

We are all Jesuits

Derk Jan Eppink // Wed, 10. Oct 2012

There are plenty of reasons to keep a close eye on Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council. Early September, Van Rompuy spoke to the 'Interreligious Dialogue' in Florence. The world press did not notice, but fortunately there was still the 'Katholiek Nieuwsblad' from Den Bosch, Rome's last resort in the Netherlands. The newspaper proudly quoted Van Rompuy as announcing: 'We are all Jesuits'. He was referring to those prominent European leaders with whom he is developing the architecture for the future Europe. 'It creates unbreakable ties. So there is a 'Jesuits International'.

Who are those people that Van Rompuy, himself schooled by the Jesuits at Sint-Jan Berchman College in Brussels, was talking about? First of all, there is José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. Secondly, there is Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime minister of Luxembourg and Chairman of the Euro group. Van Rompuy also mentions the President of the European Central Bank (ECB), Mario Draghi, who was schooled in the Roman Jesuit College Instituto Massimiliano Massimo. The Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti and his Spanish colleague Mariano Rajoy have also been shaped by Jesuit colleges, Van Rompuy cheerfully added. Fortunately there is Angela Merkel, the stubborn daughter of a vicar from the former DDR, to act as a counterweight.

Listening to Van Rompuy, you will instantly notice the similarities of the Jesuits with Europe. Jesuits formed the vanguard of the Catholic Church, like the European elite is the vanguard of the European integration. Both portray themselves as 'the elite', elevated above the ordinary people. Their methods are very similar. A sophisticated lie or purposeful deception is allowed when framed in the interest of the greater goal. A barely contained cynicism typifies the attitude toward the normal citizen, the ignorant fool, who within a democracy needs to be protected from himself. The Catholic and European elites work through inner circles. The rest is prose. Van Rompuy, Barroso, Monti and Rajoy are frequent visitors at papal audiences.

It is not surprising that this mentality leaves traces in the European structures and working methods. The ECB has a Governing Council of twenty three members, among which are the six members of the Executive Board. The ECB setup is hardly different from the Vatican. The Governing Council ranks no women, is not accountable to a Parliament and the minutes of its meetings are classified. The American Federal Reserve Bank and the Bank of Japan have to publish the minutes from their board meetings. The ECB plays a central role in the Euro zone, moving around billions of Euros, but no one knows how the bank in Frankfurt makes decisions. At least the Pope had a butler exposing the secrets.

Admittedly, Euro Jesuits are intellectually superior. They are way smarter than Guy Verhofstadt, leader of the Liberal fraction in the European Parliament and his Green counterpart Daniel Cohn-Bendit. In their book 'For Europe!' they scream their goals at the top of their lungs: a federal Europe with one government, one European tax and one army. The only thing that is missing is one secret service and one leader, so Europe is back to where it started. Put this to a referendum and the 'United States of Europe' is limited to Italy and Belgium.

Even sillier is the 'final report' of a handful of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the future of Europe. The report is signed by eleven out of the twenty seven Member States; a minority, among them the Netherlands. The usual suspect, the UK, did not sign and neither did Sweden or Finland. Of the new Member States, only Poland signed. The conclusion of the group: 'The

Euro is the most powerful symbol of European integration'. The many rescue operations and emergency funds are conveniently ignored. Some amongst the eleven Ministers (it is not clear which ones) argue in favour of a European army. Such an army will undoubtedly be a paper tiger, because the armies of the Euro countries are shrinking rapidly as a result of the crisis. Surprisingly, Greece spends the most on its military per capita! Yet Greece did not sign. In short, these eleven ministers, like a disoriented soccer team, excel at scoring in their own net.

That is something that would never happen to the Euro Jesuits. Their report 'Toward a genuine Economic and Monetary Union' only consists of 'building blocks' and 'suggestions'. The report suggests implementing a European deposit guarantee scheme. Nothing dramatic of course, it is just a suggestion. In a painless exercise of words citizens are moulded into a thinking process that goes beyond them. As soon as they realise what building those building blocks are meant to create, they are already trapped in it. What used to be suggestions will be fait accompli and those who object are labelled as unreasonable and fractious, as populists.

Meanwhile, the never elected Prime Minister Monti has announced that he will start a European campaign against 'populism'. Van Rompuy, also never elected, immediately gave him his support. Monti had earlier stated that national parliaments should not get in the way of European leaders, thereby referring to the German Bundestag. They have to be 'educated'. Jesuits lead the people, who are in turn supposed to follow. What is populism to them? It is the 'ignorant' who refuses to follow: the angry Greeks, the protesting Spaniards, the concerned Germans and the Euro-critical Dutch. A Europe with such an elitist mentality needs a Reformation, but that is something Jesuits International detests. What an annoying populist he was, that Martin Luther!

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