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# The Solari Report

April 27, 2023

**Via Europa Series:  
The Hidden History of the Great  
Divide  
with  
Guy Mettan**



**Vanessa Biard-Schaeffer:** Hello, Mr. Guy Mettan. I am very happy to have you ‘onboard’ for this interview for *The Solari Report*. I would like to briefly introduce you to our listeners and readers.

First, you are a journalist. I think you started your career at the Tribune de Genève, and you co-founded the Geneva Press Club. You also were president of the Swiss-Russian Chamber of Commerce that was created in 2005. You were a former member of the Christian Democratic Party, and you are now a member of the Swiss People’s Party; you have an active career in politics.

You also were former president of the Swiss Red Cross. You wrote several books, one of which is *Creating Russophobia: From the Great Religious Schism to Anti-Putin Hysteria*, which was published in 2017. That is how I came to know you, through different interviews that you gave in French and in English.

I found your discourse and knowledge very, very interesting and very different from what we are used to hearing. That is why I wanted to invite you to speak to our listeners and readers. Thanks to you I am passionate understanding the different relationships we have had through 1,000 years of history.

Where do you start?

**Guy Mettan:** Thank you for inviting me to this discussion. It is a pleasure to be here with you. I recently visited the United States. Ten days ago, I was in Detroit and Boston visiting some friends, so I am very happy to have this discussion with you today and with our American friends.

As you told the listeners and readers, I am interested in history in general, but especially the history of Russia, and the story of Russophobia (strong dislike towards Russia).

In 2015, after Crimea and the first violent events in Ukraine in February 2014, and the annexation of Crimea to Russia, I was surprised by the density and the depth of such a big stance of Russophobia in the Western countries – in Europe

as well as in the United States. It was a surprise to observe that. I asked the question, “Why? Why such Russophobia?”

There are many wars, and there were many times when they decided to quit wars, like in Iraq and Afghanistan and other countries, but there was not such a Russophobic reaction and an Anti-American reaction. So why was the Russophobia so high after this?

I tried to understand. When I started my research, I noticed that this Russophobic vision was very deeply anchored and rooted inside the Western mind. That is why I called my book, *Creating Russophobia: From the Great Religious Schism to Anti-Putin Hysteria*. The schism was 1,000 years ago until now. Why?

Maybe some of our listeners and readers may know that in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there was a big religious gap – a big religious divide – between the Roman Catholics based in Rome with the Pope and the Eastern Orthodox Church based in Constantinople in Byzantine. This religious schism was founded and represented the grounds for Russophobia. I will try to explain why.

I will not go into details about the religious side; it was a conception of the trinity of God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was a case about that, but why did it occur? It occurred because the Western empire was disappearing after the Roman Empire – six centuries before. There were alternatives in Western Europe to recreate an empire – a new Roman Empire. But at that time, the existing Roman Empire was based in Constantinople, not in Rome. So it was a geopolitical competition between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. The competition between Rome and Constantinople already existed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The religion was used as an ideological case in order to justify this geopolitical competition, somewhat like what we see now in the Ukraine. It was a kind of civilizational war at that time.

That is the beginning of the story.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** May I summarize? We will say that we had a Roman Empire, it was split, and the two parts wanted to be the top power over a united

Roman Empire. We had the East. For my listeners and readers, the 'East' means present Turkey, Constantinople, and Istanbul, and the 'West' means Rome, the Germans, the French, and the English.

**Mettan:** At that time, the main state in the West was the Germans based out of what is now Germany. You explained quite well the summary.

Based on this divide – the competition between these two states – it started an ideological and civilizational war between the two capitals of Rome and Constantinople/Istanbul until the collapse of Constantinople with the Ottoman conquest in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (four centuries later).

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the legacy of the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Christianity was interrupted in Turkey, but the legacy was taken by the Russians. The Russians were emerging, and the legacy of the Orthodox Church migrated from Constantinople and Istanbul to Moscow.

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, we can observe the narrative of hate against the Orthodox migrating from Turkey to Russia since that century.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** To summarize, when the Eastern Empire was taken over by the Muslims, the Orthodox went north into Moscow. They thought they were the legacy of the Orthodox Church of the Eastern Empire. Now you see the rivalry between the West and the East, but from the West to Moscow instead of from the West to Constantinople.

**Mettan:** Exactly. Thank you for your summary; that is exactly the case. Because we saw the Catholic theologian Rome strongly and hostile, not against the Greeks in Istanbul, but against the Russian Orthodox who were in Moscow.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to modern times, this old ideological, religiously-based competition became political because at that time, the main power was not yet Great Britain, but France. France was the main European state in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The King of France, Louis XV, married a Polish princess. He made an alliance with the Polish. The Polish people were Catholic, so they were very opposed to the Russian Orthodox at that time, as well as the Orthodox in Ukraine.

The King of France became very anti-Russian because of his Queen, who was very anti-Russian and anti-Orthodox in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This game of the forged/fake testament of the Tsar Peter the Great. The Tsar Peter the Great was the founder of modern Russia at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century from 1701 to 1715, more or less.

This forged document (fake testimony) was supposed to tell the heirs of the Tsar that the holy mission of the Russian Tsar was to conquer Western Europe – to conquer Germany, France, Great Britain, and Italy. That was the supposed holy mission of the Tsarist Empire.

It was completely fake, but it was used by this king (Louis XV) and by Napoleon. Napoleon was aware of this. He was informed about this fake document, and he used it; it was secret at the time, but he published it in 1812. Why? Because Napoleon was friends with Alexander I in Russia, but in 1807, they separated and became enemies. So, Napoleon tried to weaken Russia with what we can observe now with NATO in the Ukraine against Russia. It was the same vision by Napoleon, and he used the fake testament. He published it in a book by his propaganda minister, Mr. Jacques-Louis David, who was the propaganda minister of Napoleon at that time. He used this fake testament to justify its military invasion of Russia, which took place one year later in 1813.

As you know, Napoleon's invasion of Russia completely failed because Russia was victorious and against Napoleon. That was the beginning of the modern Russophobic ideological struggle from the Western countries against Russia.

This fake testament was used by Great Britain after the Napoleonic wars. It was translated into English. It was published in London in 1818 and 1819, and it was used by the British propaganda to justify their opposition against Russia.

Great Britain and Russia were once together. They were allies against Napoleon, but after the victory, Great Britain became very anti-Russian. It's ironic observing this; they used the fake testament to justify the supposition, saying, "You know the south of Russia is too strong and too powerful, and we need to check them because it could put our empire in danger in India and Egypt and so on. Since they are our main competitor, we have to control it." That is why

Great Britain, France, and Italy declared war against Russia. That was the first Crimean War in 1853.

They used this fake testament exactly as Napoleon did 40 years earlier. They used the same fake ideological lie as a pretext to invade Crimea at that time.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** So we can say that for a fake testament, it had a long life.

**Mettan:** It had a very long life, but the story is not finished. Even in 1945, after World War II, this fake testament was used as a basis to justify the Cold War by the United States. I mentioned this in my book. If you look at the text, you can see the long history of this fake testament to justify the fight against Russia during more than one century.

The fake testament was destroyed by French historians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1870, France was beaten by Germany – by Bismarck, the German Kaiser. This was the Second Reich with Bismarck. So, France was looking for new allies against their main enemy, which was not Russia, but the German Empire. There were not very many allies, but Russia was good for that. So France approached Russia; it could not consider Russia as an enemy. That is why – by a ‘magical spirit’ – at that time, the French historians discovered that this fake testament was a fake. They published the fact that it was made public by the former King Louis XV, so we can forget it.

Despite this, it was still used by the ideologues of the Cold War after World War II. It’s strange to accept that.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** We left off at the Crimean War in 1853.

**Mettan:** The Crimean War started in 1853 and finished in 1856. It lasted three years.

Finally, Russia won that war. After that, there was an agreement. But about 20 years after that, Russia came again under attack, and they were still a great power.

It is interesting to observe how Russophobia migrated from France to Great

Britain (the British Empire). The Russophobic movement went along with a story that everybody knows about Dracula. Dracula was a Romanian Count who lived north of Romania. The story of Dracula was created by a British journalist author called Bram Stoker. Bram Stoker got his inspiration to make the portrait of Dracula caricature by using the Russian archetype of nobility to depict and paint Dracula. At the time, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this part of Carpathian Rus belonged to Russia – not to Romania.

So in his view, Bram Stoker used the story of Dracula to attack the Russians. The writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century knew about it because Dracula was a kind of cartoon of the typical Russian ‘bad guy’.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** It was a character assassination.

**Mettan:** Exactly. Interestingly enough, looking at the cartoons published by the British press in the 1850’s and the 1860’s and the 1870’s, you can see cartoons showing a vampire, like Dracula, and you can see the face of Tsar Nicholas I with big teeth trying to suck the blood of the poor British people. You had the Tsar Empires preying on London in order to suck the blood of innocent British people. At that time, the bad Russian was depicted as a vampire. Now he is worse than Putin.

It is interesting to notice how Dracula was used as information at that time; it was the object of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

After that, the Russophobia migrated from Great Britain to Germany. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain accepted becoming an ally with Russia. During World War I, France and Russia fought against Germany and Austria. That is why Great Britain, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, forgot its Russophobic ideology, like France, in order to make an alliance with Russia against their new main enemy, which was the German Empire and the Austrian Empire.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I will sum up by saying that the UK (Great Britain) is happy to have Russia as an ally when they are against one of the other European countries.

**Mettan:** It was the same case in World War II; Great Britain didn't hesitate to make an alliance with Stalinists and Bolsheviks because the main enemy of Great Britain was Adolf Hitler. As soon as the war finished in 1945, the former ally changed and started the Cold War. It was exactly the same case as 1815, after the Napoleon War. It's very interesting to notice how Russophobia and 'Russophilia' could change depending on the state of geopolitics and the main enemy to be fought.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** What can we see right now that is Russophobia or, more specifically, what is going on in Ukraine? We don't have a war in Europe. We don't have the same landscape that we had in World War I and World War II, as I understand. So how do you explain what is going on in Ukraine?

**Mettan:** The war in Ukraine, in my view, was mainly connected to the progress of NATO because NATO had admitted new members to the alliance after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Eastern European countries, such as Baltic Countries, Poland, and Romania were considered by the Russians as a threat to them. It was exactly the same case that occurred in 1962 when the Soviets tried to put some nuclear missiles in Cuba. It was considered an existential threat by the United States.

In that case, considering that some US military bases with potential nuclear missiles could be placed in Romania, Poland, or Baltic countries, they are so close to the Russian border. Logically, the Russians considered that as an existential threat. That is one explanation.

There was also the bombing of the Donbas population between 2014 and 2022. This caused the death of 14,000 people, which is not small.

Let's say that the Russians decided to do a military intervention, which I don't support, but that was the explanation; that was the basic explanation of the Russian decision.

What we can say for Europe, as well as the United States, is a very unbalanced view of this conflict. I don't try to justify the Russians or Putin or anybody. Everybody has to take responsibility in all of that. But what is impressed upon me is trying to explain the words of this war, also the criticism of the unilateral



vision of this country. I think that it is wrong to consider that we have a fight of the good (Zelensky and the Ukrainian side) against total evil (Putin and the Russian side). It's not so simple in my view.

If we wish to recreate the basis of the peace, then we have to consider that; we have to know that in order to find some solution. That is why I try to have checks and balances to make a more balanced view of this conflict.

As far as I can see, this is an information war led by the Western countries in NATO against the Russians. For me, that is a pity; I can understand the reasons. Do I know the narrative of democracy against the bad autocratic countries? That is not exactly the case because in this case, how can you explain the bombing of Serbia by NATO in 1999, or the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan without false pretexts or even lies, which was the case in Iraq in 2003?

The West has no lesson of morality to give to the world. That is why I am defending a more balanced vision. Maybe I can point out the information war and the ideological war, but it's a personal opinion.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** If I 'step into the shoes' of a regular French person who has no prior knowledge of history and geography, or even myself, as I used to know where Ukraine was, but with some confusion, my feeling was that nobody knew about Ukraine until recently. Then the media and propaganda started saying, "We have to support Ukraine."

The strange thing is that Europe was rather peaceful. There were no wars inside like the wars that we have already experienced. Basically, I have a feeling that some group is trying to form a new empire on the basis of the old Roman Empire, plus the remnants of the East Roman Empire, and the US is in on it. The UK is an extension of the Great Britain Empire and a couple of leftovers of the French tradition. There is no French power anymore on the side of the Atlantic.

So, somebody is trying to create a new Roman Empire that will probably include a part of the Eastern countries around Turkey.

**Mettan:** Yes, and they will include Albania and Georgia.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** My feeling is that either they want to have it very isolated to the rest of the world, and the leader will be the core of Russia, or they will try to extend as much as they can eastward. Russia is the resistance, and they try to push it as far east as possible.

**Mettan:** Yes, that is exactly the case for me; I share this view. It's an open view because if you read the wrong corporation report in 2019 called 'Overextending and Unbalancing Russia', it was clearly written in that report that the schedule and agenda is taking place presently in Ukraine. If you read the book by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was an advisor to Reagan and former US Presidents, *The Grand Chessboard*, he also clearly explains why the Western Empire (the US and European countries) should recreate this new Roman Empire against Russia. That is the story we spoke about at the beginning of our talk. That is exactly the case.

One of the unwritten, unopen, secret, and unsaid causes is also from certain circles in Washington trying to separate Germany from Russia. If you have the industrial power of Germany with the natural resources (oil, gas) and energy resources of Russia, you can recreate a European economic power that is more powerful than the United States or China.

So, in the heads of some people in Washington, it was also important not only to weaken Russia, but to weaken Germany in order to break the links between both countries in order to keep their grip on Europe, and to make the grip of the United States and NATO stronger. That is probably the main cause of this war in Ukraine, but it is not officially said for sure.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** No, but we have the Nord Stream case that helps us understand what is going on.

**Mettan:** That is the exact illustration of what I have said.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** If you are trying to have this new power, you need a new religion. If it's not a religion per se, then you need a common culture – something that binds everybody together. What will this culture be like?

**Mettan:** Now, it is no longer religion' it's no longer the Catholics against the Orthodox because it is past that. It's still vivid and it is still around. You can see that this divide is also dividing Ukraine into two parts. The Western Ukraine is Catholic; they are connected with the Vatican and the Pope. The Eastern Ukraine is Orthodox, and they are connected with the Moscow Patriarchate. But that is not the most important thing.

The new religion, in my view, is the new democratic religion; it is all the narrative of the ideological divide with democracy against totalitarian states; it's the human rights against the non-human rights. The supposed human rights violations are seen in leaders such as Putin, Xi Jinping and so on.

So, we have the religion of human rights, the religion of democracy, and the religion of wokism and LGBT and transgender – all of which is not shared by the Russians, the Chinese, and the rest of the world – but is in a world that is put on the top by the West. So, we can summarize the new religion with these concepts of democracy, human rights, gender and sexuality identities and so on.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I think it is also very useful to distract people away from the main topics. If you talk about LGBT and human rights and the climate, etc., you don't talk about energy prices, consumer prices, the standard of living, and inflation. It's exactly what is going on now in France. We are living with many demonstrations and riots. It's a different topic, but it's 'in the air', as we say.

I would like to ask you what the stance is in Switzerland; Switzerland is a very interesting country. One of my teachers – a very good math teacher – was also a historian. He said, "You look at Switzerland. It's physically and geographically the heart of Europe, and it's a most ambivalent one." Then he went on to discussing the history of Switzerland and all the traditions, etc.

I think that it is very rare to find groups or a country that can find a balance between what is going on inside and outside. Switzerland has been under plenty of pressure financially from the US for the bank system, and it has been very difficult for Switzerland to keep their balance in that sense.

I would like you to give us a bit of an update and some information about what is going on in Switzerland relative to Ukraine, but also more generally, about

what is going on and which direction you think it is going.

**Mettan:** You are right. Until now, Switzerland has always respected the neutrality because the neutrality started with the Congress of Vienna, as we saw after the Napoleonic War. So, it was granted by all of the nations – all of the political powers in Europe – for two centuries. More or less, there were some cases during the World Wars, but they respected it, and we applied this neutrality.

In February last year with the Ukrainian War, suddenly in 48 hours, our Federal Council had abandoned their neutrality. They took the side of Ukraine against Russia, which was not the tone of traditional Switzerland. In all of the wars and conflicts, we tried to keep neutral and balanced. It was a surprise.

The Federal Council (our government) didn't say, "We respect the neutrality, but now we will start cooperating neutrality," or 'active neutrality'.

It was nonsense, but it was just to explain why they supported neutrality and took a side only for Ukraine, and they took a side with NATO against the Russians.

There is a debate now. There is also a popular initiative. They are collecting signatures to reclaim strict neutrality – not this 'active' or 'cooperative' neutrality.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** How do you say it in French?

**Mettan:** In French. it is neutralité active.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** It's more ludicrous in French.

**Mettan:** Exactly. It sounds ridiculous.

That is the case. So now, the president of the Federal Council made a statement saying that we have to take care and we have to be cautious. He said, "I am very afraid of this war frenzy and this war-mongering hysteria." So they are trying to cool down a little.

We have huge pressures by Baltic countries and European countries, asking us to deliver arms and deliver weapons and ammunition to Ukraine, which will be a formal breach of neutrality. We did not do that until now. It was more political. It is not yet militarily speaking, but it is a breach of neutrality.

Our Minister of Defense, for the first time, had an initial meeting at NATO in Brussels with the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, just to say that Switzerland was very interested in developing closer ties with NATO and making some military exercises. So that is the beginning of starting a new organization with NATO and a new breach in the neutrality. It is very preoccupying to me.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I'll make a hypothesis, which I assume could be the case. With the financial turmoil with Greece, they need the US dollars. The Swiss Central Bank probably cannot fix the problem by itself. They need the support of the US or the US-British financial system.

From what you just said, it was very recently that Switzerland said, "We will help," and, "We would like to cooperate in a military fashion."

In my mind, it makes a 'click'. I have no information or real confirmation, but it is a presumption or hypothesis that I am making that the pressure is so high that they are forced to do this.

**Mettan:** You are right. This pressure was already the case with the Jewish funds in the late 1990's. It was already the case that this pressure came from the United States in the 2000's. In 2009, we had to break with Swiss bank secrecy because pressure came with the use of the dollars in our banks.

That is why the Federal Council has abandoned the neutrality. It was under the pressure of our banks because they could be put under US sanctions if they continued to use US dollars for their financial activities. For the Swiss bank to be forbidden to use US dollars, it would be the end of our bank system.

That is why the Federal Council was obliged to make a breach in neutrality. It was also the case of Credit Suisse. It was done with the phone calls between Washington and the IMF and Janet Yellen and our authorities and the Swiss

Central Bank and so on. It probably had to do with London authorities, too.

They decided to force UBS (Union Bank of Switzerland) to buy criticism. The use of the dollar threat was completely real.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I would like to finish up with how you adopted a little girl back in the 1990's from Russia. That is how you got interested in the Russian culture.

I would like you to tell us what you like most in terms of literature, music, or art. What are the main pieces that you would like to share with our listeners and readers? What would you like us to watch or hear from Russia?

**Mettan:** I think that we have many things to hear from Russia, especially the music. The classical music and ballets from Russia were for centuries one of the biggest achievements of the Russian culture.

I would also mention some writers. I think that Dostoyevsky is one. Last year I published a small book inspired by Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. There are two chapters in that book that mention the 'Great Inquisitor'. It is a special story of the Karamazov Brothers. It's a saying and a symbol. It's just a small tale inspired by Jesus.

Jesus is coming back to Earth in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and many people come to Him because He helps, and they have problems and are attracted by His speeches and so on. You have the Great Inquisitor who is very happy to have burned dozens of heretics. He said, "Oh, sh\*\*! Jesus is back!" He knows that his power was put in danger by the return of Jesus because the Great Inquisitor used the Catholic narrative in order to have more power with the people.

So if Jesus is there, he has to leave the scene; that is the story. I made a book inspired by Dostoyevsky, saying that the new Inquisitor is the GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon) with all of their material, trying to convince us that is the force of the good. The new Jesus is inspired by Julian Assange because he has been put in jail, he cannot speak, and he is the real 'wise guy' in our world; he is inspirational.

So, that is the force of the Russian literature to inspire people.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** It's always a figure of the evil and the good, and it is a returning process. You always have to fight the bad, and Christ went through martyrdom because it is difficult to fight the evil. You shouldn't be desperate about that.

In French, they say, "l'âme russe," or, "The Russian soul." This is something that is very difficult to understand. I think I got a bit of it because my first classic ballet teacher was Russian whose name was Mrs. Zoya. She had a big, thick wooden stick, and she would use it to put my knees and my feet in proper position, but she was delicate. It was clear to the children that they needed to behave.

They have this extreme temper, which can be good or bad. They have passion in a way that is very difficult for the Western temper to understand. Sometimes there are no limits because nothing really matters. They are very romantic in that way.

Romanticism is really embedded by the Russians. I think that if you don't have this thing in mind, it is very difficult to understand that. There is no way to stop. There is a road, and Russianization won't work.

**Mettan:** Exactly. They can be mystical, emotional, romantic, as well as completely rude (not barbarian). It is the Russian soul.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I think that we have just about summarized and gone through it all, and you have done that very nicely and very simply for a very long and complicated story. I discovered many things thanks to you and your knowledge.

Now I am turning to the story of the South of France that is very linked to the West and East Roman Empire. You will find a split between the Cathars (rejected the Old Testament) and the Catholics. It rings a bell with what is going on with Russia.

I hope that we can invite you here again.

**Mettan:** With pleasure.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** I think that you can give us some light, from time to time, on what is going on in the present times. I will be very happy to share new information and new knowledge with our listeners and readers. Thank you very much.

**Mettan:** Thank you very much.

**Biard-Schaeffer:** Goodbye, Guy.

**Metten:** Goodbye.