

EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

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US political scientist Samuel P. Huntington placed the concept of civilizations (in the plural) on the political, and to a certain degree the scholarly, agenda in a notorious article from 1993, 'The Clash of Civilizations'. In the book version, from 1996, he writes: In the late 1980s the communist world collapsed, and the Cold War international system became history. In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural. Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question human beings can face: Who are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them. People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and at the broadest level, civilizations. People use politics not just to advance their interests, but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not, and often only when we know whom we are against. Nation states remain the principal actors in world affairs. Their behavior is shaped as in the past by the pursuit of power and wealth, but it is also shaped by cultural preferences, commonalties, and differences. The most important groupings of states are no longer the three blocs of the Cold War but rather the world's seven or eight major civilizations (Huntington, 1996: 21).

According to Huntington's enumeration, these civilizations are the Western, the Latin American, the African, the Islamic, the Hindu, the Orthodox, the Buddhist, the Chinese and the Japanese civilizations (Huntington, 1996: 27-28). He continues his analysis of future lines of conflict thus:

In this new world the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations. Violence between states and groups from different civilizations, however, carries with it the potential for escalation as other states and groups from these civilizations rally to the support of their 'kin countries'. In the post-Cold War world, culture is both a divisive and a unifying force. People separated by ideology but united by culture come together, as the two Germanys did and as the two Koreas and the several Chinas are beginning to. Societies united by ideology or historical circumstance but divided by civilization either come apart, as did the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia, or are subjected to intense strain, as is the case with Ukraine, Nigeria, Sudan, India, Sri Lanka, and many others (Huntington, 1996: 28).

Samuel Huntington is a well-known US researcher in international politics who, at a late stage in his career, has attracted attention far beyond the narrow world of professionals

by reintroducing the old concept of civilization. Whether he has misunderstood or misused it is not so important in this connection. The important thing is that he has succeeded in finding new formulations for some of the themes in the new global order of things by pointing out the political implications of culture and religion.

The concept of civilization has long been a central part of Europeans' image of themselves. But the connotation 'Europe' or 'European civilization' is not identical with 'Christianity'. Even in the so-called Christian Middle Ages, the Christian faith was not restricted to Europeans. The word 'civilization' itself was first used in French, in 1757, but the content of the word had already been underway for some time: from Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1720) and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). In the Age of Enlightenment the word was used to characterize both a modern, European space and a movement in time toward the modern, in the form of a theory of historic stages. The concept of space was shaped partly in a European stage setting of the meeting with the other – the less civilized – and partly in the production of inner, European spaces that were designated culture. 'In the beginning was America,' wrote John Locke, thus placing the ethnographic knowledge of the 'primitives' in a chronology. For enlightened thinkers in the 1700s, civilization marked a movement from the not- or un-civilized to the highest civilization or development. The developmental process was thought into a historical philosophy, with the result that History with a capital H was depicted as a movement toward the highest civilization, that is, the European. Parallel with the positive self-depiction in the concept of civilization, a negative self-depiction, a self-criticism, revolving around civilization, was formed. The concept of civilization thus became understood in both a positive and a negative sense. This doubleness was first resolved when the idea of culture was shaped as a consequence and contrast to the idea of civilization.

Today, at the close of the 20th century, relations between European and non-European civilizations have changed radically. People and governments from non-Western civilizations are no longer only historical objects and the target of European colonialism and neocolonialism. Instead, they are beginning to shape history in the same way as the West has. It is obvious that the rules of the world game are irrevocably changed, but whether they will move in the direction described by Huntington is entirely unclear, even though the bare fact of his analysis being disseminated points to the possibility of its becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

European Identity

A common basis for European culture is presumed to be a combination of Christian dogma, Greek thinking and Roman organizational talent. We have heard of the Greek heritage many times. It was held forth throughout the entire (unfortunately now almost entirely vanished) classical education in the humanities. But it is an illusion, albeit a useful one. It is correct that European thinking builds on writings from the Greco-Roman Antiquity, combined with the Old and the New Testaments. But Western Europe was only one of the civilizations which administered this tradition. Another was the Russian Orthodox. It is even more controversial to point out that the Arabian-Muslim and the Turkish-Muslim civilizations also build on inspiration from the Greeks and the Jews. That

they have reached a different conclusion only makes them even more important to the Europeans of today.

The past 40 years of historical research have reached the conclusion that everything we earlier assumed to be credited to the Renaissance actually dates from the so-called 'dark Middle Ages'. Empirical natural sciences, the idea of the equality of the sexes, radical democracy and nations are all phenomena that first appeared in northwestern Europe and northern Italy between the years 1000 and 1300. This is clearly demonstrated in two books by a Swedish historian unfortunately not translated into English (Nordberg, 1984; 1993). Nordberg criticizes the conventional understanding of the Renaissance as a period of intellectual awakening, enthusiasm for life, thirst for knowledge, the inquiring mind and critical sense, casting off the bonds of authority, individualism, sense of beauty and love of nature, and criticism of Christian dogmas. All this was supposed to have developed quite suddenly via a new interest in the writings of Greco-Roman Antiquity and supposed to represent all in all a total contrast to the so-called 'dark Middle Ages'. The designation *media aetas* was coined by the humanistic intellectuals of the Renaissance as a name for the cultural vacuum they presumed to lie between themselves and Greco-Roman Antiquity. However, with his book on the Middle Ages, based principally on French research and French sources, Nordberg succeeds in exploding the myth of the dark Middle Ages. Now we know that most of what we see as typical of the Renaissance was also found in the Middle Ages, which, far from being static, were quite dynamic. Nordberg alleged in no uncertain terms that while the learned men of the Middle Ages were primarily interested in what the ancient authors wrote, the humanists of the Renaissance were occupied with how they wrote – that is, a shift of interest took place, from content to form. Thus he paints a far from idyllic picture of 15th-century Italy. On the contrary, the entire book is borne by an intense polemic against the standard image of the idyllic Renaissance, whether expressed by Jacob Burckardt in the classic *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860) or in the entries in prevailing encyclopaedias. If we depart from the idea of individualistic aesthetes and art-loving patrons, which originate in particular in isolated studies of the abundant paintings of the 15th century; and move into the archival sources that have been preserved, a radically different picture is painted. Epidemics of bubonic plague, syphilis and meningitis ravaged Italy during this period. The chances of living to an old age – that is, over 40 – were slim, and the epoch was marked by permanent and bloody wars, earthquakes and much more. But none of this appears in the paintings and other art of the Renaissance.

This fact made Nordberg reflect further on a challenging statement by the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, remarking that the artistic products of an epoch, though they are an excellent source of information on taste, values and ideological currents, tell us little about material conditions. But this is just what the abundant literature on the 'spirit of the Renaissance' and the 'Renaissance man' has taught. In reality, claims Nordberg, the free, individualist 'Renaissance man' and the unhampered capitalist spirit of free enterprise first flowered in the second half of the 19th century, when the myth of the Renaissance was systemized by, among others, the Swiss historian Jacob Burckardt. This modern, anachronistic idea was well aided by Renaissance humanism's own ideology on its merits compared to those of the Middle Ages. It was, however, actually the Middle Ages that

introduced the radical idea of equality among people and the direct relationship between God and Man that have since been associated in our minds with that which is distinctively European. All in all, this modern research paints a picture of the Italian Renaissance which is more 'typical of the Middle Ages' than the Middle Ages themselves. How the artists of the time had the energy to produce 'Renaissance Art', is another question, which we will leave unanswered. Most probably the discrepancy is connected to the fact that Renaissance artists did not regard their products as 'art', but as craftsmanship. We Western Europeans certainly belong to a civilization which builds on the antique texts. But we have used them in an entirely distinctive way, just as the Arabians and the Orthodox Christians have each used them in their own way. It can be useful to see ourselves reflected in the Greeks and Romans, but it is not correct to see them as just like us.

What is the 'History of Europe'?

Late in the 1980s the European Commission, chaired by Jacques Delors, ordered a common European History textbook at the upper-secondary-school or high-school level. It was to be written by 12 authors, which most appropriately was then the number of members of the EEC and the number of stars in the European flag, which was being marketed at the same time along with a number of other common European symbols.

The group of authors had originally planned to follow the outline of a European history by the well-known French contemporary historian, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle. The initiative for the joint chronicle was taken by the French-Norwegian-British businessman FrÉdÉric Delouche, who also saw to it that the work was published simultaneously in eight of the Community's languages (Duroselle, 1990).

In the preface, Duroselle and Delouche wrote that 'there are solid reasons for regarding Europe, not as a mosaic of cultures, but as an organic whole, and it should therefore be possible to shape a united Europe'. This was an answer to Delors' call for historians to do their part for the Community. In a 1989 symposium speech with the theme '1992 and the Historical Heritage' (on the occasion of the opening of the Inner Market) Delors had said, among other things: 'It is the part of the historians to put the integration process into perspective, to go beyond the short-sighted considerations that can dazzle the rest of us. If they are to be understood in the right way, and if they are to be evaluated along with all their consequences, our efforts must be seen against a historic background' (quoted in Karlsson, 1996: 186).

Duroselle's answer was to begin with the Celts. Of course, we don't know much about them since they left no written sources. The only Celtic languages spoken today are Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish and Breton. Nevertheless, according to Duroselle, it is meaningful to call the Celts the first European culture. The European Iron Age is divided into the Hallstatt period, named after a village in Austria, from about 700 to about 450 BC and the La Tène period, named after an area of Switzerland, from about 450 BC till Caesar's capture of Gaul around 50 BC. Duroselle is especially interested in the last period. He writes: 'If a common designation is to be found for the period between the eighth and the fifth centuries BC, it could appropriately be 'the Awakening of the West'. In the period between about 500 and 450 BC, the La Tène culture developed in the heart

of the Celtic world – more precisely in the area between the Maas and Main-Decker rivers. It has been described as a particularly original culture, connected to the Euro-Asian East and the countries around the Mediterranean. The Celts already lived in small towns at that time. In the interior of the country, there were fortified towns of a fairly uniform appearance from Bohemia to Brittany’ (Duroselle, 1990: 42). Yes, in reality, one might add, the Celtic culture reached all the way to Romania and Slovenia, although Duroselle doesn’t mention this, in keeping with his general jaundiced treatment of Eastern and Central Europe. It is hard to say to what degree this Celtic culture actually was common European in any meaningful sense. The most marked common trait of the Celts was their manic preoccupation with chopping off each others’ heads in various imaginative ways. Greek culture had, like the two other roots of the common European culture, its centre of gravity outside modern Europe, in Asia Minor as well as southern Italy. The cradle of Christianity stood, as we all know, in the fertile half moon of the Aramaic-speaking part of the Middle East approximately 2000 years ago. Greek thought developed to a certain degree on the Greek peninsula, but if we disregard Athens, the capital was western Asia Minor with the great Greek city-states like Miletus, Ephesus and Halicarnassus, along with southern Italy, which was actually called Magna Graecia, and the area around the Black Sea. The capital of the Roman Empire was, of course, on the Italian peninsula, but the most urbanized part of the Roman Empire was the eastern Mediterranean. Egypt and North Africa (the province Africa) moreover, supplied most of the grain to the metropolises of the Empire. It was no accident that a great Roman Christian philosopher like Augustine was Bishop of Hippo Regius, in what is now Tunisia. This does not mean that Augustine (354-430 AD) was black, as claimed by some of the more radical representatives of Black Studies in the US, but it does say something of the importance of the southern Mediterranean to Roman civilization.

The Ancient period meant a lot to Europe, but so did other civilizations. There is no in itself privileged and direct connection from the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans to the European High Medieval Age and the Europe of the nation-states. China, Persia and India have also played a large role, not to mention Egypt, as will be seen in a forthcoming study of the role of the Egyptian heritage in European culture (Christiansen 2000).

European Uniqueness

If we are to explain the origin of the unique characteristics of European civilization – the combination of the scientific, the technological, the industrial, the national and the democratic revolutions – we must turn our gaze further east, to the great realm at the other end of the route through Asia, the Silk Route. For thousands of years China was the most likely bid on where the modern breakthrough would take place – much more likely than the small, impoverished and barbaric peninsula we call Europe – a name, by the way, of Semitic origin: Ereb, ‘the dark’, the Phoenicians on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean called the areas in the west, where the sun set. This idea has been preserved in the striking German word for the West, das Abendland.

Every European knows that it was the Chinese who discovered gunpowder. But according to a hardy myth, they only used it for fireworks, not, in modern, genuine European style, to kill each other more effectively with guns and cannons. Where this

myth comes from, no one knows. In any case, it is completely false. The Chinese used gunpowder both for guns and cannons, and, as a matter of fact, put them on great ocean-going warships with advanced sailing technology and navigational instruments. They killed each other and others in the best of European style, with the only difference being that in Chinese strategy it was considered a virtue to lose as few soldiers as possible. They therefore refined their manúuvres to the utmost. It may have been these advanced movements in the landscape that made the more primitive European observers believe that the Chinese could not kill. The difference was that the Chinese, in contrast to the Europeans, saw no point in doing so unless it was unavoidable.

The maritime exploits of the Chinese in the first half of the 15th century show how fortuitous European dominance over the rest of the world really was. The Mongols left China in 1368 and returned to the steppes. The ruling power then went to an ambitious, able and authoritarian general who founded the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). He ruled for 30 years under the name Hongwu. Among other things, Hongwu and his successor, Yung-Lo (who ruled from 1402-24) tried to abolish private trade and gather all foreign trade under the central tax system. But the first Ming emperors also supported an enterprise which had the goal of extending Chinese influence to cover the entire Indian Ocean. Seven armadas of junks, with up to 37,000 soldiers on board each fleet, sailed the seas from Kamchatka in the north to Zanzibar in the west, putting in to distant harbours in what are now Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and East Africa. The expeditions were of little or no permanent importance since court politics put a sudden stop to the activity, but it is still worth taking note of these journeys since they dramatically demonstrated China's potential for cultural expansion in the 15th century. The Ming voyages took place between 1405 and 1433, instigated by the Emperor Yung-Lo. Led by the able diplomat and general, the eunuch Zheng He (or Zheng Ho), who was a Muslim by birth, the voyages demonstrated China's economic and military vigour. The expeditions consisted of impressive fleets, at times numbering more than 300 ships, including 63 gigantic, nine-masted treasure ships, each weighing 1500 tons. In comparison, Vasco da Gama's flagship weighed only 300 tons – and Columbus' (The Santa Maria) even less. The enormous Chinese ships could carry up to 500 men. The expeditions were finally stopped in 1436 when the Emperor issued a decree forbidding the building of new ocean-going vessels. The crews were ordered to man the boats travelling the inland routes on the Great Canal, which was completed in 1417. The resources that had been used for shipbuilding were channelled into the building and maintenance of public buildings. After a short time the Chinese had even forgotten how to build the huge ships that had struck foreign beholders from Java to Malindi with such awe. However much China's internal development was to blame for this choice, it was to clear the path for the Europeans, who succeeded in capturing almost the entire world in the run of the following centuries. This process was, on the other hand, less necessary and legitimate than normally assumed.

The functional connection between East and West is seen much more clearly in modern historical works on China than in the corresponding works on Europe. Etienne Balazs, a historian of Hungarian-French origin, wrote in a 1952 analysis of the long-term factors in Chinese civilization: 'Since the fall of the Roman empire, Europe has been split into a

large number of small states, who have been involved in mutual war, competition and rivalisation. China, on the other hand, has a long, continuous history as a centralized state, and once had an enormous trading fleet. How can it be that it was Europe and not China that became a political and economic trend-setter?' (Balazs 1952) Balazs was not a specialist on Europe, but for that very reason he was able to pinpoint the most dominant and unique characteristics of European history. It allowed him to understand Europe, not as the world leader followed at a respectful distance by other civilizations, but as the one major exception the rest of the world today seeks to imitate, even when they call the imitation a special 'Asian road to development', based on special 'Asian values' (Balazs 1952), as do certain East Asian leaders, with the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed and the former leader of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew at the forefront.

Seen with today's eyes, it is almost impossible not to view the industrial, technological, scientific and political revolutions as the only possible end results of European history. Seen with the eyes of the time, however, this result was far less certain. On the contrary, most objective observers would have put their money on China if they, in the period between the years 1000 and 1500, had been asked which of the two civilizations, China or Europe, would most likely produce an industrial breakthrough.

The principal explanation for Europe's leading role lies in the characteristic political organization of territory and power. If we look at what has happened at opposite ends of the European continent over the past thousand years, we find that while the Roman realm was dissolved, the concurrent Han Empire survived as something in the nature of a nation-state. Modern Europe has had the habit of seeing itself as the direct heir to the Roman Empire. Nevertheless Europe, after the fall of the western part of the Roman Empire in AD 476, has at no time composed a political entity. In reality, the Roman Empire lived on in the East, in the form of the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire. It had a bad press in the West – from the crusaders to Edward Gibbon's classical portrayal in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). Rome's 'fall' took place, according to Gibbon, in 1453, when the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople. Now one might protest that an empire whose ruin took over 1000 years was actually quite good at surviving. At the same time, modern research is inclining towards the idea that the Ottoman realm in many ways was a continuation of the Byzantine, as a universal empire spanning the geographical border formed by the Bosphorus. Seen in that perspective, one could claim that the Roman Empire was first destroyed in 1918, even though it took place in a version dominated by Islam. In any case, it is important to remember that the Arabian-Islamic culture is at least as legitimate an heir to the Jewish and Greek-Roman civilizations as is Western Europe.

But a split took place in the West. Western and Central Europe have almost always been dominated by political schisms and even wars between the various countries. And, in addition, the exercise of power has often been derived according to differing principles, as in the conflict between Pope and Emperor in the Middle Ages, where the worldly imperium stood against the sacred sacerdotium. The sovereign territorial state became recognized as the basic unit in Europe at the peace settlement ending the Thirty Years War, agreed on in Westphalia in 1648. This peace agreement adopted the principle of the balance of power between rival territorial states as the foundation of European civilization.

This is why the epoch we are, for the most part, still in has been called the 'Westphalian System' or the 'Westphalian Epoch'. After the Wars of Napoleon in the early 19th century, the territorial states changed to more or less homogeneous nation-states. The balance of power shifted from open competition to alliances, consensus and then back to open rivalry, resulting in the industrialized mass murders of World War I, revolution and dissolution of century-old states. At the same time, a number of the European Great Powers succeeded in drawing the rest of the world into their political and economic spheres in the so-called Imperial Epoch. This relatively short-lived hegemony later led to the present global situation with a world largely dominated by the principle of sovereign, centrally governed, ethnically homogeneous nation-states.

The principle of sovereign nation-states has been realized in Europe to such a degree that the process had to be reversed, or at least moderated, after World War II. The European Community constitutes an attempt to develop economic dynamics on a continental scale while maintaining national sovereignty to as great a degree as possible. In comparison, unbroken political unity has existed in China, a country the size of a continent with a population that is more than continental sized, since the Han dynasty (200 BC-AD 200). Han China is a fascinating example of an empire on the way to becoming a nation – unfortunately at the cost of the people of Tibet and Xinkiang, as well as threats to the prosperity of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Even so, China has far from succeeded in meeting the challenge of combining European economic growth with its imperial traditions. On the contrary, China is at the moment faced with a double problem, with internal strife between regions and conflict between regions and the central powers. These tensions coincide with a marked change of course towards a market economy. The solution lies, according to the Chinese leaders, in maintaining control of the centrally ruled imperial state by the use of modern technological methods while giving the economy free rein. It is extremely doubtful if this can succeed: the task is the old one of squaring a circle.

European Split and European Development

It is in truth difficult to foresee the immediate future for China, or for Europe and other parts of the world. The lesson of European history is, however, relatively unequivocal: multiplicity and competition between shifting centres of power. On the whole, Europe could have taken on a number of different political forms. The US historical sociologist Charles Tilly has pointed to four main types of political organization which were conceivable but which in the end had no influence on the formation of European states. They comprised: a theocratic federation in keeping with the intentions behind the Holy Roman Empire from 962 till 1806; a trading network like the Hanseatic League of the late Middle Ages or clumps of city-states such as those in northern and central Italy and Flanders; feudalism, which could very well have developed on a European level in line with the development we later saw in Poland; or the fourth prospect, a centrally governed political empire, which was actually also a possibility even though it was never fully realized.

The absence of a centrally controlled empire is basically the most characteristic trait in European development. However one should not disregard the empire in comparative

analyses of European identity. After all, most of the world's large groups of populations have always been organized in empires, and the empires had grown in extent at the point in the High Middle Ages where Europe began to organize space and territory in a whole new way, in sharply demarcated territorial states and nations.

What really needs explaining, as regards Europe, is why a thriving empire did not evolve inside her borders after the fall of Rome. Even though it was close at times, from Charlemagne to the Habsburgs none of the great European empire-builders were able to swallow up all their competitors. Charles V's ambitions failed in 1555 with the Peace of Augsburg, where *cujus regio, eius religio*, the principle that the religion of the ruling prince was the religion of the country, was decreed. The idea of one universal empire in Europe was definitively militarily defeated with the defeat of the Great Armada in 1588. Charles V's son, Philip or Felipe II of Spain, sent in that year Europe's greatest force against Queen Elizabeth I of England to enfold her realm in his Universal Catholic Empire (even though, technically speaking, it was his cousin in Vienna who was Emperor). It failed, as we know, but modern archival research and underwater archaeological examinations of the ships' outfitting have made it clear that it was pure luck that the British won. That, of course, is not how they remember it themselves – especially in the light of the victories over Napoleon and Hitler, who also lined up enormous invading armies on the other side of the Channel. But in 1588 the balance of power was even more skewed, and if the fleet had not been shipwrecked in a hurricane the Duke of Alba's war-hardened troops would most likely have cut through England like a knife through butter. Furthermore, such a military success would have mobilized the still strong Catholic forces in England. In truth, 1588 is one of the great turning-points of European history.

Later, the Habsburgs again failed to establish a hegemony in Central Europe in the Thirty Years War – first and foremost because of intervention by the Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus in league with Cardinal Richelieu of France in one of the unholy, interest-based cross-alliances typical of European politics since the Middle Ages. Instead of an empire with clearcut allocation of competence, Europe became a system of states in unstable balance. A system where change in one element affected the others like billiard balls. This system of sovereign territorial states with permanently changing alliances is what is called the Westphalian System, after the peace settlement at Westphalia in 1648 when the German states were internationalized and the modern principles of relations between sovereign territorial states were founded.

This result is vital to an understanding of the industrial, technological, democratic and national revolutions that have characterized Europe's development. Indubitably, the whole of Europe was neither modernized nor industrialized at the same time nor in the same way. Leadership came and went, different regions fell behind at different times, and earlier leaders of the race fell by the wayside. After a time, however, this very backwardness allowed a few of the losers to make a crucial leap ahead. This has been convincingly analyzed by the Russian-American economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron under the headline 'The Relative Advantage of Backwardness' (Gerschenkron, 1962).

By pointing out the variations in the process of industrialization in the most important European countries, Gerschenkron made it clear that industrial laggards, precisely because

of their backwardness, were enabled to develop substitutes for the conditions which characterized the British industrial model. With the help of governmental intervention or financial banks, they could cancel out the lack of capital accumulated by more spontaneous means (Marx's 'original accumulation'). Gerschenkron also hinted that it could be an advantage to be a late starter; in that a country was thus able to skip earlier stages of industrial development and go straight into the most advanced sector of its time. Gerschenkron thus contributed to understanding industrialization in Europe as variations on a theme, not identical processes or slavish copies. It was the differences that were the secret of the dynamics of European society. The industrial revolution was not planned by a political and administrative centre, as the case would have been had the same thing happened in China. Had that been the case it would have been evolution, not revolution; and Europe would not then have been 'European'.

In itself there is no reason to assume that a system of competing states should be a necessary prerequisite for permanent growth. Theoretically one would sooner think that an empire would be able to shape growth on a scale surpassing that of an incoherent system of independent states. Apparently this argument was convincing to the many disciples of centralized planning in the 1960s and 70s, in the Soviet Union as well as elsewhere. But the command economies broke down in the 1980s and discredited the principle of centralized control. And so we have repressed the original and still relevant arguments against the price of cohabitation between many completely sovereign and egoistic states.

The cost of this type of system is that it presupposes a balance of power in order to survive. And the balance must in the final instance rest on mutually recognized relative military strength. Investments in new military hardware are therefore being made at a breakneck pace. That is the logic of balance of power, and wishful thinking will not change it. The years from 1500 to 1700 were the most warlike ever in Europe with regard to the percentage of years with open conflict (95%), the frequency of war (one nearly every third year), and the average length, extent and intensity of conflicts. Spain and France were hardly ever at peace during the 16th century, and in the 17th century the Austrian Habsburgs and Sweden were at war on average for two out of every three years, Spain for three out of every five, Poland and Russia for four out of five, and the Ottoman Empire practically speaking constantly. Contrary to the usual assumptions, the weapons race turned out to be an economic advantage – if not for the population as such, at least for the states involved. The so-called 'new military history research' of the 1960s and 1970s has succeeded in demonstrating how the serious administrative and logistical problems posed by the need to build fortresses and warships and recruit and equip soldiers on a hitherto unknown scale caused a revolution in the form of government, from which the modern state was born in the 18th century. The so-called 'military revolution' is viewed today as the definitive explanation of the development of the work-discipline, management and technological discoveries that made possible the Industrial Revolution of 1780.

In contrast with decentralization within a system of states, an empire is able to control the economy centrally. It cannot be said a priori which system is best. Europe's example shows, however, that seen over a period of time centralization seems to be less effective.

Empires normally become unstable in the long run, regardless of how stable they may seem when seen in a shorter perspective.

Plans for a United Europe

For a century and a half after the appearance of the modern international system at the Peace of Westphalia, conflicts in the European world were first and foremost conflicts between monarchical territorial states, constantly attempting to expand their bureaucracies, their armies, their mercantile economic strength and, most important of all, their territories. Gradually, most of these territorial states would change character and become nation-states. As one US historian, R. R. Palmer, has put it: 'in 1793 the wars of the kings were over, while the wars of the peoples began' (Palmer 1959-64). This pattern continued until the close of World War I, when conflict between nations gave way to conflict between ideologies within countries and between countries – first between Communism, Fascism/Nazism and Liberal Democracy, then between Communism on one side and Liberal or Social Democracy on the other. During the Cold War the conflict manifested itself in the battle between two superpowers, which were not nation-states in the classical, European meaning of the word, but which instead defined their identities in ideological terms. At the close of the Cold War, international politics finally moved out of an epoch dominated by the West and into a genuinely global one. At the same time this global situation makes it more than ever necessary to rethink the current European cooperative project under other premises than the narrowly national (and nationalist) ones which normally mark the debate in almost all member-states.

So an objective historical-sociological analysis of development in Europe makes it clear that revolutionary growth was freed on the strength of the divided state system. A good idea could always flee and seek a new protector in another country. That is the background for the French Calvinists and the Huguenots in Berlin. The dynamics of Europe can thus to a great degree be traced back to competition between states. But that does not mean that the system was without its costs. On the contrary, it was exceedingly bloody and ruthless towards its citizens, not to mention the surrounding territories it conquered. For that reason we can find suggestions for European cooperation made by well-meaning philosophers practically from the beginnings of sovereign states in High Medieval times. Around the year 1300, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) put forth a plan for a political order, a 'universal monarchy' in a united Europe, in the treatise *De Monarchia*. In Dante's system the Pope was given the role of God's representative on Earth – thus far, but no further – in contrast to Bonifacius VIII, who at the time was actively participating in the political power game in order to establish the supremacy of the Pope over emperors and kings. Dante's system left no room for sovereign lilliput states ruled by princes, such as Florence, from which he had been driven into exile in 1302. For him, a universal monarchy, bringing together the individual states while preserving their individual characteristics, was a crucial condition for continued peace.

Dante's plan was soon contradicted by Pierre Dubois (approx. 1250-1320), the Law Officer of the Crown to King Philip IV of France ('Philip the Fair'), in a treatise with a much longer title, *De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae* (On the Recapture of the Holy Land), from 1306. Dubois pictured instead a league of nations led by a council of sovereign

princes and regulated by a court of arbitration. None of the suggestions were carried out. Instead Europe had bloody religious wars and uncertain balances of power with shifting alliances all the way to and including the 20th century's suicidal civil and fratricidal wars. But we can thus see as early as c.1300 the two mainstreams that have marked thoughts of European unity ever since. One pictures a centralized government, while the other wants to shape a kind of league of nations, a federation – not meaning a centralized union but on the contrary describing a clear distribution of competence between various levels of power; in other words, subsidiarity.

Neither Pierre Dubois nor Dante Alighieri used the word Europe in their plans. Europe as a secularized designation was first used by Pope Pius II in 1458, when he called to battle against the Muslim Osmons, who in 1453 had captured Constantinople. A minimum requirement for a successful fight against the effective and modern Turkish army was for the rivalry between states to cease, at least for a time. Utopian ideas like this, of an armistice in the internal warring, were put forth regularly for the next few hundred years by well-meaning humanists. But the hope stranded on geopolitical realities every time. Instead of keeping the peace among themselves, the weaker states typically allied themselves with the Turkish enemy. This was first and foremost the case, as earlier mentioned, for France.

Nevertheless it was a French statesman, the Duke of Sully (1559-1641), who in 1638 put forth an outline for a Christian, European league of nations, 'La République très chrétienne'. Fifteen states were to be a part of it – six classical territorial states: Spain, England, France, Lombardy, Denmark and Sweden; five states with elected sovereigns: the Holy Roman Empire (the imperial realm, which had now sunk to the level of other states), the Vatican, Bohemia, Hungary and Poland; and four republics: Venice, the Italian Confederation, the Helvetic Confederacy and the United Netherlands. Many traits of the political discussions of the time between European countries can be explained by this list. The idea had no possible chance of being realized, but the list shows which of the countries of the time that carry with them the legitimacy of history. This applies first and foremost to the six monarchies, of which five exist today as sovereign nation-states, as well as to three of the states with elected sovereigns. Important groups in Lombardy would like to see their country independent of Rome once again. Poland, thanks to the murders and shifting borders of Hitler and Stalin, has for the first time become an ethnically homogeneous state. Because Hungary has lost her wars at least a third of the Magyar speakers are outside her borders, but the population seems, on the whole, to have accepted the situation. Bohemia and Moravia have shaken off Slovakia and thus fulfil all the requirements for becoming a prosperous democracy again. Sweden and Denmark were certainly multi-nation states in the 1600s, but the names have been inherited by today's small, homogeneous nation-states. This heritage and the collective memory of having always been there and thus having the right to unlimited sovereignty explain much of the political mind-set in the small Scandinavian countries. This is the background for the countries' thinking of themselves as legitimate Great Powers who just happen to be fairly small in the physical sense, but who, on the other hand, hold their own as moral powers to be reckoned with.

Sully suggested that a council of 60 members should lead this league with, among other things, the task of establishing an international European law. Sully also suggested that six regional councils be formed whose decisions could be appealed to the Council (of nations) by individual countries. He further suggested the formation of a standing army to maintain internal order in the Christian republic. This would therefore be able to intervene in the states but was also to protect citizens against the whims of rulers. Its task with regard to foreign policy was to expel the Turks from Europe.

All of this led nowhere. On the contrary, France went its own egoistic way in the Thirty Years War, undermining the Habsburg emperor, who bore the main burden of defence against the encroaching Osmons, who during this period ruled most of Hungary and Croatia and twice reached the gates of Vienna, in 1529 and again in 1683. There were, though, better prospects for success in the idea put forth in 1645 by the philosopher and pedagogue Comenius. He suggested uniting Europeans by improving the educational system under the leadership of an international academy. The free exchange of information was for him a prerequisite for European agreement. The educational efforts were later to be followed up by political cooperation inside the framework of new international constitutions. The goal was reconciliation between the quarrelsome churches and the founding of a joint 'World Consistory'.

Pessimistic Disillusion after World War II

The following centuries produced many idealistic plans for overcoming the catastrophic results of the political divisions. These divisions were, as stated, the basis for the extraordinary dynamics in all fields of life, but at the same time, were incredibly expensive, especially during the major upheavals after the French Revolution and again in the 20th century, with its two world wars which in reality were a continuation of the European civil wars. By 1945 the parties had almost succeeded in exterminating each other, with the result that the continent became dominated by the two new dynamic Great Powers, the victors, the USA and the USSR, who each administered their own inheritance from European civilization. The racist genocide of the Nazis had discredited European modernism while European scientists in exile in the USA had produced the horrific atomic bomb. True enough, they may have worked in a good cause – that of conquering the totalitarian enemies of democracy – but when confronted with the devastating power of the bomb, which could obliterate friend as well as foe, it was difficult to see its potential for peace. Today we can see that the Cold War avoided heating up by virtue of the discipline forced on the combatants by the existence of atomic weapons, but that was not easy to predict in the 1940s – and we must not forget how close the balance of terror of the Cold War was to ending in disaster.

Many intellectuals fell into total despair over Europe in this situation and wrote off the possibility any positive content. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80) expressed the desperation of a whole self-critical generation when in 1961, in the preface to Franz Fanon's anti-imperialist treatise *Les damnés de la terre* (Condemned Here on Earth), he wrote off Europe and all things European with the words: 'earlier, our continent had other pontoons: the Parthenon, Chartres, human rights, the Swastika. We now know [after the Holocaust and imperialism] what they are worth: and thus we can only be rescued from

shipwreck through our very Christian feelings of guilt. We are finished, as you see: Europe is springing leaks everywhere. What then has happened? Simply that we used to be the ones to make history, and now others are making history with us as the raw material. The balance of power has turned, decolonisation is in full swing, all our mercenaries can do is to delay its completion' (Sartre in Fanon, 1961: 23-24).

The Actually Existing Europe

This is no longer the attitude to Europe – not even among the most die-hard and unimaginative of nay-sayers. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important is – believe it or not – the economic, bureaucratic and mercenary European cooperative effort of Rome, Maastricht, Edinburgh, Schengen and Amsterdam. In its concrete form this is often difficult to relate to great thoughts and perspectives such as those of former times, but one of the ethereal plans did turn out – the Coal and Steel Union of 1952, which in 1957 became the Treaty of Rome on the establishment of a common market with six members.

The new cooperation in Europe began, in a way, in 1917, in the middle of World War I. Impressed by the threat to Allied supplies from the increased German submarine war, a little group of civil servants in London – two Britons, John Anderson and Arthur Salter, and a young Frenchman, Jean Monnet – had the idea of pooling their tonnage and putting it under 'supra-national' administration. It soon appeared that there were great dynamic possibilities in this new type of organization. If they were to attain the most effective utilization of the meagre tonnage, it was not sufficient just to administer it jointly. It was also necessary to organize joint purchase of the goods to be transported, first and foremost being goods like grain, which required many ships. The pooling of ships was therefore followed by the pooling of goods.

The whole thing worked so well that the same civil servants, when peace appeared, had the idea of using the same international organizational principles for the regeneration after the war. In the autumn of 1918 they convinced their ministers to suggest an international economic cooperative organization to the US government. But the idea was sharply rejected in Washington, on the basis of doctrinaire liberalistic opposition to any kind of governmental intervention in the economy. This rejection was probably just as fateful as the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations by the Senate. Nothing came of the idea of economic collaboration, either in the Western world or in Europe. The result was the global economic crisis, where nation states attempted to give each other the blame for the problems, thus increasing them.

All this is old hat, but the effects of the economic cooperation on politics and identity – the spill-over effect, in integration-theory jargon – are not broadly recognized. The combination of Jean Monnet and Arthur Salter appeared again in the first, sensational and abortive attempt to meld Great Britain and France into a new political entity during the catastrophic military defeat in May of 1940. The newly appointed British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, offered in June of 1940 to enter into a political, military and economic union with defeated France. The proposal was delivered by the only French general who had gone through the battles with honour, General de Gaulle. But the idea was Monnet's,

and it was, of course, rejected by the French parliament, which had fled to Bordeaux, not far from the Cognac district where the Monnet family's business was located.

After the collapse of France, Monnet was sent to the USA as a British civil servant, to take charge of purchasing for the lonely, battling country. His unique ability to put himself on a confidential footing with leading statesmen allowed Monnet to win over President Roosevelt to his plan to mobilize the USA's industrial resources – a far from obvious idea in the isolationist USA, where Roosevelt was running for the presidency for the third time and facing an isolationist – and anti-British – front stretching from the flyer Charles Lindberg to John F. Kennedy's father, Joseph (who was ambassador to London). In Monnet's memoirs we are given a penetrating description of all this, along with his informal working methods, which consisted of always thinking five steps ahead and having a short, lucid memorandum ready to solve a topical political problem while keeping the long-sighted strategic implications to himself and his closest colleagues. This so-called functionalist strategy became the trademark of European cooperation after the war and is, as a matter of fact, still behind activities such as the passing of the bill on the inner market in 1986 under Jacques Delors and even the European Monetary Union (EMU) in the Maastricht treaty of 1992. Delors is a Christian Social Democrat and Protestant and can hardly be accused of loving the free market. Even so, he took the initiative for the implementation of the free, inner market in 1986.

The explanation of this apparent paradox is that he used Monnet's tactics. When first the market was established – it was to come into force in 1992 – it would be obvious to governments and populations that there was a need for regulation. Thus the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 and the proclamation of a European Union. The theory was fine, and so was its realization, as far as that goes. It made it possible for the liberalists to proclaim that the Common Market was their project in the 1980s, and for the social democrats to do the same in the 1990s. And they were both right, each in their own time. But the risk is that the populations have been left out in the cold, so that the liberalists are opting out now, when we have arrived at the regulation stage, while the social democratic sectors of the population still have not been able to bring themselves to give up old habits. Political slogans are likely to take root, so that one ends up believing them, if they are repeated often enough. The present European crisis clearly reveals the limitations of a functionalist strategy. In the present situation, there is a need for an open, explicit political discussion with clearly defined constitutions and enthusiastic declarations of goals if we are to become Europeans. On the other hand, it must be admitted that if Monnet had not toiled as he did in the early 1950s we would hardly be where we are today. With all its unreasonable facets and shortsighted nationalism, we are carrying on a basic political and, in the best sense of the word, popular discussion with each other on the organization of Europe.

Europe as an Idea, a Process – and a Necessity

It is important to place the current discussions on institutional changes in the European Union in proper historical context. They are, on the whole, variations on a theme which has interested thinking and responsible Europeans ever since the foundation for the early nation-states was laid in the dynastic battles of the High and Late Middle Ages and the

religious wars between territorial states in Early Modern times. Nor are we likely to reach agreement on the only right arrangement, valid for all time, this time, either. Such an arrangement does not exist, because Europe is not an organization, not a thing, and definitely not a legal contract – much to the frustration of many self-opinionated, legalistically thinking Northern Europeans. On the contrary, Europe is an idea and a process which is never finished. For that same reason, cooperation will probably never result in a pure, lucid, federation, confederation or loose alliance of sovereign fatherlands. The unclear relationship between that which is common, or European, and the national and regional differences is the very soul of Europe. The secret to Europe and ‘Europeanness’ lies in the sovereignty of the state. Yet this very secret is at the same time the root of the problems in Europe, since the principle of sovereignty necessarily has to be balanced by another principle, that of cooperation, if the states – and especially their populations- are to survive. So far, the EU has primarily rescued the states from themselves and the deep legitimacy crisis they fell into during and after World War II. Under the impression of the postwar period’s impressive economic and political regeneration, we are apt to forget how deep almost all the states had sunk during the war, except for neutral Switzerland and Sweden. These countries ‘only’ suffered damage to their morals. And this was relatively easy to live with during the Cold War. Only after the revelations in the 1990’s of their profits on the savings of murdered Jews and profits from their dealings with the Nazi war machine Switzerland and Sweden have begun searching the national heart and soul. All other European countries, with the exception of Great Britain, had gone through civil wars, which, to be sure, in the later collective memories have been disguised as national wars where a united people stood shoulder to shoulder against the German and Nazi oppressors. In this way the war’s character of ideological confrontation between Nazism, Communism, and democracy was glossed over, although that confrontation left deep traces in the populations of all the occupied countries. In contrast to the propaganda both from opponents and supporters of a federal, centrally governed Europe, objective historical analyses show that European cooperation in reality rescued the nation-states, even though the air has been thick with expressions of the opposite. This has been convincingly proven by the British historian Alan Milward in his programmatically titled seminal work from 1992, *The European Rescue of the Nation State*.

It can be difficult for ordinary voters, who can only study the words of the treaties word for word, feeling frustration over the distance between the introductory paragraphs’ all-too-fine words and the all-too-humble and detailed world of reality, to see that the rescue of the nation-state has been the real purpose of European cooperation. Maybe it is time to speak out and overstep the limits of Monnet’s functionalistic strategy. It has served us well by overpowering the national-egotistical sluggishness and the habitual thinking of the state apparatus. But it is becoming increasingly clear that we are running the risk of jeopardizing democracy and thus achieving neither the common Europe nor the Europe of the fatherlands, but only the third, all-too-well-known, unstable Europe of the balances of power. There is a common European cultural heritage, but it can easily be jeopardized if it is disseminated too poorly. And the heritage is, on account of its ambivalent character,

very poorly suited to serving as a guideline for political decisions and strategic choices. History can be misused in order to legitimize almost any definition of Europe.

Potsdam, Amsterdam and the Nation-States

A great deal happened to and for Europe in recent years, not all of it unconditionally bad. To be sure, a somewhat lack-lustre atmosphere dominates the integration-happy circles in Brussels, Paris and Rome after the great years with Delors in the late 1980s. Traditional super-Europeans criticized the two Luxemburgers in charge of the EU in the later half of 1997, Commission Chairman Jacques Santer and the former Council Chairman Claude Juncker, for lack of vision. And the British do not trust those same super-Europeans, in spite of Tony Blair's modernizing of his country's rhetoric. In reality, however, quite a number of positive things happened in 1997, from the signing of the treaty of Amsterdam to the summit meeting in Luxemburg on 12-13 December with its agreement in principle on an invitation to all the Eastern and Central European countries.

It is a good sign that the EU is now negotiating with all of former Eastern Europe and not just accepting Central Europe, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as Helmut Kohl originally intended. Negotiations on the *acquis communautaire* are now well under way with the six countries recommended by the Commission after long internal discussions: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus. The Helsinki summit in December 1999 expanded this group of applying countries with another 6 states: Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Malta. The entry of all these countries and, possibly some time in the future, Turkey into the European Union will fundamentally change the nature the cooperation to such a degree that it will be difficult to criticize EU as a rich man's club of imperialist westerners.

An invitation to negotiate is a far cry from membership, indeed very far. But that is not important seen in relation to the fact that a realistic process, binding on both sides, has now been begun. That normally in itself means a positive development in a number of areas beyond purely economic aid. At the same time there is an important symbolism in the countries which have been included in the first group of six. The most important and the weightiest are, of course, the three old central European countries of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. These countries were the ones Germany originally wanted to limit the EU to accepting, and they would have been almost impossible to reject. But by inviting three countries besides these, the EU sent an important signal, for the three other countries were: i) a post-Soviet country, Estonia; ii) a post-Yugoslavian country, Slovenia; and iii) a post-Ottoman country, Cyprus; that is, the countries were all representatives of more recent European identities and experiences.

'Europe' is not, and can never be, anything but a process, and cannot be a finished product. The treatment of Turkey, which has been associated with the European Common Market since 1963, shows only too clearly that discussion is no guarantee for acceptance. But it is difficult to imagine a complete withdrawal of the hand stretched out to Eastern and Central Europe, regardless of how many difficulties mount up. Europe and the EU are now so close to being identical that one can give up the politically correct distinction between the two designations; unless, of course, one is an opponent of any

binding cooperation in Europe as a majority of the Danish populace turned out to be with the referendum of September 28 2000.

The truth is that the EU is well on the way to closing the parentheses of the Cold War and healing the sores from the divisions of World War II. It will, of course, be a long time before all the countries are included. And even a uniting of European countries does not mean a mental union. The relationship between East and West Germany demonstrates this as clearly as anyone could wish. Even so, there is good reason to reflect a little on what the fact that Europe will actually be united inside the coming decade means to our understanding of the EU. Europe was divided by World War II at the conference of Potsdam. Already at the meeting in Yalta, the so-called 'big three' – Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin – had agreed to demand unconditional surrender from Germany so there could be no possible basis for a new German 'knife in the back' legend, like the World War I claim that the army could have won, if not for the 'cowardly' civilian surrender. The victors further agreed that Germany be divided into four zones of occupation – four because France, under General de Gaulle, was able to sneak into the group of victors, even though she had in reality not been among the belligerents. It was also agreed to call a conference in San Francisco to found a new international organization, the United Nations, to replace the failed League of Nations.

With the advantage of hindsight it is easy to see that these agreements, combined with the division of Germany into four occupied zones, laid the ground for 45 years of a Europe divided into two worlds. But it was more difficult to predict this result in 1945, when everyone expected that the Soviet Union would long be weakened by the enormous efforts of the war. What was not foreseen was the fact that while Communism is rotten at managing a sophisticated consumer society – which is why the USSR went broke in the 1980s – it is very well suited to mobilizing large amounts of manpower during intensive efforts such as the first phase of rebuilding after total war. Whatever the case, World War II resulted in the division of Europe into two armed camps, with a few neutral countries between them, to the great detriment (at any rate of the eastern part) of the continent, and with all the well-known results in the shape of repression and poverty in Eastern and Central Europe. In fact, one could say that Central Europe – Mitteleuropa, as the Germans used to say – vanished entirely in favour of a sharply defined division into Western Europe and Eastern Europe.

The division was actually cemented by a terminology in which we spoke of the 'First World', consisting of Western Europe and North America, i.e. the industrialized capitalist countries, as opposed to the 'Second World' – the industrialized communist countries. Together, these two 'modern' worlds distinguished themselves from the rest, which we in the early 1950s began to call the 'Third World'. This last group of countries tried, at least at first, to be independent of both the first and the second industrialized worlds. In 1955 they organized themselves in Bandung, which was neutral in regard to the conflict between the USA and the USSR, and which was led by India, Indonesia and Egypt. In 1961 this was followed by a meeting in Belgrade, where the circle of participants was widened and Marshall Tito established his role as the neutral leader on a par with India's Nehru, Indonesia's Sukarno and Egypt's Nasser.

All this is history today – to such a degree that it is important to remind ourselves of it in order to understand the extent of the upheavals in the 1990s. The meeting between the so-called non-aligned countries in Belgrade thus took part in the light of Soviet leader Khrushchev's proclamation that the Soviet Union would have surpassed the USA in prosperity by the end of the decade! And the world – at least the world outside the Eastern Bloc – didn't fall over laughing at the absurdity of the statement. On the contrary, newly elected President Kennedy replied with the proclamation of a race into space against the Soviets and a promise to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. This last succeeded, but the Soviet Union entered into permanent stagnation under Leonid Brezhnev, which in its turn triggered Mikhail Gorbachev's desperate reforms and their consequence, the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

If we are really to understand the integration process in Western Europe, it must be seen in the light of the World War II division of Europe into East and West. There were, of course, many different, and at times contradictory, goals for the shaping of an institutionalized cooperation between European states. One of the most important was to eliminate the possibility of war between France and Germany by tying these two countries' iron and coal centres together, along with those of neighbouring Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands. That was the background for the Coal and Steel Union, approved in 1950 and put in effect from 1952. But it was at the same time the middle of the Cold War, which was heating up in Korea. The Soviet Union had confirmed their military and ideological domination of Eastern Europe in the late 1940s, stamping out all signs of independence. It would thus have demanded a willingness to wage war to integrate these countries with Western Europe; but that does not mean that there was no desire to do so.

In analyzing European integration we must remember that leading circles have always sincerely hoped to unite the whole of Europe in one supranational organization. The aim was, and is, to prevent future wars on this continent, whose entire history has been marked by scientific discoveries, the free play of imagination and creativity, material progress – and war. It is not entirely coincidental that the Treaty of Rome was signed in Rome, after meetings in Messina, thus including a Southern European country. Italy had the same intention as Germany, namely to rejoin the right democratic club after the mistakes of fascism. But that doesn't change the fact that the country actually was allowed in despite a weak industrial basis in the 1950s. In 1957 it was impossible to foresee that Italy would become the fifth largest industrial power in the world inside a few short years.

It cannot, therefore, be denied, that the fathers of the Treaty of Rome actually meant what they wrote in the preamble to the treaty – that the intention was to shape 'an increasingly closer union between European countries'. And that, as stated in §237, 'any European state can seek membership'. Sceptical Lutheran Scandinavians have a tendency to interpret this as, at best, an attempt to reinstate the universal power of the popes of the Middle Ages – 'the Roman Union'. But that doesn't actually correspond with practice since the 1950s, despite the introduction of the slightly unsavoury and difficult expression 'subsidiarity' in the Maastricht Treaty.

The European Economic Community actually took quite a big step towards uniting separate historical experiences when it accepted Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland as members in 1972. Certainly no one in Denmark has ever seriously imagined that there could be any reason to keep a small, rich country like Denmark out, but, as a matter of fact, there could well be. The Danish self-righteous, know-it-all, puritan attitude to many subjects must appear immensely incomprehensible to more pragmatic Europeans with a Catholic background. This European obligation became even more marked with the admission of Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986 following the fall of the dictatorships. This has not been without its complications. In particular, the admission of Greece, with its drawn-out national populist (not to mention the tainted expression 'national socialist') rule, often made many people wish the country was out again. But Greece is in; it has become richer and more developed and has now, finally, under Kostas Simitis and George Papandreou, begun behaving as a stabilizing factor in the region. Thus, even Greece must be seen as a success story. At any rate infinitely more of a success than neutralist Yugoslavia.

The admission of Greece in particular, is symbolically important for another reason than the Southern European dimension, even though the country has fully lived up to its role as the egoistic protector of non-existent olive trees and other subsidy-provoking forms of agriculture. Greece belongs to the Orthodox world and thus belongs on the other side of the civilization curtain that Samuel Huntington and other strategists have attempted to draw between Eastern and Western Europe in the 1990s. The Greeks do not speak a Slavic language, but their tradition of thought is the same Byzantine-Orthodox tradition as that in so many other countries in the area, including gigantic Russia. The EEC presumably overlooked that fact in 1981 when Greece was admitted, probably carried away by an infatuation with Athens as the cradle of democracy and a romantic dream of the ancient world systematically fed by the teaching of Greek History in school. To be sure, today's 'Greek' coffee and 'Greek' music, which are hardly distinguishable from the same phenomena in Turkey, have at no point been introduced into the course of studies. Nevertheless, Greece was included as a European democracy, and is now gradually becoming one.

Based on this lengthy historical experience, it is therefore not impossible that some European politicians mean at least part of what they say with regard to including the whole of Europe in the EU in the long term. Fundamentalist Danish Lutherans, of course, do not necessarily believe this and so join the Swedes in pushing for maximum demands. That may possibly be good, and perhaps even wise. Political decisions always consist of compromises between various positions in the landscape, and it can therefore sometimes be wise to take extreme positions, on condition that one can give way and finally accept a compromise, with the promise of reconsideration at a later date. The problem is that it is not easy to represent such tactics as a victory when faced with a sceptical, doubting, democratic domestic populace. Especially a populace which thinks that every ideal consideration is to be found in its own backyard.

There is, of course, a long road ahead of the EU and the applying countries, regardless of whether the latter were included in the first rounds of talks or not. And the process will differ from Cyprus and Malta to Estonia and Bulgaria. But experience with previous

extensions has given reason to hope that the division of Europe can be annulled without being replaced by other divisions than those which already existed before World War II. In the years between the wars, Czechoslovakia was one of the richest countries in Europe, with a higher GNP per person than Denmark, for example. This wealth was the result of the country's past as the industrial centre of multinational Austria-Hungary until 1914. The country has since become poorer, compared to other European countries, and the communist regime (which the Czechs elected in relatively free elections) and the later Soviet coup of 1948 can, to a certain degree, be blamed. But only to a certain degree. Regardless of how development took place, with or without communism, the Czech Republic, as an old industrial country, would today face the same difficulties as the old industrial areas in French-speaking Belgium and northeastern France, and before them industrial areas in Britain.

Countries and regions change position in relation to one another, and not much is constant in that process (as Marx so prophetically wrote in the Manifesto of the Communist Party 150 years ago). Recent years have been good years for a vision of Europe that sees Europe as a binding cooperation between nation-states. That will hardly prevent critics from talking about a new 'silver curtain' between rich and poor Europeans, and chaste, nationalistic arguments on the need to retain borders in order to keep out 'foreigners' will gain ground. More disappointed are the super-Europeans, who want nation-states to die out. They are right to criticize the centralism and intolerance to other identities of the nation-states, but have not yet been able to shape a convincing alternative anchor place for identity and democracy.

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