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The Heritage of the Cold War
Has Gone, and yet Two Concepts
of Europe Remain

*To Jacek Purchla and his next 15 years
at the International Cultural Centre, Krakow*

Geographically, Europe covers 2.060861% of the earth's surface. Since its enlargement in 2004, the European Union now covers 0.780635%.¹ Such figures help to relativize a purely European concept of cultural heritage, but they do nothing to point up the effects of several European cultural bequests on the world political scene. The heritage of Left and Right, for example, can be regarded as one of Europe's central cultural legacies to the world. But it has never been a simple heritage, not even in post-war Europe.

Virtually nobody in Central and Eastern Europe, and hardly anyone in the Western Europe of today, remembers that right after World War II ended, the masses in Western Europe pined for socialism and longed to vanquish nationalism. Their political classes had to work hard to re-establish nation states and to convince their people that liberal democracy would be a better option than abolishing state borders and creating a common Europe under socialist auspices.

In Italy in 1946 the "scala mobile" was introduced, an automatism between inflation and wage adjustment of clear socialist origin, promising panem to the plebs. In the late 1950s the Americans were still hard-pressed to keep Italy's Christian Democrats on top in government rather than risking the famous "Euro-communism" of the PCI (which won 28.6% of the 1946 votes).² In France, hardline Stalinists dominated the Communist Party, which in 1946 polled the highest percentage of votes for parliament (28.8%). The party could count

¹ Calculation by M. Vogt for the purpose of this article (ed. note).

² Regine Igel, *Andreotti. Politik zwischen Geheimdienst und Mafia*, Herbig Verlag, München 1997, points to illegal action taken to this end.

on such artists and intellectuals as Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, Yves Montand, Pablo Picasso and Jean-Paul Sartre, and played an important role in many governments. The 1950 minimum wage regulation SMIG (today: SMIC)³ is a typical fruit of this situation. In the Western allied zones of Germany it was the experience of Soviet behaviour in East Germany that turned the majority of West Germans anti-communist within a year or so. On 12 November 1945, no fewer than 35% of West Germans preferred communism when the American Forces asked them in a survey: "If you had a choice between communism [35%] and National Socialism [24%], which would you prefer?" (these figures fell to 8% and 9% respectively one year later, in the 25 November 1946 survey).⁴ The leading German companies subsequently underwent purely socialist collectivization, since by law all stock corporations had to appoint a board made up half of owners and half of workforce representatives. Generally speaking, the turn away from socialist or even communist parties towards social democratic or Christian democratic ones tolerant of capitalism took quite some years.

The Cold War helped enormously to regroup the Western half of Europe as part of the Western hemisphere – commonly construed as on the right and Right side of the world. The Soviet usurpation of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary in 1948 remained uncontradicted by the West, because since the Potsdam conference 1945 these peoples had been considered part of the Soviet sphere of influence – in other words on the evil and Left side of the world. The Berlin crisis, conversely, provoked American action, as did the Korea crisis of 1950, which ended US demobilization and in fact signaled the beginning of the Cold War period. The latter was brought to an end only in 1989 by the Polish *Solidarność* and the Polish pope, which were helped by the Helsinki process in 1975 and afterwards, and by the Council of Europe's legal system. Now Europe *in toto* – the Orthodox heritage region apart – seems to be on the Right.

On a symbolic scale, the cultural confusion henceforward reigning throughout Europe can be easily demonstrated by asking: "When is Europe Day?" The armistice formally ending World War II was signed by the German army at Reims on 7 May 1945, legally putting an end to all military action. Remembering the ill fate of the World War I armi-

³ SMIG – le salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti, SMIC – le salaire minimum de croissance (ed. note).

⁴ E. K. Scheuch: "Zeitenwende", *BISS public, Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus dem Brandenburg-Berliner Institut für Sozialwissenschaftliche Studien* Heft 6, 2. Jg. 1992, p. 71.

stice, which during the 1920s had been declared a “stab in the back”, thus helping Hitler to votes and to power, the Allies decided to re-stage the procedure the following day in Berlin Karlshorst in the very geographical heart of the enemy. Alas, since the fax machine had not yet been invented, the cable to Moscow translating and retranslating Stalin’s annotations took more hours than foreseen, and only in the early morning of 9 May were the signatures set under the armistice protocol. Since that day, every 9 May Soviet and, nowadays, Russian troops have marched across Red Square in Moscow to commemorate the Great Patriotic War. And with them, their Central and Eastern satellites commemorated on 9 May the “Hitler kaput”. Only recently did Berlin historians discover in the archives that since American and British officers had pre-prepared their press statements and had already printed 8 May on them as the date, they decided to maintain this date (objectively incorrect in Berlin but right for the Washington time zone). Thus, for more than sixty years West Europeans have commemorated this event on the wrong day, symbolically dividing Europe into two halves. Or, to be exact, into three parts: the Netherlands commemorate the end of World War II on 5 May, on the basis of a wholly invented story of an armistice that never happened but that gained such positive renown that its Canadian inventor some years later became chief of the Canadian army. Within the draft of the Constitutional Treaty, the European Union declares 9 May as the new Europe Day, officially because the Schuman plan was published on 9 May 1950. If subjected to political scrutiny, however, this date would make the entire European process into a commemoration of the World War II armistice. When Europe Day was invented by the Council of Europe, it chose 5 May. Officially, because the London signature meeting had taken place on 5 May 1949. Politically, because on 5 May 1821 Napoleon died and because on 5 May 1813 Karl Marx was born – so Left and Right and Right and Left can each mourn for their respective idol of Europeanization.

When analyzing the fate of Left and Right in today’s Europe, we can observe a cultural turn. It is no longer Bismarck stealing the socialists’ political thunder by founding social insurance systems. It is two concepts which are now in contest for the European soul. One is typified by the European Union, the other by the Council of Europe.

To characterize the European Union, one might quote St Augustine. In his *Confessions* he coined the phrase “e pluribus unum”.⁵ This

⁵ Augustinus: Confessiones 4,13.

was originally part of a longer description of the effects of friendship, which at the end of a wonderful evening draws us into a kind of consentient entity. In 1776, the quotation was proposed by Pierre Eugene du Simitière for the US Great Seal, where it was to adorn the escutcheon showing the emblems of the then 13 states, with the six main countries of origin in the centre. The escutcheon was omitted when Charles Thomson created the final design of the Great Seal in 1782, but the quotation remained. Since that time, the United States have been understood both by their own citizens and abroad as a melting pot where different ingredients form one unity.

A possible symbol for the European Union might be the europallet, which measures 80 × 120 cm and facilitates the transport of goods to every corner of Europe. No citizen of the European Union can avoid encountering the europallet day in, day out, at the supermarket, at railway stations or airports, or when trucks are unloading – wherever goods are handled. The europallet makes it possible for Bavarian milk to be transformed into yoghurt in Italy, then enriched with strawberries in the Netherlands and transported for consumption to Poland; all this for a trifling few cents. This is what the ministers intended when at the Messina conference on 3 June 1955 – possibly the most important of all the European conferences – they wrote: European integration must start with economic integration.⁶ The European freedoms of information, of movement and of trade are pleasing to European citizens. But they have their price. This price is uniformity. The *acquis communautaire* had 83,000 published pages in each language already in 2003.⁷ Since that time, the number of official languages has increased from eleven to twenty. The true price is not that of translation. The *acquis communautaire* has the effect that each judge has to have the European context in his mind, i.e. to reflect on possible implications of European ordinances.⁸ The point is that it is not a general perception of justice and injustice, of good and evil, that has learned and to be executed – not a culturally defined notion but a concrete regulation.

The work of the Council of Europe is based on fundamental cultural definitions instead of on concrete regulations. Originally founded

⁶ Compare, for example: G. Brunn, *Die Europäische Einigung*, Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart 2002, p. 106.

⁷ Foreword by David O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Management Committee, in: Annual management report, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg 2003, p. 5.

⁸ F. Ranieri (ed.), *Die Europäisierung der Rechtswissenschaft*, Nomos, Baden-Baden 2002.

more to avoid a common Europe and to enable the nation-states to enact their individual power, it has created a number of conventions which, in the 1980s, showed themselves to be more powerful than the tanks and rockets of the Cold War warriors. Once they have stepped inside, it is difficult for its 47 member states to step outside again, as the case of Russia shows these days. A country which has never in its history had a true legal system (based on European understanding of such a system)⁹ now has to admit that its own citizens can complain against the state at the Strasbourg court; and indeed, roughly half of all complaints now come from Russian citizens. Nobody believes that Russia will within the next generation become part of that family of European regions where a transparent juridical system embeds a true democracy, but who can tell? a start has been made, and such starts are rarely reversible.

The Council of Europe and the European Union are in a strange rivalry. The European symbols were all invented by the Council of Europe: the flag with the twelve stars deriving from the statues of the Virgin Mary; the anthem (badly composed by Karajan); Europe Day on 5 May (soon to be shifted to 9 May by the European Union, without any cultural understanding of policy). But curiously enough, it is now the European Union which has taken notice of the fact that a majority of its citizens are rather discontented with its unification ambitions and are seeking "A soul for Europe". When young people were asked which slogan they might envisage for the kind of Europe they are longing for, a possible motto arose: "In varietate Concordia", which, when translated into Greek, reads beautifully as *Ενότητα στην πολυμορφία* – polymorph our forms, together by our hearts.¹⁰ (Compare this to the official English translation "United in diversity"). Despite the fact that it was the Brussels-based European Union (and not the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe) that selected the motto on 4 May 2000, this is exactly what the Brussels unification strategy can never achieve. It is the Strasbourg strategy which might be able to fulfil what is a cultural task and not an economic one. Goods we may buy at cheap prices, but friendship we cannot buy because it is not on any price scale and not available for purchase. Indeed, the entire econ-

⁹ Understood as derived and based on one of the following: Roman Law living to this date in the Roman Catholic Law, Positive Law – a developed form of the first one, and Single Case Law of the Anglo-Saxon countries, completely different from the Continental Positive Law.

¹⁰ Actually there are three different translations into Greek: «Ενωμένη στην πολυμορφία / Ενότητα στην πολυμορφία / Διαφορετικοί αλλά ενωμένοι».

omy is based on cultural values: Jan Sokol noted that money is nothing but trust – *non aes sed fides*.¹¹

Jean-Claude Juncker proposed in April 2006 that the European Union become a member of the Council of Europe.¹² This is a somewhat revolutionary idea that would enable the two concepts of Europe to develop henceforth in parallel. But Juncker encountered little enthusiasm for his idea; the Swiss media reported on it more fervently than either the German or the French papers.

So the Unification party and the Polymorphia party will continue their battle. The former – the heir of what was formerly called “rightist” – has many economic arguments at hand plus one per cent of the gross national product of the EU member states. The latter – the heir of what was formerly called “leftist” – has barely two cents to rub together, but it has the hearts of the “Nee-derlande” (as the Dutch called their country after the constitutional referendum), the *concordia* of all those European citizens discontented with unification.

When looking for Opportunities and Challenges for Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century, one might first of all look for Opportunities and Challenges by Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century. It is the non-identity of each old house or monument or church or palace or square or entire city which best defeats the Unifiers and their europallets. A Krakow church and a Florence one may both be Baroque and dedicated to the same rite, but their place in their respective towns is as different as they reveal themselves to be to whosoever takes more than a cursory glance at their beauty. “Europe is difference” is a lesson derived from some thousand years of building, and a message emanating from each house of a certain age.

When looking around with a perspective somewhat wider than Europe, we can discover that the same lesson is true for other regions

¹¹ J. Sokol. “The Market as a Place of Rules”, in: M. T. Vogt, J. Sokol, E. Tomiczek (eds.): *Kulturen in Begegnung*, Collegium PONTES Görlitz-Zgorzelec-Zhófelec 2003, Breslau 2005, pp. 239–246.

¹² Europarat – Europäische Union „Eine einheitliche Zielstellung für den europäischen Kontinent“. Bericht von Herrn Jean-Claude Juncker, Premierminister des Großherzogtums Luxemburg an die Staats- und Regierungschefs der Mitgliedsstaaten des Europarats – Deutsche Übersetzung 11.04.2006.

<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Europa/Europarat/Junckerbericht.pdf>. See also Neue Zürcher Zeitung 12-04-2006: “Der Europarat wird unsere Generation weit überdauern”. Jean-Claude Juncker au sujet du rapport sur les relations entre le Conseil de l’Europe et l’Union européenne.

http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle_presse/Interviews/2006/04avril/20060412juncker_nzz/index.html.

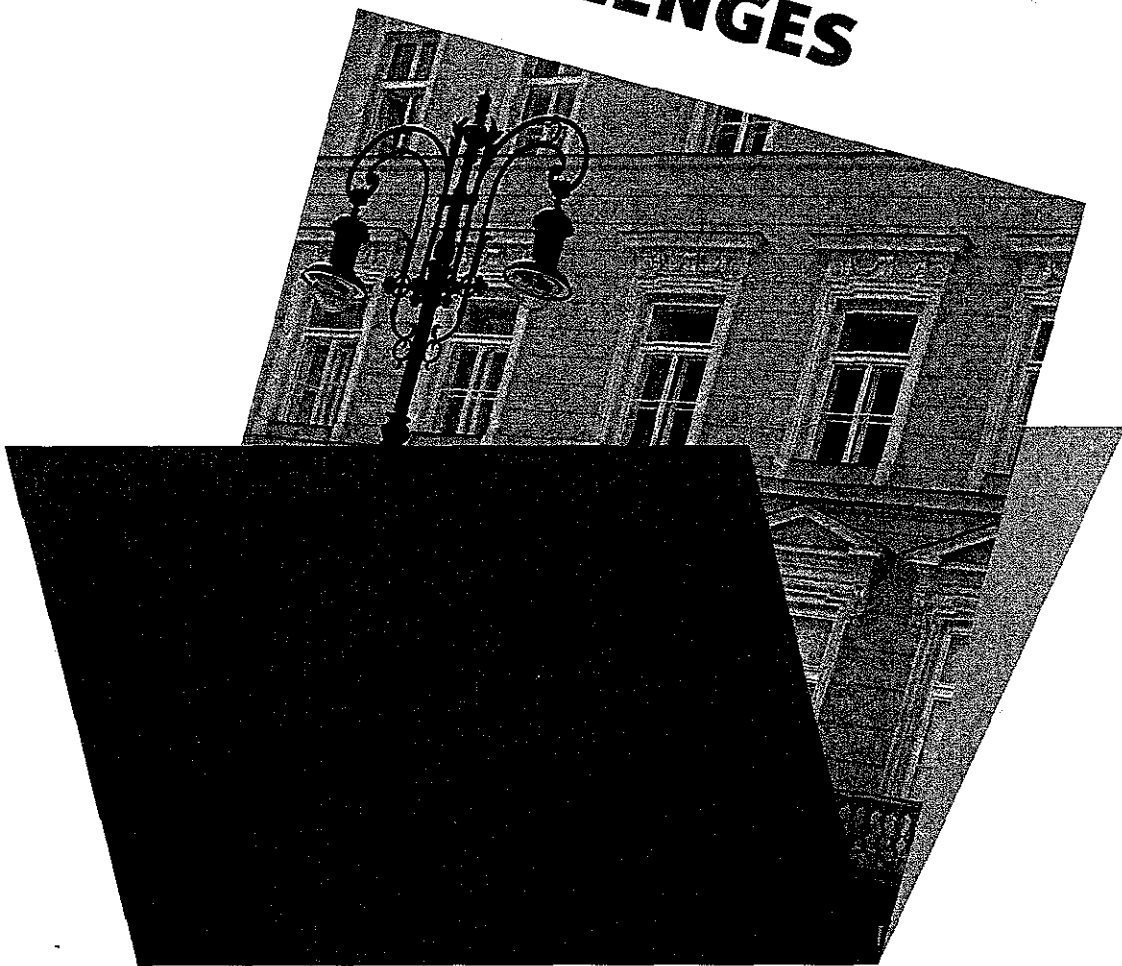
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of our globe, too. "The world is different" is all but self-evident in the era of globalization (which, by the way, has lasted 500 years at least). But the cultural turn from what was Right and Left to what is now the battle between "E pluribus unum" and "In varietate concordia", may in the 21st century become a European cultural bequest to the world political scene. But it will never be a simple heritage, not even in asymmetrical times.¹³

¹³ M. van Creveld, *Transformation of war*, The Free Press, New York 1991.

**CULTURAL
HERITAGE
IN THE 21ST CENTURY
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AND CHALLENGES**



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