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EUROPE IN THE NINETIES

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

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What culture ? What society ? What Europe ?

"When I hear the word culture I reach for my gun", Goering (or was it Goebbels ?) is supposed to have said. Should one reverse the formula and state : "When I hear the guns, I reach for my culture ?". Or, on the contrary : "When the guns have fallen silent, I reach for my culture ?". The answer is less obvious than it would seem. The hostility of nazism indicates, a contrario, an affinity between culture, on the one hand, peace and democracy on the other. Yet nazism was itself a cultural phenomenon in the broad sense (one of the best books on its origins was entitled : The politics of cultural despair) and has produced its own form of culture in the narrow sense. Culture can be warlike as well as peaceful, particularistic as well as universalistic, aristocratic as well as popular. Indeed the struggle between these opposing tendencies may well define both the current European situation and the theme of this essay.

The same ambiguity could be noted concerning the other term of our title, that of society. The European revolutions of 1989 can be called cultural revolutions in the deepest sense : on the one hand they were led by intellectuals, on the other hand, they express a general rejection of communist legitimacy and a general aspiration to rejoin the mainstream of European culture. But the most widespread notion to emerge out of them is that of civil society, of its rebirth and of its affirmation against totalitarianism and its ruling elite, the nomenklatura. Yet after victory, questions abound about the content and orientation both of cultural identity and of civil society. Communist totalitarianism acted as a negative, unifying force. Its demise brings forth conflicts between levels and orientations, between social strata and between cultural traditions. Domestically, the bipolar opposition between "us" and "them" or between "civil society" and "the system" is replaced by more complex and contradictory oppositions between town and country, secular intellectuals and the church, young activists and old conservatives, new rich and new poor etc. Internationally the bipolar opposition between East and West is replaced both by the homogenizing influence of modern technological and consumer society and by the differentiating search for identity through the rediscovery of real and mythical, ethnic, national and religious roots. The interplay between these various factors which are present everywhere but in different proportions may create new divisions or revive old ones within Europe between East and West, between North and South.

Europe in the nineties, then, will be neither the partitioned Europe of the cold war, nor the united Europe of an integrated community extended to the continent or a reunified Europe on the model of a reunified Germany. It will be a differentiated Europe whose formerly separated parts will be much more exposed to mutual influence but, also, much more exposed to the temptation of mutual rejection and self-closure. As the military and the ideological confrontation tend to vanish, economic, social and cultural differences will follow contradictory trends. They may in some respects be blurred or reduced by comparison with the time of the cold war, but they will be more salient, more sensitive, and hence more resented, particularly by comparison with the hopes awaken by the crumbling of the Wall. Indeed, new wales and new curtains, as well as new gaps may emerge as a reaction to the shock of openness and contact, whether it be the impact of consumption models from the West or immigration waves from the East. But these new divisions, while partly coïnciding geographically with the old ones, will transcend the old borders. They will be (or, rather they already are) felt within the West and within the East and, indeed, within European countries themselves.

The key to these divisions is the interplay between the political, the economic and the socio-cultural dimensions. Ralf Dahrendorf has illustrated both the crucial and the paradoxical character of the latter by stating that, for the revolutions in Eastern Europe to lead to open societies on the Western model three things were needed : a constitutional state, the market,

and civil society, but that while a democratic constitution could be set up in six months, six years were needed for the market to operate effectively, and sixty years for the emergence of a real civil society. The "catch twenty-two" character of the situation is that democracy and the market both cannot function without civil society and cannot wait for the decades necessary for its emergence which, in turn, could be jeopardized by their failure.

The question is whether this dialectic leads to a vicious circle such as has often been observed in Latin America or in inter-war Eastern Europe, with Western-type political and economic institutions being introduced but failing to take roots because of contrary social and cultural attitudes which, in turn, give rise to anti-Western political and economic movements, or to a virtuous one, where education to democratic and capitalist ethics can build upon pre-existing elements of civil society and of national culture and lead towards an original synthesis.

In a sense, society is present wherever several individuals relate to each other or, at least, wherever these relations have a private or autonomous character which escapes the control of the state. But what is the relation between, on the one hand, this broad sense of society and, on the other, civil society, in the sense of the self-assertion of the people against a totalitarian system, or in the more difficult or demanding sense of a civic culture, i.e. of a set of norms and attitudes governing the relations of people with each other and with common institutions, involving the art of tolerance and honesty in economic and political behaviour, of voluntary association and

peaceful competition, of respect for diversity and of a sense for the preservation of unity ?

To say that the chances for civil society are heavily influenced by the political culture of a given country is both true and frustrating, since it leads us from one complex and ambiguous notion to another. When we speak of culture we cannot simply adopt the broad, anthropological definition which includes all the attitudes, values and customs of a society. Nor can we remain within the bonds of the narrow, classical definition in the sense of Bildung, concerning the cultivation of the mind, i.e. education and the symbolic dimensions of human existence, such as art and science, religion and philosophy. What we are after is the intermediate level, concerning attitudes towards politics and, more generally, towards the art of living together within and between communities. But, particularly to-day, this intermediate level is, precisely, the ever-moving result of the tension between the other two.

The tension can be seen at at least three levels.

The first one is that of the types of culture. Never before has culture, even in the narrow sense, been so torn between conflicting forces and trends. The most obvious and widespread division is, of course, between "high culture" and popular culture. This has been given a new dimension by the spread of literacy and, above all, by the explosive progress of science and technology. Within "high culture" itself, it has led to an increasing gap between what C.P. Snow has called "the two cultures", the scientific and the literary one, or, more broadly, the technological and the humanistic one. But perhaps the most

far-reaching consequence has been the transformation and the division of popular culture itself, under the impact of the mass media. The new communications technology tends to produce a mass culture which is naturally cosmopolitan, as it reflects the influence of the more powerful societies, particularly the United States, and of the simplest and most direct values, such as consumption or sex, whereas the traditional folk culture transmitted from one generation to another tends to be predominantly particularistic even if it follows universal patterns. Of course the former is gaining over the latter. But this produces powerful culture shocks (of which the experience of East Germany through its contact with West German society first through television than through direct contact is the most vivid example). Even within the modern culture of the mass media, which, on balance, has a socially and internationally homogenizing effect, there are tensions and splits between the rock culture of the young (with its polarities of brotherhood and violence), and the consumer or social-climber culture conveyed by the televized games and the soap operas.

Hence the second, more indirect, division, the socio-political one between the intelligentsia and the masses. This is well-known for countries in transition towards modernity, whether 19th century's Russia or 20th century Third World. But it takes both an even more acute and a more complex character in former communist countries, where (unlike both traditional and Western societies) intellectuals have been both the greatest favorites and the leading (sometimes the only active) opponents of the regimes. This distinction between the intelligentsia and the

masses is often combined with related but not quite equivalent ones, between the young and the old, and between towns and countryside. The latter is particularly in evidence in Bulgaria, (where the opposition holds the cities and the communists rulers the countryside), in Hungary (where the traditional opposition between "urbanizers" and "populists" revives under the form of the predominance of the intellectual-based and universalistically oriented Alliance of Free Democrats and of the Young Students Movement Fidesz, in Budapest, whereas the more conservative and national Democratic Forum and Small Landowners'party are stronger in the rest of the country), and even in Russia, where the municipalities of big cities like Moscow and Leningrad have been conquered by reform-minded, Westernizing, intellectuals.

It is most acute where the absence of a civil society has not permitted so far an articulation of either political programmes or economic interests. This is the case of Rumania, where the divorce between the universalistic culture of the intellectuals and of many of the young, and the nationalist culture of the majority (particularly older generations, workers and peasants, but also many city-dwellers, very often of recent peasant origin, as shown during the violences of the miners in Bucharest in June 1990) is most radical. Yet even there the situation is more complex with some cities, like Timisoara, being more open to cosmopolitan influences while some intellectuals rediscover the nationalistic (sometimes bordering on the mystical or the chauvinistic) accents and themes of the Ceaucescu or of the Iron Guard past.

This brings us to the third division which is most relevant to this paper, the regional one. Is culture a factor of European unity or of national and regional divisions ? Between the traditional village and McLuhan's "global village", are there any stable intermediary units in the realm of modern culture ? Is the German journalist R.W. Leonhart right when he writes (in die Zeit, October 12, 1990) that "from Ulster to Georgia the only Heimat is the region" ?. Or is it the nation ? Or is it Europe ? Or are they all carried away by the common trends of modern society ?

The question is that of the respective weight, in each particular case, of three major influences : the one we just mentioned, that of modern technological and consumer society, the legacy of communist rule (with its bureaucratic and authoritarian attitudes which outlast their institutional bases) and specific, cultural traditions. Within the latter, the further question is whether the former partition of Europe along East-West lines coincides with a socio-cultural division as well as with a military and ideological one.

In other words are Eastern and Western Europe defined not only by the presence of Soviet and American troops in 1945, determining the nature of their political regimes, but also by different socio-cultural structures and traditions ? Or are the latter distributed along different lines which are re-emerging to-day and re-creating the cultural geography of Europe, brutally twisted by the bipolar division ?

This, for instance, is the view of Milan Kundera, who, in a famous article, defined Central Europe as "a kidnapped part

of the West". But such a definition raises as many problems as it answers. Are Europe and the West identical ? Is Russia to be seen as not belonging to Europe ? Has East Central Europe the same socio-cultural characteristic as Western Europe ? Conversely, has the latter a cultural reality distinct from that of the United States ?

There are no objective answers to these questions which have provided the themes of innumerable polemics. One can only warn against drawing too quick and facile inferences from the political to the cultural and vice-versa. Those who see a strict correlation between family structures and political regimes (like the French historian Emmanuel Todd) run against the obvious objection that communism was brought to Eastern Europe by the Red Army, not by native evolutions or revolutions based on demographic developments. Some tend to base schemes like de Gaulle's "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" and Mitterrand's "Confederation" including Russia but excluding the United States, on the notion that American civilization is based on technological optimism and lacks the historical depth, the attachment to tradition and the experience of suffering which characterize European history and literature, including Russia's. Others can point, with greater plausibility, that, to use Heidegger's expression, "Americanism is something European", that the American revolution is born out of European religion and philosophy, whereas Russia has experienced neither the Reformation, nor the Enlightenment, nor the bourgeois revolution. More convincingly still, one could point out that cultural traditions are both ambivalent and constantly being redefined in

the light of current social developments and political choices.

This is particularly true for the two former superpowers. Their relation to Europe is clearly ambivalent and takes a different character according to phases in their respective histories. The United States is completely European by its historical roots but has been set up precisely to offer a contrast with the political and moral corruption of the old continent. Moreover, it may be becoming less European by becoming more inter-cultural and turning its interests to Latin America and Asia. Russia has, ever since Peter the Great, had a love-hate relationship with Europe. It has been torn between imitation and hostility, between feelings of cultural inferiority and messianic superiority. Its present revolution can be seen as a desperate attempt to join Europe for good. But however sincere its search for acceptance may be, it cannot wipe out, if only in the minds of East and Central Europeans, the legacy of a profoundly different past.

But is the same problem not present within Western Europe and Eastern Europe proper ? While Europe is integrating politically and economically, are not differences between an Atlantic and a Middle European, a nordic and a meridional orientation becoming more apparent within the Community and even within some of its countries like Italy, at the very time when mass communications and migrations are exploding traditional communities ?

The question assumes even greater relevance for the future of Eastern Europe. The revival of the Central European idea both in Germany and in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, in the

northern republics of Yugoslavia and to a lesser extent in Poland or even in parts of Italy, has both a cultural and a political meaning, but the two are not identical. Culturally, the Central European theme is essentially nostalgic. It refers to the literary and artistic splendor of the decaying Habsburg Empire. But the two peoples who provided its common inspiration, the Germans and the Jews, have been eliminated in favor of more ethnically homogenous national units. While middle-aged intellectuals dream of Central Europe, the young are attracted either by nationalism or nativism or by the West as such, which, at the level of mass culture as well as of technology, means America at least as much as Europe.

Politically, the affirmation of Central Europe had a clear negative meaning. For part of the German public in search of its national unity and identity, it meant the refusal of the division of Europe, the refusal of amputation and americanization. For East Europeans it meant the refusal to be cut off from the West and identified with the Russian invaders seen as culturally inferior and less European, or with the politically dominating and economically inferior Serbs in the case of Croatia and Slovenia. The question is what will remain of this notion under conditions of all-European rapprochement and of disintegration of the Soviet empire and of the Yugoslav state.

One practical answer is both political and cultural : it consists in the rebirth of old regional solidarities which were artificially severed by the Iron Curtain : between Scandinavians and Baltics in the North, between Central Europeans, between heirs of the Habsburgs, between states of the

Balkan Peninsula. This corresponds both to the desire of former communist states to grasp any possible anchor in the West and to that of Western states like Germany, Italy and Austria to use traditional ties or affinities in order to increase their political, economic and cultural role in the new Europe. The obstacle, however, lies in the social problems raised by these very contacts, especially by the movements of population which they are supposed to facilitate.

Even when regional rivalries and ethnic conflicts do not prevail (like in the Balkans) over solidarities, the flux of migrating workers and that of wandering and unwanted minorities like the Gypsies, tends to provoke reactions of self-closure rather of openness on the part of the richer or less poor countries. German unity has raised a new economic and social barrier between the former GDR and Poland while suppressing those which used to separate the two German states. More generally, visas and border guards and protectionist measures between Germany or Austria and Poland or Rumania, but also between Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as between Soviet republics are on the rise and may for a time at least hamper the re-emergence of Europe's older regions almost as much as the Iron Curtain used to do. The balance between the resentments created by these reactions and the irresistible ties created by the realities of Western influences in the East and Eastern migrations to the West which nobody can eliminate entirely, will vary from case to case.

The other answer is analytical : it tends to attribute differences in the political developments of European, particularly of formerly communist countries, to their respective

historical legacies and, in particular, to their cultural and religious background. The distinction emphasized by Kundera between a catholic or protestant, formerly Habsburgic Central Europe which, alone, would be truly European, and the orthodox, formerly Byzantine countries such as Russia, but also Rumania, Bulgaria or Serbia, re-emerges in many interpretations of the political events since the opening of the Wall. The idea would be that the democratic transition is smoother and more promising in countries blessed with a legacy of historical contacts with the West, of independent centers of power, like the Catholic Church, of individual autonomy (promoted by protestantism) whereas the Balkans submitted to Ottoman rather than Habsburgic domination, and under the influence of the Orthodox Church, have no feeling for the distinction between spiritual and secular power which is the precondition of liberalism, nor for the rule of law or the rights of the individual.

There obviously is something to this explanation as shown by the differences within a multinational state like Yugoslavia in the two paradigmatic evolutions, that of Slovenia and Serbia. Yet exceptions abound : within Yugoslavia itself, Serbia has at least as much a democratic tradition as catholic Croatia which along with catholic Slovakia and catholic Lithuania has experienced some of the most brutal forms of fascism during World War II. Greece, while not a model of Western democracy is certainly not a model of religious totalitarianism either. In the inter-war period, before 1938, Rumania has known a balkanic form of parliamentarianism which, while weak and corrupt, was closer to democracy than the dictatorship in Hungary

and Poland. To-day, while developments in Rumania are even more discouraging than expected, Russia, with the poor showing of the Pamyat movement, the electoral victories of democratic reformers and the non-imperialist turn taken by the dominant trend in its nationalist movement, is a good surprise for democracy.

Above all, these remarks go to show that cultural patterns are only one element among the many which tend to influence the search of European nations for a new identity. The character of recent communist rule is just as important (perhaps decisive in the case of Rumania). So are the influences of a changed international environment.

All are looking for their identity and a new role by finding an original and necessarily unstable balance between the state, the international (European and global) economy, subnational aspirations (represented by the challenges of ethnicity and of regionalism) and transnational challenges, whether those of the environment and those of population movements.

The last two elements cannot be over-emphasized : nothing has done more to awaken Armenian and Baltic, Ukrainian and Byelorussian nationalism than the environmental issue and particularly than Chernobyl. Nothing is more explosive and more conducive to a rebirth of nationalism, East and West, than the issue of immigration of economic rivalry and cultural shock between what The Economist (Oct.13, 1990) has called the "huddled masses on the move".

Socio-cultural malaise and political identity : nationalism in Eastern and Western Europe

The striking fact, with which to begin, is that nationalism may be more a consequence than a cause of this "new situation". What has happened is the collapse of the division of Europe based on Soviet domination of East Central Europe and on the division of Germany. What killed them, however, was not so much nationalist reassertion in the East, Rumanian-style, or an irredentist West German nationalism. The decisive factor was the economic and spiritual failure of the communist system and the success of the Western one. They came as much as a surprise to the Western leaders as to Gorbachev. Once they happened, however, they inevitably meant the removal or at least the loosening of supra-national bonds which were containing or hiding old nationalist feelings to which were added new temptations and fears.

Nationalism has thus become the primary subject of worry concerning Europe's future. But while the widespread comparisons with the pre-1914 Balkans or with the Europe of the thirties are not entirely groundless, they run the grave risk of failing to consider historical and regional differences. A greater national consciousness or attachment to national interests does not necessarily mean a revival of nationalism; a nationalist revival does not necessarily mean a return to the warlike racist and fanatic nationalism of the nazis or the Iron Guard. On the other hand, a revival of xenophobia linked to the increase of immigration and to the difficulties of coexistence between diverse religious and cultural communities should not

necessarily be identified with nationalism although it may pose at least as great a threat to the spirit of tolerance and of universalism.

Finally, the most common feature may be a general anxiety about identity, which is to be found among individual and ethnic minorities as well as among middle and superpowers, uncertain about their role in front both of economic and technological interdependence and of the end of the bipolar world. But while, at this level of generality, the questions are common, the reactions and the answers are strikingly diverse.

Eastern Europe : Old-style nationalism ?

The most general statement one can make about the region is that old national, ethnic or religious conflicts which have lost much of their relevance or at least of their intensity in Western Europe, are still alive in the East, either because its countries are at a different stage of historical and cultural development, or because they have been isolated from the great movement of social and economic interdependence which has engulfed the Western capitalist world or because the communist regime has exacerbated nationalist tensions either by ignoring them or by deliberately fostering and exploiting them.

Within this general context, however, it is necessary to distinguish between three obviously related cases : the crisis of the multinational states, like the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia; the rivalries or hostilities between independent nation-states; and the sub or transnational tensions affecting relations between communities, from xenophobia to racism, from

the treatment of minorities to that of immigrants.

The first case is the most serious both in its historical significance and in its immediate consequences for the peace and the shape of Europe. It is here that past history seems most relevant. The Russian empire is finally following the fate both of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian ones and of the colonial empires of the Western powers.

Secondly, it has often been remarked that the victory of the principle of nationalities in 1918-19 was not complete : the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire has given rise to a series of Austro-Hungarys, almost as diverse and beset by minority problems as the double monarchy itself. In one case at least, the successor state may be as unviable as the original empire. This case is of course that of Yugoslavia. And the striking fact, particularly from the point of view of nationalist tensions, is its similarity with that of the Soviet Union.

In both cases, the content and style of the movements for independence vary considerably according to geographical and historical, economic and religious factors. Slovenia and the Baltic States are following the evolution of East Central Europe towards democratic pluralism; they feel they are part of Europe and are trying to rebuild their respective Scandinavian or Central European ties and to detach themselves from their poorer, orthodox less developed and (according to them at least, less democratic) but more powerful and more numerous Serb and Russian hegemonic neighbors. The Croats and the Ukrainians represent another, crucial case. Their respective sizes and economic importance make them strictly indispensable to the survival of

Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Hence they are both the most dangerous opponents and the most anxiously coveted partners of the Serbes and the Russians. Both the potential conflict and the desperate attempt at avoiding separation are strengthened by the presence of substantial Serbian minorities in Croatia and Russian ones in the Ukraine. This overlapping of nationalities is one of the most important reasons why no general mutually satisfactory solution can be found to the problem of nationalities in either of the two federations.

More generally, in the last analysis the problem of nationalism in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia is less that of centrifugal forces than that of centripetal ones, in other words less that of insurgent nationalisms fighting for their independence or at least for their autonomy, for the dissolution of the Union or at least for its radical transformation, than that of the conservative or reactionary nationalism of the two largest republics, Russia and Serbia, who have been politically dominant while lagging economically, behind others and who are tempted to react violently to secessionist attempts in the name of their historical mission, of the greatness of the Union, or of the protection of their brethren in the other republics.

Which way will Serbian and Russian nationalism go ? This is the central question. In both countries there is a temptation for a populist nationalism, in which neo-traditionalist or religious elements, conservative communist ones and parts of the armed forces would be allied. In both there are also forces who prefer progress towards democracy to the struggle to maintain the empire and who think that their nation can only

revive if it does not exhaust itself economically, militarily and psychologically in trying to maintain its supremacy over others.

At this writing, the first trend seems to be prevalent in Serbia, to judge by the harshness of the repression exercised in Kosovo and by the persistent (although decreasing) popularity of M. Milosevic. In Russia, on the other hand, the election of Boris Yeltsin as head of the Supreme Soviet and above all the fact that under his leadership Russia decided just like the Baltic States and Uzbekistan before it and the Ukrainia after it, to declare its autonomy and the primacy of its laws over those of the Soviet Union, and to open direct contacts with the other republics is perhaps the best news of 1990 for the Soviet Union. It indicates that perhaps a way can be found which (rather than the confrontation between center and periphery played out between Gorbachev and the Lithuanian government) may lead to a progressive and consensual separation between republics. They would all then, negotiate a network of bilateral arrangements with each other rather than with the Kremlin which would rapidly slide into irrelevancy.

Of course inequalities of power and wealth divergences according to the domestic paths taken by the various republics and to their ability to find other partners outside the Soviet Union will necessarily reassert themselves and make some common rules and some central or international arbitration both indispensable and extremely difficult. Of course, too, hatreds resentments, social revolt may at any time provoke new explosions which would jeopardize the process. Yet one also senses both among Russians and among Balts, and among other European

nationalities, a certain fear of, precisely being drawn into the spiral of violence, and a certain ability for control and restraint. But moderation can win the day only if the myth of Soviet unity is exploded and if the Russian nation acepts and welcomes the withering away of its imperial role.

Similarly it is likely that the only way to avoid a mutual escalation of Serbian and Croatian nationalism (not to speak of the other peoples of Yugoslavia, particularly the two extremes, Slovania and Kosovo) is for Serbia to develop an identity which does not presuppose a unitary - let alone a Serbian-led - Yugoslavia. In both cases, only on the basis of separation can a multipolar, decentralized re-association have a chance.

This does not mean that it would necessarily succeed. Independence - or the right to declare it - may be a necessary condition for peaceful coexistence between national identities once they have achieved self-consciousness. It is not, however, a sufficient one. This is well shown by a second category of East European nationalism, that of states which have reached independence at least in the 19th century if not, under one form or the other (like the three historical nations, Poland, Hungary and Bohemia) much earlier.

As already mentioned, it is clear that mutual ignorance, mistrust, jealously if not outright hostility, seem more prevalent among the nations of the region than in Western Europe (with the not coincidental exception of Greece and Turkey). In spite of the common fate suffered under Soviet domination, which would have led one to predict a predominantly

anti-Russian feeling, old animosities seem to have survived under the cover of Socialist internationalism. Old rivalries (as between Rumanians and Hungarians) still present minority problems (as with Hungarian minorities not only in Rumania but also in Yuyoslavia and Czechoslovakia or the Turkish minority in Bulgaria) or unsolved border problems (as between Rumania and Bulgaria or, in a sense, the Soviet Union) are, of course, the main explanations. But leaving aside the question (already mentioned and to which we shall return) of why such territorial or minority issues have stopped poisoning relations between Western states like France and Germany or the Scandinavian countries and are still alive more to the East, it is striking that even between countries which are divided by no such problems, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, mutual popular feelings are rather negative in spite of the efforts of inter-nationalist leaders like Vaclav Havel.

There are three main general explanations to this state of affairs.

The first, deepest and broadest has to do with the history and culture of East and Central European nations. The British political theorist John Plamenatz has drawn a contrast between Western and Eastern nationalism. Going from West to East, he distinguishes between states where the growth of national identity has been parallel to that of the state, like France and England, those where the nation has preceded the state but where national consciousness was based on a genuine community of language or culture, like Germany and Italy, and those, like the Slavs and the Third World, where nationalism is above all a

reaction, made both of attraction and repulsion, of irritation and hostility to Western influence or domination.

More specifically, the great Hungarian historian Istvan Bibo and his disciple Janos Szucks have insisted upon the distinctive features of the political development and culture of Central Europe which lead to a distorted or pathological national feeling. Caught between West and East, prevented by the three empires (Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russia) from an evolution towards the nation-state on the model of the West, they have suffered from a permanent insecurity about their identity and their borders. This had led, according to Bibo, to a kind of "hysteria" (already present in the German case) expressed in the vital importance given to any territorial or minority dispute, since at any moment nationhood had to be tested against the competing claims of neighbors whose own national legitimacy also relied on mythical or at least debatable historical or linguistic claims.

The second explanation has to do with more recent history, that of communist rule. Above all, of course, this has cut Eastern Europe off from the economic and cultural evolution which has led Western Europe towards more cosmopolitan post-national or at least post-territorial attitudes. More specifically, the negation of national (as well as of social) differences in the name of socialist internationalism or of Soviet patriotism has served to exacerbate them : repressed, clandestine feelings re-erupt with a vengeance when given a chance.

The new situation brings new water to the nationalist

mill, and this is the third explanation. There is a general desire to "return to Europe" or to the West. But, on the one hand, since it is obvious that not all former communist states will enter the presumed paradise of the Community together, there is a race as to who is more truly European and a search for unique Western links, which leads to jealousy or disparagement towards Eastern competitors. On the other hand, the repudiation of communist ideology has naturally led to the search for long repressed traditions as a guide or a refuge in a new and unknown world. Hence, the tendency towards polarization between an orientation towards the West and to international interdependence and one towards the past and national identity.

This opposition, which is a new version of the nineteenth century struggle between slavophiles and westernizers in Russia, or of the interwar one between populists and urbanists in Hungary, is the key to the difference between the two main Hungarian parties, the Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free Democrats or between the two fractions of Solidarity (around Walesa and around Mazowiecky) which have recently split. The opposition is at its starkest in Rumania : the leading National Salvation Front using the distrust of the population - more influenced than was expected by decades of national communism towards the financial powers of the West and towards the former emigrés of the bourgeois parties, is following an indigenous path in open defiance (whether on the occasion of the Ceaucescu trial or of the violent intervention of the miners in Bucharest on June 14 and 15) of the moral and legal traditions of the West whose help it sollicits at the same time.

Of course very much in the development of these opposing trends and alternative paths will depend upon the success or failure of the opening to Western Europe and upon the reaction of the latter. In full accordance with Plamenatz's definition of Eastern nationalism, nothing can favor the pathological forms of the latter more than the feeling of failure in the attempt to join the group of modern democratic or capitalist nations, and of rejections by them.

While, in this case, insistance upon national pride and sovereignty and the search for diversion or scapegoats in conflicts with their respective neighbors are likely, the danger of inter-state wars over territorial issues, like in the past, is not the most serious one. Whatever the bitterness of feelings between Hungarians and Rumanians, a war between the two states, while less unthinkable than, for instance, between France and Germany, remains very hard to imagine and certainly much more so than civil war in Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union. Other conflict between independent East European nations are even less likely to take the form of classical wars. The widespread analogy with the Balkan conflicts and their supposed role in triggering the First World War are therefore misleading. The restraints on inter-state warfare coming from the existence of nuclear weapons, from the absence (unlike the situation in the past and in the Third World) of demographic pressures, from the primacy of civilian, whether economic or democratic values and attitudes over military ones, illustrated by the European Community, are likely to constitute powerful disincentive to wars.

This relative optimism about inter-state hostilities

does not necessarily extend, however, to more diffuse, social forms of nationalism. But is nationalism the right word for this phenomenon ? What I am alluding to, of course, is the third level (besides the conflict over the future of multinational states and classical conflicts between nation-states), namely the twin forces of racism and xenophobia. These do not necessarily follow the boundaries of nation-states. Even more than their neighbors, the targets of their hostility are sub or transnational groups - only some of which, like national minorities are actual or potential challengers for territory or sovereignty . Some, like the Gypsies, who are, almost everywhere in the region, the most despised and rejected group, have no territorial claims at all which is seen as another reason to deny them the legal status and guarantees of national minorities. Others, like the Jews, given their drastically reduced numbers all over Eastern Europe, are no longer serious competitors for economic or even political power, but still (along with the Free-Masons) are the object of hostile fantasies inherited from the past. Immigrants and foreign workers are perhaps the most immediate targets of hostility, particularly when the fear of competition for salaries and jobs is combined with racial or ethnic prejudices, like in the case of the Vietnamese workers (brought by the former regimes and to-day heavily attacked and discriminated against before being expelled) or Poles (in East Germany). Finally, a more general feeling of distrust and jealousy, if not fear and resentment, towards the outside world, and particularly towards cosmopolitanism and the rich and lucky West is, as already mentioned, very close to the surface in large proportions of the

population. It seems dominant nowhere, with the possible exception of Rumania, but could become so everywhere (to judge from the ugly scenes between the most peaceful and bland of the East Central European peoples, the Czechs, and the Vietnamese workers) if things turned sour.

The reasons are more or less the same we already mentioned in the case of the mutual hostilities among nation-states : insecurity about the individual's, the group's or the nation's own identity, seclusion through Soviet rule - hence, absence, in particular in the GDR, of the education about the nazi past and the cosmopolitan present to which the FRG was submitted), disappointment with what is or would be felt like disdain or rejection by the West.

Two special points, however, deserve to be made in the context of the second and third explanation.

Interestingly if discouragingly the most explosive social issue, that of attitudes towards immigration and foreign workers cuts both ways. The hostility of East European populations to Vietnamese workers is increasingly likely to be emulated by the hostility of West European populations towards East European immigrant workers. This is the best illustration of the way in which the fates of the two halves of the continent are linked even though the strains of their reunion may lead on both sides and particularly in the West to the desire for a new separation.

One of the main reasons for refusing pessimistic and deterministic predictions lies in one crucial difference with the interwar period. At that time, three models competed for the soul

of East and Central European peoples : the Western democratic one, which looked tired and declining; the fascist one, which looked energetic and on the rise; and the communist one, which appeared as a dangerous threat to most and as an inspiring hope to some. To-day the fascist and communist models are dead or discredited, and the liberal capitalist world looks like being not only the only model available but also highly successful economically and politically. One does not see what counter-model the nationalist forces in the East could lookto, unless the West prompts them to find one because of its own crisis or retrenchment.

Western Europe : new- style nationalism ?

Neither of these two dangers can be easily discounted. And yet it would probably be even more misleading to sound the alarm about Western Europe undoing the work of decades of integration and falling back into the conflicts and violence of the past. Any serious analysis must above all try to avoid the twin dangers of complacency and catastrophism, the two facile assumptions that history is dead and that it must repeat itself.

Something essentially new has indeed happened. One should not minimize the contrast between the disintegration of the East and the integration of the West, the creation of a "zone of peace" or, to use Karl Deutsch's expression, of a "security community" between states whose mutual borders are not guarded and among whom war has become unthinkable because of the constrainsts up on their freedom of action but, even more, because the societies they represent have become civilian

societies, where the economic dimension prevails over the military one and individual satisfaction over collective sacrifice.

But, by the same token, one should not be blind to the fact that this new situation creates new problems and awakens old nostalgias, that international peace and interdependence do not exclude inequalities among states but are liable to create new ones, that they do not suppress domestic violence but rather may encourage it as a compensation, that the opening of borders does not suppress the need for community, for solidarity and for exclusion (or at least for distinction between "we" and "they") but may on the contrary exacerbate it out of frustration.

Like in the case of Eastern Europe, these reactions and attitudes cannot necessarily be identified with nationalism in the strict sense but here again, they cannot be entirely dissociated from it. Again we may distinguish three cases. The first is that of the new inequalities of power, and of the temptations, jealousies and fears they may provoke among nations - of course the central phenomenon in this respect, in 1989-90, is the one posed by the uniting of Germany.

The second phenomenon is the reaction against the anonymity and uncontrollability of modern society, and of the loss of identity it entails for traditional groups or institutions such as the nation-state. Here the progress of European integration increases these fears and is sometimes taken as a scapegoats.

But, like in Eastern Europe, both the main scapegoat and the most genuine problem is the increase in immigration and

the economic, social and cultural strains it increasingly entails. This is the main source of political danger from the extreme right.

Between these three levels, of course, many misleading confusions but also many genuine combinations, compensations or mutual reinforcements are to be observed. But this is no reason not to try to look first of all at their specific features.

In particular, precisely because of its central importance for the construction of Europe, because of its racist past, and because of its exposure to the problem of immigration, from the South and the East, it is important to be precise about the German problem, about German power and about the nationalist reactions it may provoke among Germans and non-Germans.

First, nobody should deny that in the world of interdependence inequalities of economic power do exist and that they do have political consequences. Within the European community, the Federal Republic already was the most powerful partner. In spite of temporary difficulties, unity will reinforce this inequality. The role of the Federal Republic's economic strength inevitably produce (contrary to the thesis of some German academics according to whom, due to European integration and domestic pluralism, German has reached a post-national stage where economy can no longer be used politically) a political and psychological fall-out. This was obvious in the attraction which the Federal Republic's economic strength has exercise both upon East Germany's population and up on Gorbachev and which was used by Chancellor Kohl with great political determination and effect. A certain new German self-confidence, already visible

economically, has made its appearance on the political level.

On the other hand, before speaking of the danger of German nationalism, one should avoid overlooking the other side of the coin.

First, there is not the slightest evidence of German militarism or of the romantic, mystical, missionary or conquering nationalism which has characterized several periods of German history even outside the nazi period. The mood of the population is predominantly pacifistic and welfare-oriented. The undeniable new assertiveness is basically an arrogance of wealth and competence (the "Deutschmark nationalism" criticized by Habermas) certainly not, at least in this generation, of military power. For instance, there is still the same reluctance at playing even a peace-keeping role outside Europe.

Of course, German unity may usher a new period, going beyond the bourgeois satisfactions and the quest for acceptance of the post-war Federal Republic. There are some signs of this search for a new (or renewed) identity. The "historians' quarrel" of the late eighties is one, although it ended with the defeat of the revisionist school. The strength of the right in the former GDR is another. But, again, one cannot overemphasize that the uniting of Germany was neither preceded nor followed by any great mood of national exaltation. It was essentially the effect of the opening of the Wall and of the inability of the East German economy to function without being separated from the West German one. Both the government, the opposition and the population of the FRG had accepted the division. Certainly, Chancellor Kohl seized the oppportunity of exploiting the

inevitable and of becoming the Chancellor of German unity. This did not go without some elements of hubris and unilateralism, notably in his dealings with Moscow. But, again, it is not clear at all that the population either in West or in East Germany is particularly receptive to this mood. On the contrary, whatever evidence is available in the primacy of economic considerations and the mood of mutual distrust and irritation with the consequences for individuals, in particular for employment in the two Germanies.

Polls indicate an increase in interest for the European Community, which had declined in recent years. And the Kohl government itself, in spite of the unilateralist features of his diplomatic tactics, has successfully reaffirmed Germany's commitment to the West, including NATO and, even more importantly progress towards the United States of Europe.

Again all this may change. But for the time being, the only really worrying tendencies in Germany are those concerning the hostility to foreigners, particularly to migrants from the East and the Third World. But that is a general phenomenon which is not specific to Germany and has found much more serious political expression in other Western countries.

Even on attitudes to Europe, the danger of a new emphasis on national sovereignty rather than supranational integration as a result of German hegemony may be stronger in countries like France and Great Britain than in Germany itself. In the case of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, I was suggesting that the problem lay less with the independentist nationalisms of the smaller republics than with the Russian and Serbian reaction. In

the case of Europe, it may lie less with the nationalism of the potential hegemonic power, Germany, than with its partners who used to consider themselves as its equals. There is, I think, no contradiction between these two judgments : in both cases, the fears of those who see their established positions threatened may lead to more irrational actions than the aspirations of those who see the trends going their way. Conversely, it may be the former who hold the key to the solution : the best chance of preventing German nationalism from becoming imperialistic or adventurous is for the other European states to unite and create a friendly counter weight within a common framework.

This is indeed what many political leaders and movements within these countries are advocating. But the most vocal reaction goes in the opposite direction. Its mots spectacular and caricatural expression were the declaration of the former British secretary for Trade and Industry, Mr. Riley, accusing the Germans of seeking to dominate Europe, the French of acting like their poodles and any surrender of monetary sovereignty to the European Community of being tantamount to a capitulation in front of Adolf Hitler. Without going to these extremes it is clear that, in France, both on the right of the political spectrum with J.M. le Pen and to some extent, with part of the gaullist party who are goint back on their recent conversion to Europe, and on the left (with the Chevènement wing of the socialist party and with the former revolutionary writer and Mitterrand aide Régis Debray), important fractions of public opinion claim that the uniting of Germany has made nonsense of the uniting of Europe, that the Community can from now on be only

an instrument of German power, and that France should imitate Germany in following its own interest and in giving priority to the preservation of its national identity.

It seems that the fear of German hegemony serves as the catalyst for a variety of feelings. One is bitterness at the loss of France's and Britain's positions a great powers, a loss consumated by World War II and decolonization but which had been slown down or partly masked by the Cold War and the limitations on German sovereignty. Another is perplexity at the anonymity of modern society, at the loss of control by the nation-state or by any other concrete, recognizable community. A third is the perception of a threat to national identity coming, on the one hand, from the cosmopolitanism and standardization of mass culture and consumption (often seen as "americanization") and on the other hand, the influx of immigrants often seen as alien or hostile for racial or religious reasons . Individual, social and national insecurity, the preoccupation with law and order, with jobs, and with the nation are thus combined into one complex syndrome where external threats and internal doubts are hard to disentangle.

Italy has surprised everybody, including itself, with the spectacular electoral success (in the Spring of 1990) of Northern leagues (notably in Lombardy, Piémont and in the Venetian region). What is fascinating about them is that they reproduce the North-South cleavage as it is found in Yugoslavia, in Europe as a whole (including within Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union) and in the world. The modern, industrious and efficient North refuses to pay taxes which, it says, will go to

the corrupt and inefficient central bureaucracy in Rome, to the criminal mafia in the South, and more generally, will subsidize the backward and lazy South. In fact, the phenomenon is as much a reaction against immigration to the North (both from the South of Italy and from Africa) as against centralization and corruption.

More generally, retrenchment, whether local, regional, national or continental, whether economic, political, religious or racial is the great temptation. The contrast between the search for economic progress and the fear of insecurity, between the crumbling of boundaries and the nostalgia for closed and stable communities is the greatest and most general problem.

Isn't it clear that, despite all their important differences, Eastern and Western Europe both have to face it and to live with it ?

Europe : East and West, North and South

The Cold War meant the primacy of East-West issues. With its ending, they lose both their primacy and their specificity in favor of North-South relations. Not only is the situation most dramatic in the Third World, particularly in Africa, not only are the targets of racism and the candidates to immigration into Europe and the wandering homeless refugees primarily Asians and Africans, but East-West relations themselves are more and more taking a North-South character. Of course neither the economic backwardness nor the cultural distance from the West are the same in the Soviet Union, let alone East Central Europe, as they are in Africa. But the primacy of social and

economic divisions and conflicts over ideological and military ones is coming to Europe too. The problem of relations with Poland centers on debt relief and on immigration like with most Third World countries. What Mexico is to the United States, what the Maghreb is to France, the South and East of Europe (Turks and Yugoslavs yesterday, East Germans, Aussiedler from Russia, and Poles to-day) is for Germany or Austria. The tendency for rich, Western countries to close their borders as poor countries open theirs plays in the direction of the former Iron Curtain as well as of the Mediterranean. The unemployment inevitably caused by economic reform in Eastern Europe will, just as inevitably, increase the search for jobs in Western Europe, hence the feeling of the latter's population of being besieged. The racism which is spreading all over Europe, including Scandinavia, will be directed towards Poles and Russians as well as towards Arabs, and will in turn, create anti-Western nationalism and resentment in the East. It will be small consolation that both sides will have in common hostility to Gypsies and Jews.

This apocalyptic scenario is not inevitable, however. What is inevitable is the interaction between xenophobia or, simply, rejection and exclusion in the West and in the East. A virtuous circle can be substituted to the vicious one if political action and solidarity can actively try to channel and steer the inevitable conflictual communication provoked by economic and cultural interdependence, in the direction of gradual integration.

The main problem of Europe is destabilization through openness : economic destabilization through trade , cultural

destabilization through immigration. If handled unilaterally, these destabilization will lead to mutual, if imperfect, closure and to mutual resentment. If handled together they may, in the long run, be to the benefit of all. This is true in particular, for international institutions. The CSCE has no more important task but to contribute to the multilateral management not only of territorial and minority conflicts, but also of the mutual opening of societies through communications and migrations. The Community must develop an immigration policy in close coordination with the home countries of the potential immigrants from the East and the South. Unilateral measures of closure or exclusive bilateral exceptions can only make the problem worse.

We shall end this survey with two thoughts about the future of Europe, of nationalism and above all, of peace and democracy.

Peaceful coexistence is more necessary than ever. But the problem now is less peaceful coexistence among opposed social systems, alliances and superpowers than among independent nation-states and, even more, among economic, social, cultural, religious communities in everyday life and at the local as well as the national or continental level.

To put it more abstractly, if one distinguishes between three levels of relations in Europe, strategic interaction, economic interdependence and social interpenetration, the chances of nationalism and the dangers to peace are to be found less on the first level than on the second and third, and particularly in their interplay. The hardest problem is the socio-cultural one, but economic interdependence, according to the way it is

handled, can either exacerbate or alleviate it.

To ensure a positive outcome, the opponents of nationalism, the friends of universalism and tolerance, of peace and freedom must themselves undergo a conversion on their own. In the nineteenth century, there were three revolutionary ideologies which were sometimes allied and sometimes in conflict: liberalism, nationalism and socialism. The last two have led, through fascism and communism, through Hitler and Stalin, to such monstruous crimes and failures that they are fatally discredited, and have led the field wide open to the first. To-day we witness the triumph of liberalism, both in its political aspect, that of representative democracy and in its economic one, i.e. capitalism. This is not simply a temporary fashion since it corresponds to the only system which has stood the double test of legitimacy and efficiency. But it is not a final and complete solution to the problem of peace and democracy either. We know through bitter experience that there is no substitute for freedom and that no state, system, or alliance (be it as large as China or as samll as Albania) can close itself off from the modern world without ultimate failure and collapse. But we also know that man cannot live on freedom and universality alone, that the aspirations which have led to nationalism and socialism, the search for community and identity and the search for equality and solidarity, will always reassert themselves, as they already do. It is to the extent that liberalism can incorporate them and reconcile them both with the freedom of the individual and with the interdependence of the planet that, after having won the Cold War, it will really win the peace.