

The quest for eternal peace
How Resilient is Democracy in Europe?

Mr Paul Scheffer
Dutch author and commentator

(English translation: Jan Bertrams)

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I. Force Majeure and Self-Restraint

European history is soaked with war and the memory of war. Anyone who suspects war to be an inseparable part of living together will easily find this notion confirmed. Sooner or later group formation will result in an invitation to conflict. Once a boundary has been drawn, the moment will invariably arrive when this dividing line between residents and outsiders, arbitrary by nature, becomes controversial. The same phenomenon shows itself at a far higher level of violence in the era of nation building. Entire populations are mobilised to make wars possible.

The First World War strongly confirmed the belief that armed conflicts are ineradicable, thus pushing aside the faith in progress, which had prevailed throughout the nineteenth century. The break after a long period of unprecedented growth in wealth and science could hardly have been more profound. Just think of Paul Valéry's opening phrase of his *Crise de l'Esprit* from 1919: 'We civilised nations now know that we are mortal'. After the war nothing was to be the same anymore. The decline of civilisation which characterises the former half of the twentieth century, and, as some believe, also the latter, dates back to this period.

In the wake of this first unlimited war there was enormous brutalisation of political culture and disillusionment with liberal civilisation. The First World War is the setting against which the rise of fascism and communism should be placed. Though there is more to be said about the parallels and differences between both dictatorial systems, one thing is certain: but for the 'archetypal catastrophe' of the first World War, these movements would have had far less chance to strike root. The emergence of the two totalitarian systems cannot be understood apart from the background of this first 'total' war.

Many writers came into contact with these modern worldviews either as perpetrators, victims or witnesses, and so echoes of an 'age of extremes' resound in their novels and autobiographies. The French writer Céline, who is part of post-war-disillusionment, is by no means an exception. If this writer has made mud slinging into an art, it is only too obvious where he quarried his raw material: in the trenches where as a twenty-year-old he roamed about in a mist of fatigue and gets wounded

after three months. In a letter he reports from the front: 'no news from the battlefield on practically the same firing line for three days dead soldiers are constantly replaced by living ones so many that they make little mounds that are burnt and in some places one can cross the Meuse by walking on top of the German bodies of those who tried to make it across the river and are tirelessly swallowed by our artillery'.

Céline cogently puts into words the experience of the frontline, in which good and evil become blurred: 'I've still got a supply in me of a thousand pages of nightmares, those about the war in front. The weeks in 1914 in the pouring and slimy rain, in that terrible mud and that blood and that shit and that human filth, I'll never get over it, it's a truth, I'll tell you once again, we only share with a few'. Many of those who survived the trenches came away with similar impressions, 'yesterday's world' had ceased to exist.

It cannot be denied that in Europe civilisation and barbarism are neighbours. European history is steeped in war and imperialism. At the same time, our continent is dominated by the laborious efforts to argue with this simple fate. The liberal hope that preceded 1914 was pursued with other means. First, the League of Nations and, next, the United Nations made efforts to mitigate the inequality of power in the world through equality before the law. In this way international law and democratisation are also major themes in the twentieth century.

With ups and downs the European Union is doing nothing less than make a quest for eternal peace. In Western philosophy 'eternal peace' is a recurrent theme, which has been dealt with by Podiebrad, Leibniz, Rousseau and, in particular, Kant. In his famous *Zum ewigen Frieden* of 1795, written with the echo of the French Revolution ringing in his head, the German philosopher stands up for an alliance of constitutional republics. In his view, states having a civil legal order are supposed not to wage war against each other. After all, citizens have such a direct interest in peace in order to improve their prosperity and welfare that in a democratic republic their voice against war will always be the deciding factor.

Kant also refers to the shared interests of trading nations and a growing openness as a foundation of world citizenship. 'Considering that the regularly advancing community

of the nations across the world has come so far that abuse of the law in one place is felt anywhere else in the world, naturally, the idea of a legally defined world citizenship is not just a fantastic and exaggerated picture of justice'. To our ears this two-hundred-year-old text sounds surprisingly up-to-date, or perhaps we should rather say that analyses about the 'CNN-effect' show a surprising anachronism.

The gravity of history is opposed to this ideal of social planning, a fundamental conflict worth thinking about. We cannot simply confine ourselves to an interpretation in which planning and progress dominate. The perspective in which fate and recurrence are made into a worldview should be done justice to as a formative power in any analysis. In this way force majeure and self-restraint contend for priority in Europe.

The long drawn-out war in Yugoslavia, with all its daily atrocities displayed in great detail in the news reports, has had an impact on thinking about these issues. Not surprisingly, many have tried to define the Balkans outside Europe as a new dividing line between civilisation and barbarism. The Balkan mentality was widely discussed, a phenomenon to be contrasted at will with our own self-image.

At the same time, it was not possible to place Yugoslavia outside Europe. The matter at issue here is not only the boundaries of European integration, but also the far more essential realisation that we are witnessing the end of an exceptional situation. What is now being disturbed so abruptly is the feeling of invulnerability that had captured our part of the world. This attitude thrived in the context of growing prosperity, a well-defined self-image of democracy, increasing civil liberties and a closed border with the East.

With the atrocities that reached us daily an old expression has suddenly come to life again: the civilisation we so self-evidently seem to share is no more than a thin veneer. In her study on the Balkans Rebecca West writes: 'Only part of us is sane: only part of us loves pleasure and the longer day of happiness, wants to live to our nineties and die in peace in a house that we built, that shall shelter those who come after us. The other half of us is nearly mad. It prefers the disagreeable to the agreeable, loves pain and its darker night despair, and wants to die in a catastrophe

that will set back life to its beginnings and leave nothing of our house save its blackened foundation’.

Politics, being the art of the practicable, will have to take full account of these diverse motives. There is a lot to be said about the coercion with which this has been done, but that with political means old passions may both be controlled and used, does seem to be certain. The aim of the art of politics is to prevent the ever-slumbering disasters of human nature from flaring up or precisely to provoke them. To those who profess an easy cultural pessimism the question may be put: is not the ‘surface of civilised manners’ the most realistic goal in society? It is not ‘inner civilisation’ we have in mind, but guarantees of social peace, as long as it lasts. Set off against history as a whole this may not be more than a wink, but easily decisive in a person’s life.

Only who sees that the peaceful relations in Europe are based on stable democratic constitutional states will understand that security in Eastern and Western Europe cannot be taken for granted. At this moment the resilience of liberal democracy is being put to the test. Many traditional parties, some of them torn by corruption scandals, seem to be exhausted. When liberal tradition gradually starts to lose its legitimacy, for which there are indications, violent conflicts will become conceivable again.

Many see the memory of the war as a barrier against the return of old conflicts. A commemorative tradition fed by experience and criticism is certainly important. However, there are numerous pitfalls involved. In most countries a national commemorative culture prevails which has many words for that country’s own role as a victim. Only too often is the role of perpetrator or bystander suppressed, which does not add to honest commemoration.

At the same time, historic knowledge is increasing. The interpretation of the war years is continuously shifting, taking on new aspects. First black and white, then grey: this debate on the wide domain between good and evil has been going on among historians for quite some time already. The war years are largely marked by the instinct of preservation of life or, what has occasionally been called, ‘a human right to

cowardice'. Such meagre motives should be paid attention to at commemorative occasions. Not by way of accusation but in order to prompt further questioning.

And yet, whether societies really learn from past catastrophes remains uncertain. Who does not believe in such notions as collective guilt may also question the possibility of collective learning processes. Can the memory of past mistakes immunise a society against making the same mistakes again? Or should we assume that individuals do have the ability to learn, but that collectives are always subject to lapsing into barbarism?

'No more Auschwitz' was a post-war optimism in telegram style, an expression of an indestructible belief in progress. Now the abyss had become so visible, surely, no one would ever venture towards the edge again. At the same time, it was an implicit denial of the uniqueness of the holocaust: after all, why warn against repetition if you are convinced that it was a once-only event? The 'no more' was an incantation, a promise, a belief, all in one.

We must recognise that during the fifty years since the war this principle has not in the least been lived up to. Many examples of genocide have remained unanswered. In this way 'the international community' is evaporating, turning into an abstraction on to which the responsibility is shifted. All recent history is pointing in this direction: the United Nations as an embodiment of the international community is not in a position to make a decisive difference in times of war. Only individual member states or coalitions of the willing can effectively use military means of coercion. The United Nations is simply too much a sum of diverse interests and cultures to arrive at a workable, shared ethic.

The American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr advocates this view. His conviction is that the more extensive a group, the weaker its morality as well as the reasonableness of its actions. The egotism of nations, in particular, is proverbial. People may put their lives at the service of the community, but the sum of all this devotion results in nations that pursue their own interests without too many scruples. In the love of one's country individual sacrifice is converted into collective selfishness. According to Niebuhr, the moral ambiguity of international politics is therefore a fact of life: all

hope is vain that by extending social sympathy we will be able to contribute to resolving the big issues of humanity.

Perhaps our part of Europe has found a form of integration that has permanently banned war as a continuation of politics with other means. And we might succeed in enlarging this zone of 'eternal peace' step by step with new countries. However, the self-restraint that is now being observed in mutual relations may be disrupted by an appeal to force majeure. Once democracy is no longer solidly embedded, old or new passions may erupt. Building of Europe is therefore a fragile enterprise, in particular since many certainties have been lost after 1989.

II. A Farewell to Europe-in-Between

The weak tradition of self-determination has provoked a typical mood of resignation in Central and Eastern Europe. A sense of lacking control of one's own destiny appeared to have become second nature. The term Europe-in-Between (a translation of the German term *Zwischen- Europa*) quite aptly sums up this experience of the countries that lived in uncertainty between Russia and Germany.

In this respect post-war-communism was a continuation of a history in which the bigger neighbouring countries in turn or jointly used to trample freedom. The Polish writer Kazimierz Brandys uses a compelling image: 'One winter we discover that it has snowed. Then we ask ourselves, is this our snow? Are we under any obligation to shovel it? For there is some question as to whether this snow might not be theirs, imposed on us by the Russians in the framework of friendship, and so - shouldn't they remove it themselves?'. Such an appeal force majeure is highly attractive: it provides a convenient answer to the question of guilt.

And still it appeared that the resignation of many could be resisted by a revolution whose theme was self-control. After previous attempts at reform in 1956 and 1968 had failed, the year 1989 marked the farewell to Europe-in-Between, a region of countries which now for the first time for many years managed to release itself from the yoke of geography and history. By doing so, these nations have got rid of the existential fear that has played such a decisive role in their histories. And this turn of events may deliver us in Western Europe from a permanent source of unrest.

Writers such as Havel, Konrád and Michnik embodied the velvet revolution. In the long years preceding 1989 they were well aware that communism would continue to be the horizon of their daily lives for a very a long time. They did not cease to emphasise that they were unlikely ever to reap the fruits of their resistance against the ruling powers, whereas at the same time they would have to suffer the consequences of such a contrary attitude. Though they had every reason to deny responsibility, in a modest way they continued to persevere in an ethic of individual responsibility.

In well-chosen words Havel expresses in his letters from prison what kept him going in all those years when nothing appeared to move: 'When I speak of faith and hope, I'm not thinking of optimism in the conventional sense, by which we usually mean the belief "that everything will turn out well". One may imagine a man with no faith who believes everything will turn out well, and a man with faith who expects everything to turn out badly'. Hope and optimism are two different things: hope results from an inner attitude that does not depend on the ups and downs of the outer world.

This detached attitude he had acquired early. Already after the 1968 invasion Havel knew that 'a de facto defeat need not be a moral defeat; that a moral victory may later become a de facto victory, but a moral defeat, never'. In this subtle way he contradicts the force majeure of circumstances. When the ruling powers collapsed, this moral attitude appeared to make an essential contribution to a revolution marked by self-restraint.

Undeniably, in Poland the revolutionary year 1989 began with the round table talks between opposition and government in April, the first free elections in June and the first non-communist prime minister Mazowiecki taking office in August of that year. Historic credit is certainly due to Gorbatsjov for giving this room; however, if it had not been for the typical Polish mixture of Catholicism, nationalism and liberalism, the dominoes in the East would have begun to move much later. When these events had broken the spell, the opposition elsewhere felt free to make full use of the reserve on the part of the rulers to use violence against the reform movement

Michnik is well aware of the tensions in Polish tradition. In an essay he dwells on two Polish traditions, personified by Cardinal Wyszynski and the writer Witold Gombrowicz. Whereas Wyszynski cultivates the collective form of Polish Catholicism as a stronghold against foreign dominance, Gombrowicz considers this tradition to be the very source of all weakness vis-a-vis communism. The only effective resistance will be stubborn individualism. At the same time Michnik knows that, but for the somewhat parochial and conservative Catholicism, far fewer freedoms would probably have been preserved in post-war-Poland. It was due to his insight that a highly effective rapprochement came about between the secular

dissidents and the Catholic opposition, which resulted in the independent Solidarnosc movement. 'We should finally understand that church and religion are no anachronisms or transitional phenomena which are slowly dying, but that they are lasting elements of the social, moral and intellectual reality of the Poles', said Michnik.

At the same time the church should also come to terms with its own past, in particular its anti-Semitism. After the revolution of 1989 Michnik fears that after the first betrayal of the clerks under communism, a second betrayal will now follow, that is, a surrender to a dogmatic Catholicism and nationalism: 'May the spirit of cardinal Wyszynski protect us from the first and the biting sarcasm of Witold Gombrowicz protect us from the second'.

It has been the strength of Central European opposition that at an early stage they recognised the risks involved in the revolution. However fundamental resistance against communism may have been, in most cases the fear to fall back into another kind of collectivism had the upper hand. In other words: with most critics of the ancient regime the wish for reconciliation won over the cry for retaliation. Nothing summarised Michnik's attitude better than his formula 'for amnesty and against amnesia'. Forgive indeed one might say, but never forget.

However, a doubt is gnawing at the back of his mind, since he wonders how this thought relates to Herbert's verse which he so often quotes: 'Do not forgive, for it is not within your power to forgive on behalf of others that were betrayed at dawn'. In a dialogue with Havel both conclude that extensive purges and collective guilt are not the right approach. Havel tells about his objections against the Lustration Act, which he had to sign as president and which removed entire categories of communist officials from public life. Even if this is the case, the choice of 'amnesty' cannot simply be the solution face to face with the many citizens whose lives and careers were broken and who now ask for retaliation. 'We have been condemned to these dialectics'.

There is a striking contrast between Poland, where for a long time they preferred to let bygones be bygones, and Germany, where hundreds of thousands were screened on their Stasi-contacts. Though one would like to embrace the Polish way, it cannot be

denied that the German model is gradually being followed. Why? In Poland, Hungary and many other East European countries that had no purges the old communist parties have come to power again in a new form. This was not so in East Germany and the Czech Republic. A too simple presentation of things, says the British historian Timothy Garton Ash, but 'it is true that, in Poland and Hungary, the new democracy has been shaken by issues arising from the lack of lustration, including the current activities of the security services'.

György Konrád, in his typical, slowly contemplative way also writes about retaliation and forgiveness. 'There is a doubtful aspect to forgiveness. After all, it may not only concern a person, but also imply understanding for an act in retrospect, i.e. accept that it is seen in perspective. One can become reconciled with the culprits, but not with the crime that has been committed'. His formula is: 'Neither retaliation nor forgiveness'. He also resists the temptation to lapse into the attribution of collective guilt. On the contrary, he stubbornly holds on to his ethic in the first person singular.

The miracle of 1989 was, in particular, the predominantly non-violent and democratic outcome of the revolution. The examples of Meciar and Milosovic show that things might also have taken a different turn: authoritarian and violent lapses were, and still are, not in the least imaginary. The more than average self-control that was displayed in most countries of Europe-in-Between must not remain unanswered. And it should be said that the West European countries have been too hesitant and reserved in their reaction to the enormous possibilities and risks in the East.

1989 has often been seen as the 'return to Europe', which was to end many years of isolation. This is because for many years Eastern Europe was the biggest open-air museum in the world, where, until quite recently, one could make an accurate study of the smells and colours of the forties and fifties. The cars, the clothes, the tables, everything suggested that Marshall aid had passed by this part of the world. Between the end of the war and the beginning of peace the other Europe went through a period of well over forty years of stagnated reconstruction.

This should be taken into account now that the West is finally in a position to extend a helping hand to the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. But in spite of the

momentous events on our threshold the mental distance between the East and the West has remained great. Only few people are aware that Poland was situated between three countries that no longer exist: the GDR, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The hesitation to take up the new countries into the European Union will not have great effects on Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. But how will this inertia affect countries like Bulgaria, Rumania and all others pushing at the back of the queue?

From the moment when new Central and East European countries join the Union we will export stability, but also import instability. We are less concerned here with the somewhat panicky expectations of some that immigrants will make for our borders in great numbers. What may be a matter of far greater concern is the legal resilience of the institutions in these countries: will they be able to accommodate the legal standards of the Union and enforce them? Governments would be well advised not only to emphasise the long-term advantages in the fields of security and economics, but at the same time they will have to make clear that the enlargement will also involve problems and expenses. They are acceptable because embedding democracy in this region is not only a matter of our own interest, it is also a great moral obligation. A realistic assessment is called for in order to prevent public opinion from being ill-prepared and turning its back on enlargement.

The acceptance of new countries in NATO was also a very controversial issue, as it still is. As always, historic analogies played a role in this debate. There are those who argue that now the same mistake is being made as with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. On that occasion defeated Germany was so humiliated that it did not take long for the cry for revenge to be widely heard. A straight line appeared to be running from Versailles to Hitler. And now the enlargement of NATO is humiliating Russia to such an extent that a fierce nationalism is being evoked. Just see what happens: the strong men in the Kremlin have seized upon the war in Chechnya to strip democracy to a minimum.

Others know for sure that the mistake of Yalta 1945 is being repeated, when, as tradition has it, Europe was divided into two spheres of influence. Although in the year 2000 the dividing line may be drawn further to the east, the countries falling

outside NATO, in particular, the former republics of the Soviet Union, are given to understand that they need not count on the West. In this way a new sphere of influence is being created over the heads of those involved.

This is a far too one-sided picture. In the modern age this region found itself at the crossroads of 'Pan-Germanism' and 'Pan-Slavism', also at a time when these expansionist ideas had not yet adorned themselves with these names. These influences were never symmetrical. Europe-in-Between rather used to be a region where German influence made itself felt and which, simultaneously, acted as a barrier against Russian advance. After 1945 we witness a reversal: in Russian eyes Europe-in-Between just became a buffer against the West and mainly against West Germany. The big issue after 1989 is, of course, whether we are now going to see a reversal of this historic role again: will this region again become a barrier against Russia?

In 1918 Czechoslovakia's first president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, wrote about Europe-in-Between: 'This zone was, and still is, the real political danger zone for peace in Europe'. What must never be forgotten indeed is that in this region two world wars found their origin. Not through intervention outside NATO's treaty area, but through step-by-step enlargement of this area will a lasting contribution be made to the prevention of violent conflicts. In this way the zone of 'eternal peace' which the West European countries intend to be will be further enlarged.

The fundamental question remains, though, whether the new Central Europe will again become a buffer against Russia. Is this enlargement not just an unnecessary humiliation of the country that has lost the Cold War anyway? Kissinger puts against this that America is laying too much emphasis on the internal reforms of Russia in the hope that democracy and market economy will drive away the memory of Soviet imperialism. In doing so, American diplomacy obviously overestimates the possibilities to influence internal developments in Russia. An old saying is being ignored: 'On the territory of the former Soviet Union not every anticommunist is a democrat and not every democrat is opposed to Russian imperialism'.

Much will depend on the extent of mutual trust in future years. After 1989 the image that Russia and the West had of one another was vague – somewhere in between

friend and foe – but a fundamental change for the worse has set in as a result of the Kosovo war. Enlargement of NATO was justified by referring to the defensive character of the alliance. However, the alliance has taken on a different face since the war against Serbia and Montenegro and the introduction of a doctrine enabling NATO to conduct ‘out-of-area’ operations means a farewell to a purely defensive role.

Not surprisingly, Russian discontent about the West runs deep. Who wants clarity on this point is asking too much. The orientation of Central Europe is no more than one factor in an equation with many unknowns. Whether enlargement of NATO will turn out to be a barrier against Russia or form a bridge towards other relationships, mainly depends on internal developments in Russia, but also on the self-restraint the alliance will be able to muster in future years.

Step-by-step enlargement of NATO may lead to security agreements between the West and Russia, the character of which will be different from the situation of armed peace during the period of the policy of *détente*. This is because the closer one approaches the borders of Russia, the more urgent the need for security guarantees will be. There are limits to such an approach. Russia will not become a member of NATO, because who wants to imagine the West guaranteeing the security of the Chino-Russian border? Apart from that, Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia have made security arrangements between them, which do not allow any of these three countries to become a member of another, that is, Western alliance.

It therefore suits the purpose of European security to make arrangements that will discourage the rise of a new zone of uncertain countries. In addition to further disarmament treaties and a revaluation of institutions comprising the whole of Europe, other countries should be allowed the possibility to accede to NATO. At any rate Slovakia, Rumania, Croatia and the Baltic countries should be granted the right to participate in the alliance within a definite period. In the event of this having been the first and also the last enlargement, a new Europe-in-Between will arise at NATO’s borders, with all the risks this will involve.

III. Liberal Discontent

Something odd is happening. Only shortly after the victory in the Cold War, at the peak of liberal euphoria, the collective mood has suddenly changed. Now that the disciplining effect of a common enemy has been lost, the contradictions in our own society are becoming more distinct. A remarkable aspect of this change is that the elite's express themselves in increasingly stronger terms on parliamentary democracy. The self-confidence derived from the contrast between democracy and totalitarianism has decreased. There is not an enemy any longer to delegate responsibility to.

One might indeed argue that, in effect, the lament on democracy is a permanent background music to any open society, which proves its viability exactly through this continuous self-criticism. From time to time the tones will swell, provoking a correction, after which pessimism fades again. In 1975, for instance, an international cry of distress was given on the governmentability of the Western nations. The report *The Crisis of Democracy*, by the so-called Trilateral Commission (a collection of prominent politicians and businessmen from Western Europe, the United States and Japan), caused a lot of controversy. After all, the conclusions were pretty harsh, even the fearful prospect of 'Finlandisation' of Western Europe was stirred up.

Meanwhile, since this lament was raised, a great many years have gone by and discontent about the functioning of democracy has flared up again. It was the former German president Von Weizsäcker who, a couple of years ago, dwelt with foresight on the 'party state' of his country: 'If a society, as was fortunately the case in the old Federal Republic, has achieved great prosperity, globally speaking, the relationship with the parties will be liable to the danger of 'one good turn deserves another', i.e. maintaining prosperity in exchange for maintaining power. Paradoxically enough, this is accompanied by an increasing suspicion towards the parties and at the same time by an increasing corruptibility of voters'. To this may be added that not only have the voters turned out to be susceptible to 'bribery' but that in a far more literal sense the viability of democracy has seriously been undermined by the many corruption scandals we have witnessed since 1989.

Von Weizsäcker's attitude illustrates liberal criticism on democratic culture, but it is not dominant. In a number of respects current criticism on the institutions may be likened to '1968', though the present situation is hugely different from the one more than a quarter of a century ago. If at that time aversion manifested itself under a left-liberal sign - with pleas for comprehensive democratisation -, now discontent at democracy is expressed under a conservative-populist sign, whereby reaffirmation of one's own, often national, identity is the key issue. Resistance against Europe, against immigration and against the established political parties comes together in an aversion to the left-liberal elite. It is those who came to power on the previous wave of protest that are the subjects of criticism themselves. It is their language, attitude and programme that evoke discontent.

It cannot be ruled out that, with the big contrast between East and West having been lost, something has become unstuck in the Western democracies that goes further than the routine corrections common in any democratic system. Criticism on liberal attainments and institutions has raked up again almost forgotten issues of ethnicity and identity. The historic tension between nationalism and democracy is the far wider background against which we should place the rise of nationalist and populist movements, such as FPÖ, Front National and the Flemish Nationalists.

In other words, we have every reason to look for possible causes for discontent with liberal democracy. Let us first look at the undermining of democracy from within. In his famous book on the end of history Fukuyama argues that, as far as the level of ideas is concerned, liberal democracy has been without any rivals since 1989. Having thus closed off any escape routes, he forces us to think about the inherent weaknesses of the tradition of Enlightenment.

He distinguishes rational forms of recognition, that is, the ideal of equality of liberal democracy, and irrational forms of recognition, such as religion and nationalism. These are irrational because such dividing lines between groups of people are arbitrary and at odds with liberal thinking with its universal mission. Fukuyama states that liberalism has for the greater part made religion a private matter, and goes on to say that in the Western world nationalism has also acquired a far more domestic form.

Following Tocqueville he has to admit, however, that these 'irrational' forms of recognition produce the sense of community which a democracy needs to survive. Fukuyama also knows that liberalism, with its levelling effect, breaks down traditions and provokes resistance: 'There is everywhere a resistance to that homogenisation, and a reassertion, largely on a sub-political level, of cultural identities that ultimately reinforce existing barriers between peoples and nations'. Is liberal tradition in fact self-sustaining or does it live on the sense of community as embodied in the romantic image of nation?

Eventually, Fukuyama sets his 'end of history' against Nietzsche's resistance against the slave ethics of a society that has ceased to live in a glorious and compelling manner. What passion can such a society of equals still arouse? Tolerance may easily lead to a dictatorship of mediocrity. Who will still dare to condemn anything? Here Fukuyama runs up against the limits of his argument: 'The dissatisfaction arises precisely where democracy has triumphed most completely: it is dissatisfaction with liberty and equality. Thus those who remain dissatisfied will always have the potential to restart history'. In short, 'the end of history' is not to be taken too literally, a fault made by many critics.

This feeling of discontent recurs with great vigour in his books that have since appeared. Fukuyama is involved again with the issue of the self-destructive power of capitalism and liberalism, seeking ways in which the social capital built up over the ages may be continued. How does 'trust' arise in a society and why are there so many indications in Western society that it is currently lacking? He describes the decline of the traditional family, growing crime, a tendency towards cultural segregation, and declining trust in government.

Fukuyama traces so many signs of moral decline that one wonders how compelling the triumphal march of liberal democracy really is. But there have been previous periods when social cohesion came under heavy pressure, which were subsequently followed by a civilising mission. He points to Victorian morality as a reaction to the uprooting effects of industrialisation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Now Fukuyama also sees the first signs of a civilising mission against the moral confusion evoked by the transition to the information society.

This cry for a moral 'reveil' illustrates that liberalism cannot stand on its own legs. And here we encounter again the strength of romantic criticism: without 'irrational' forms of community 'rational' democracy threatens to crumble into individualism without borders. Are there any forms of community that may be connected again with a living democracy or will the decline of the nation state result in emphasis being laid on the nation as a cultural entity?

For this purpose we also have to look at developments threatening democracy from the outside. In his concise and uncompromising essay on the end of democracy the French diplomat Jean-Marie Guéhenno explains the deeper background of insecurity. '1989 brings an end to the age of nation states'. After this revolutionary year the market economy faces the prospect of unbridled expansion, whereas it is more apparent than ever that national governments and parliaments are no longer in control of fast growing world-wide economic interdependence.

Why does the slow death of the national state also mean the end of democracy, as we know it? Unmistakably, Guéhenno gets down to the root of the issue when he remarks that up till now all forms of classic representation have been bound to a clearly defined territory. In other words, our democratic institutions have a territorial basis. And the logical consequence of globalisation is: 'The spatial solidarity of territorial communities is disappearing, to be replaced by temporary interest groups'.

Step by step we are entering a post-political world. What are the symptoms of this world in which democracy as a regulating principle is being lost? 'The essential is not to master a territory but have access to a network'. In Guéhenno's view America and Japan are examples of what is in store for Europe. 'In effect, what is Washington today?', he asks rhetorically. It consists of a couple of hundred parliamentarians and as many as thirty thousand lobbyists. Classic democracy is degenerating into uncontrollable networks in which policymakers and business are entangled. Principles are losing their meaning, relationships and a handful of rules, that's what it all comes down to: 'It is immoral to violate a contract but there is no morality outside the rules agreed on in the contract'.

This leads to an important observation on corruption. The scandals that hold France, the United States, Japan, Germany, Belgium and lots of other countries in their grip are no incidents. Under the formal exterior of democracy a fusion of political and economic interests is emerging. Guéhenno writes: 'Corruption is now only an archaic word, with which those nostalgic for another age bitterly describe the inevitable value accorded to networked power. The deal is hallowed as the only truth of our age, and any demand that is solvent is a legitimate demand'.

The corruption scandals that have shaken the Western democracies since 1989 are 'the logical outcome of the triumph of the only universality that remains to us: money'. The demoralisation of the civil service is part of this gloomy self-portrait of present-day democracy. Who still believes - in a world where private interest so unambiguously sets the tone - in this unselfish dedication to the public interest?

What one might argue against Guéhenno is that he too much presents globalisation or mondialisation of the economy as a radically new phenomenon. Had not capitalism been a 'world system' since as long ago as the fifteenth century? Did not Marx write in 1848: 'Through its exploitation of the world market the bourgeoisie has made production and consumption of all countries cosmopolitan'. For the smaller open economies, in particular, internationalisation at the beginning of this new century is not in the least a new phenomenon. In other words, it is too easy simply to announce the end of the national state.

However, the increasing problems of the national states to create order constitute a visible trend. We are talking about powerlessness as regards many global issues arising from the connection that exists between the population explosion, environmental damage, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and the migration issue. Globalisation is not only experienced as an invitation, but also as a threat. Opposite the usual image of a 'global village' there is the image of a 'besieged city': the bombardment of bad news that daily enters the living rooms give many a feeling of being locked up.

The consequences may be serious. Citizens derive less legal certainty, social protection and cultural confirmation from the present state. Now these certainties have

begun to shift, many are turning away from the liberal government and from an open society. They are taking refuge into something else: closing themselves off from the strange outside, they seek the relative safety of 'we among ourselves', the cosy excuse of 'no more vacancies'. Tolerance is suffering under the burden of overdue maintenance. Society has, of course, become more stubborn, making governance far more difficult than it used to be. Meanwhile, the political class has underestimated how fragile social peace is.

The laborious debate on migration and multiculturalism illustrates this. The fast demographic changes in many West European societies have stirred up a feeling of alienation that may easily be abused. In many countries the substantial number of new immigrants combined with still limited integration may easily increase social inequality and cultural segregation. Often it turns out to be hard for migrants to fully participate in society. Admittedly, one may say that actual integration is a matter of generations. However, such expectations have only partially been confirmed by the experiences in the past few decades.

What remains is the conclusion that shared citizenship does indeed have something to do with cultural integration, a sense of community and mutual recognition. Enzenberger's conclusion seems to be justified: 'Nowadays willingness and ability to integrate can no longer be taken for granted in any country and on any side. The multicultural society will remain an empty slogan as long as the difficulties raised by this concept are being declared taboo rather than solved. Until now integration has not been accepted by a large part of European population. The majority is reluctant towards integration, perhaps not even capable of it'.

If a somewhat controlled reception and active integration of refugees, labour migrants, and their family members does not really succeed, we will sooner or later reach the critical margin of what is socially and culturally acceptable. This does not mean that the Netherlands, France, Austria, Poland or Belgium are 'full', because such slogans are only an invitation to permanent distrust towards immigrants. What one should realise, however, is that precarious social and cultural relationships are at stake, which will be a source of tension in, particularly, the bigger cities of Europe. How to cope with this issue will be a huge challenge to West European democracy.

The European Union has reacted rather rashly to Haider's party joining the Austrian government. This illustrates, among other things, the embarrassment of liberal democrats. Confronted by issues such as the weakening of party-based democracy, the frictions of a multicultural society and economic globalisation, they should rather take the rise of populist parties as an invitation to critical self-examination. What now happens is the opposite: an isolation that is bound to heighten anti-European sentiment in Austria.

Some of those who criticise Austria being isolated by the other member states erroneously think that they have to speak soothingly about the 'Freiheitlichen' joining the government. This event should indeed be considered a watershed that may also have effects in other countries. After all, the tension between universal legal standards and local cultural identities may be noticed everywhere. The Hungarian historian István Bibó wrote: 'Democracy and nationalism have similar, closely connected roots. If this connection is broken, serious lapses may ensue'. In other words: when romantic imagination ceases to be democratically embedded, when national identities start to roam, a situation may easily arise where violence is stirred up. The defence of an open society in a world increasingly without borders forces us to rethink the cultural foundations of democracy: not to exclude but to include people.

IV. Humanity and Sovereignty

Anyone who travels from west to east on our continent will soon notice that the century has not been closed off by any means. This is because the consequences of the 'European civil war' (1914-1945) have been divided very unequally. Reconstruction, completed in Western Europe a long time ago and now in full swing in Central Europe, is something people in Russia and Serbia can only dream of. The accumulated conflict matter or rather the great insecurity about the borders of their own country makes the citizens of these countries realise that they are still living in the twentieth century.

In this respect Europe is not a whole, but an area of different time zones. This diverse experience is often explained as the difference between forward and backward. The peoples of the Balkans, for instance, are considered to be caught up in a culture that may predominantly be called traditional, whereas we in the prosperous West are already basking in the sun of a post-modern age. The code words are 'blood feud' versus 'globalisation'. As every civilisation needs rebellious barbarians at its gate in order to define itself, so many look at the edges of Europe.

An essential motive for the formation of the European Union coincides with this view: integration is first and foremost an attempt to maintain internal peace and close oneself off against wars and conflicts outside the borders. Judged by this aim, the diplomatic quarrels in the European Union on the war in Yugoslavia cannot only be dismissed as a moral low. In spite of a long tradition of diverse alliances in the Balkans conflicting opinions have only to a limited extent paralysed the European Union.

However, closing oneself off means creating a distance. The importance of these countries, as defined by the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, is unlikely still to appeal to many people: 'The areas that at first sight were no more than the outer line of defence of Europe were in effect the amply filled storerooms of this continent. They were on no account to be forgotten or given up'. That is not how most of us look at the Balkans and, not surprisingly, our interference with the disintegration of Yugoslavia was half-hearted, which it has remained until today.

This ambivalence is indeed understandable. Idly standing by while human rights are being violated at a large scale is rejected on moral grounds. We are living in what has occasionally been called an 'emotional democracy'. Decreasing indifference to injustice wherever in the world may certainly be seen as moral progress. However, what price are we willing to pay for this humanitarian commitment? Confronted with this question, Yugoslavia's plight is suddenly less relevant: after all, our own safety is not at risk. And for that reason the Western governments are afraid of putting the lives of their soldiers at stake. This sense of justice at bargain price has resulted in the Srebrenica tragedy.

Nevertheless, the war in Yugoslavia was accompanied by the rise of a new paradigm of humanitarian intervention. In this view humanity takes precedence over sovereignty and, if necessary, human rights should be enforced with military means. Nowadays the goals of international politics may be summarised as the defence of national security, reinforcement of the international legal order and respect for human rights. What the new interventionism suggests is clear: there is no fundamental conflict between these goals, all of which can be served with the use of military means.

It is certainly true that in the long run an increasingly more general recognition of human rights by constitutional states will reduce the chances of war and thus make the world safer. The conclusion that democracies do not wage war against each other is anything but nonsense. For that reason promotion of human rights is a completely legitimate goal of international politics. Sovereignty is not a sacred thing and the long years of apartheid in South Africa have shown that there are many means to exert pressure. However, the question is whether the use of military force on behalf of human rights will make the world a safer place and strengthen international legal order. This is not an obvious conclusion.

In a world with numerous dictatorships and civil wars the conflict between security and human rights is visible to anyone. This dilemma is by no means new: it was the dominating theme throughout the Cold War period. In these years there was a tendency to underestimate the importance and the possibilities of an active human

rights policy. A widely heard argument was that laying undue emphasis on oppression behind the Iron Curtain would jeopardise arms control and undermine stability in Europe.

Ten years after the Wall came down we seem to have ended up in the reverse situation. Whereas we are living in a more insecure and chaotic world, we now see an overestimation of the effects of human rights policies and insufficient attention for the possible conflict between security and humanitarian goals. Serving humanity through the military may make the world a lot more insecure. In this way the end pursued may be desecrated by the means that are used.

Eventually, the new interventionism puts humanity before sovereignty. And military force is considered a justified means to enforce this rule. Unfortunately, the issue is more complex. Let us have a look, for instance, at the Gulf War, when a coalition of countries tried to undo the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. That Kuwait is anything but a liberal democracy, rightly, did not matter, to say nothing of allies such as Saudi Arabia. Security in the region and great economic interests was at stake. And for that reason in the Gulf War all emphasis was laid on the defence of sovereignty, to which humanitarian considerations were made subordinate.

The Canadian essayist Michael Ignatieff gives a precise description of the relationship between sovereignty and humanity. The right of self-determination is a fundamental principle in any doctrine of human rights and 'if we move into a world in which coalitions of the willing believe that human rights considerations automatically override the claim of state sovereignty we may actually arrive at the paradoxical and unwelcome result of using human rights to sacrifice human rights'. Military force that seeks to identify with a moral mission remains military force, which does have its own laws. Self-willed violence in the name of humanity may easily lead to a world that is more insecure and lawless.

The war in Kosovo serves to illustrate this. This conflict has had an adverse effect on the relationships with Russia, though an open crisis could be avoided at the very last moment. In this way, after the euphoria about the new world order has subsided, a return to the animosity of the olden days is becoming apparent again. The hubris

behind this scheme of a 'new world order' has added to this development. Recent reports speak of a low in the relationships between Russia and the West. Is this the price we are willing to pay for the half-hearted pacification of Kosovo?

Meanwhile, a new Russian military doctrine has been published. What emerges is the trend towards greater dependence on nuclear arms, which is connected with the conventional superiority demonstrated by NATO in Kosovo. It should not be forgotten that both in the Gulf War and in the war in the Balkans nearly all casualties were on one side, which is unique. After Kosovo Kissinger wrote that the West's technological lead is so definite that other countries can only diminish this inequality by obtaining nuclear weapons. In the summer of 1999 the former Russian Prime Minister and Balkan negotiator, Chernomyrdin, was quoted in Newsweek as having stated: 'the world has never been in this decade so close as now to the brink of nuclear war'.

Kosovo has made it easier for the Russians to continue the war in Chechnya. In spite of all criticism the West has no choice but to take a reserved position. One does not want to let relationships deteriorate even further. But in terms of human rights the situation in Chechnya is many times worse than in Kosovo before the NATO bombardments. That at this moment, contrary to the days of the war in Afghanistan, we are not announcing any economic sanctions, may also be part of the price we have to pay for waging war in former Yugoslavia.

The rule of conduct that, eventually, humanity comes before sovereignty evokes precedents inviting imitation. A self-appointed role as an arbiter of good and evil in the world is liable to abuse. In Kosovo we have seen how controversial a term like 'genocide' was. The chances that agreement will soon be reached about rules on humanitarian intervention are therefore very small. For reasons of sovereignty the United States even resist a permanent tribunal for trying war criminals. Suffice it to conclude that moral principles may be thwarted by the alliances we choose for reasons of our own security.

Not only do we need to think about the conflict between human rights and security, but we must also be aware that human rights and the international legal order are not

simply in line with one another. The Kosovo war was a violation of fundamental rules of the UN-Charter, under which the sovereignty of states is declared the foundation of the international order. The only exception to this rule concerns developments in a country that endanger international peace.

The well-known human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson provides arguments as to how the war against Serbia may be justified under international law. In his view, there was 'an ongoing conspiracy to commit a crime against humanity', 'this conspiracy was producing a humanitarian emergency that threatened international peace' and the bombardments were 'a proportional deterrent offering a reasonable prospect of avoiding the tragedy or at least punishing its perpetrators'.

The problem with conspiracies is, of course, that they are hard to prove and also relate to crimes that have still to be committed. One can easily see that each of these arguments is controversial and the risks of Robertson's line of thinking become apparent when he welcomes American intervention in Grenada and India's intervention in Bangladesh as examples of a similar humanitarian intervention. Of course, every law is shaped by jurisprudence, but there is an enormous tension between the militarisation of human rights and the international legal order.

Interventionism leads to a sharpening of the cultural clash between 'the West and the Rest', thus doing harm to the general acceptance of human rights. When power and ethics become so entangled, the Western countries may easily be reproached for continuing their old expansionism with new means. Ignatieff puts it in these terms: 'Human rights is increasingly seen as the language of a moral imperialism just as ruthless and just as self-deceived as the imperialisms of yesteryear'. This is further aggravated by the fact that humanitarian interventionism is always directed at weak states. Fortunately enough, nobody would think of enforcing respect for human rights with military means in Tibet, which underlines the need for realistic assessment to check high-flown principles.

These cultural conflicts deeply divide the United Nations, making them a powerless organisation where conduct of war is concerned. At the same time many West European governments recognise that NATO has a limited range, i.e. primarily

Europe and immediate surroundings. This may seem a lot, but if we look at these 'immediate surroundings' more closely, not an awful lot is left. In the former Soviet Union deployment of military force is unthinkable. The same goes for ally Turkey. And would NATO fancy taking military action in the Middle East or North Africa on its own initiative? At the most one may say that the war in Kosovo was intended to confirm a legal and moral standard for a future European Union, an attempt whose outcome is becoming more and more controversial, as has been said. With this war surely no general rule has been written that might be enforced outside an enlarged Union.

After ten years of 'peace missions' one should have a keener eye for the unintended consequences of military force on behalf of human rights. The Dutch philosopher Hans Achterhuis remarks: 'Who puts the victims at the centre without looking at the political context, may well make more victims than he may help'. He aptly describes how noble goals may be corrupted by the means that are used. Against those who announce these new times he concludes: 'I fear that in practice, however, we are more likely to fall into an old age in which more and more often military force will prevail. That in spite of continuously changing goals this force should always find moral legitimisation so easily, may make this perspective indeed partly new, but also the more frightening'.

Security, legal order and human rights, every one of them, are fundamental goals of international politics. In a world where equality before the law is overruled by inequality of power, they are conflicting desires. Military power is pre-eminently an instrument to resist an infringement on security. Given the chaotic world, in which we are living, this is sufficient justification for the armed forces. For those who believe that a world order can be planned, any infringement made on this ideal will easily take the form of moral self-reproach. For the very reason that conscience will look for a way out, it is necessary to define the limits of military intervention as sharply as possible. This is not a call for resignation, because there are other possibilities to protect human rights, i.e. diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, arms embargoes. Humanitarian intervention, that is, war on behalf of human rights, cannot become a generally accepted rule in the conduct between nations and should remain an exception.

Whether Kosovo warranted such an exception is a matter one may have doubts about, as György Konrád has. His sharp remarks on how the war was conducted show his commitment as a citizen of a neighbouring country. According to Konrád the bombardments are based on the idea of collective guilt of the Serbs, since the bombs do not distinguish between targets. As a result, innocent citizens became victims, directly and indirectly: ‘who still claims at the end of the twentieth century that collective punishment is legitimate? And what else is bombarding but collective punishment?’

The use of force always has unintended consequences: ‘the intervention has stirred up resentment, vindictiveness and barbarism’. The most concrete expression of these sentiments was the expulsion of the Albanians. Some will argue that the Serbs had already planned to expel the Albanians. But even in that case, one may say that the use of force did not prevent this escalation and even accelerated it. Konrad’s conclusion is that force is only justified for the sake of self-defence, because he knows: ‘a bomb as an instrument is intended for a war between states and not for saving people’.

Timothy Garton Ash, on the other hand, defends the intervention with verve. For him the lessons of Munich 1938 play a major role: ‘Milosevic is not a Hitler, but the basic pattern of appeasement is comparable: the longer you wait, the higher the price’. The events in Kosovo are no ‘holocaust’: ‘But it is, together with Bosnia, the most terrible single event to have happened in Europe for fifty years’. And to complete the parallel: ‘As innocent Germans paid the price for Hitler’s crimes after 1945, so innocent Serbs in Kosovo will pay the price for Milosovic’s crimes’. Eventually, such analogies are not really convincing.

The use of force against Serbia must be disputed, because lasting peace in this region can only be based on inclusion, not on exclusion. The only conceivable answer after three Franco-German wars was the voluntary integration into a more comprehensive whole. The same may be said about the Serb-Croat or the Turkish-Greek wars and conflicts. In essence, European integration is nothing but the formation of one time zone, which will include Central Europe and, on the long run, the Balkans. For the time being this is beyond our imagination, since in this case we are talking about a

Union of around forty member states, which will have drawn in many historic conflicts. With their war the West Europeans have committed themselves to solving this puzzle. In this way a tradition of outside interference may be transformed into a voluntary community sharing the same fate, which is what Kadare is dreaming of.

As long ago as 1903 the first international police force appeared in Macedonia. Nearly a hundred years later there are international peacekeepers in Kosovo and Bosnia. We seem to have come full-circle: a century of outside interference has produced few positive results so far. But if the protectorates of Bosnia and Kosovo become the spring-board for a grand project of democratic temptation and inclusion, in twenty years' time the moment may have come when this region will also leave the twentieth century behind.

V. The Quest for Eternal Peace

Making Europe is a fragile enterprise. Nothing can be taken for granted: we should look beyond the self-evident world we live in. However, such a perspective is difficult since the majority of our citizens were born in an integrating Western Europe, a horizon that seems to be obvious. Even if this is the case, behind the continuous incantation of the irreversibility of 'Europe' a note of uncertainty is hidden. Anyone with only a cursory knowledge of the history of this continent should see through the fragility of the order surrounding us.

There is a European civilisation ideal in the wake of the tradition of Enlightenment, which sees Europe as a goal in itself: an extensive area with open borders where nations, associations and individuals live in security and freedom and where a common standard of justice, prosperity and cultural variety is reached. Characteristic of this ideal is that the imperial tradition, which has scourged Europe for so long, is being converted into a democratic association of states.

There is also a European order in the making, which sees Europe as a means: a whole of organisations and rules serving as a protective coating for the nation states involved and their primary task of legal protection. A mixture of intergovernmental and supranational forms of administration characterises the European order. This set-up is designed to restrain conflicts between nation states and, if possible, turn them into mutually beneficial forms of co-operation. A typical feature of the European order is the very limited use made of the common means of nation building, such as the monopoly of the use of force, a constitutional assembly, a standard language or conscription.

The European ideal is built on a belief in social planning. Seen in this perspective, the European Union is not the outcome of economic laws or social forces, but rather a construct born by political will and moral conviction. Certainly in the long run, this outcome is more open than is often assumed. Europe should be looked at with a feeling for the fragility and the tentative character of the balance that has been achieved.

The integration of Europe is a civilisation ideal, which does not mean, however, that as a means to an end the Union is beyond all criticism. There has always been the hope that the creation of supranational institutions and binding procedures would not only serve general interests, but would also lead to bonds between citizens across borders. Jean Monnet is known to have spoken out firmly on these issues: 'Only institutions grow wiser; they store up the collective experience'. And: 'Institutions govern relationships between people. They are the real pillars of civilisation'.

In this form of integration both the strength and the weakness of the tradition of Enlightenment reveal themselves. The institutional unification is a calculated exchange of interests which, however, does not live on communal symbols or a shared language. To the average citizen the cold integration has never come to life, which will therefore make it permanently vulnerable to a populist undercurrent knowing how to play on the warmth of national or regional identifications.

European integration wants to be nothing but a lesson: 'never again'. Learning from the history of catastrophes remains a controversial idea. European integration, however, may be summed up as the attempt, in retrospect, to define the era of 1914-1945 as a European civil war. This can only be done from the underlying thought that the nations of Europe are 'federal states' of a comprehensive whole and that a violent conflict should be allocated to the domain of national rather than international politics. This attempt to gradually blur the difference between domestic and foreign politics in Europe, to remove existing borders, is unprecedented.

The aim of the European Union is to be no less than a zone of 'eternal peace'. The fundamental question in our age is whether democracies are indeed unwilling to wage war with each other. The argument against is invariably the enthusiasm that was shown by the European democracies on the eve of the First World War, to engage in armed conflict with each other. At the same time, one may indeed claim that there have not been any examples of war between democratic states after 1918. Fukuyama, intending to continue on the same line as Kant, holds that in liberal democracies 'the desire for self-preservation and comfort has overcome the desire to put one's life at risk in a battle for pure prestige'.

How enduring really is this attempt at 'eternal peace'? This may, of course, only be concluded in retrospect, in the event of things going wrong. At the same time, there are developments jeopardising the sustainability of European democracy and with it 'eternal peace', which have already been commented on in a preceding paragraph on 'liberal discontent'. Here we intend to relate the question of the sustainability of democracy directly to the so-called deepening and broadening of the European Union itself.

First of all, the question should be asked to what extent the European Union contributes to its central task of securing the national democracies against decline. Or will the transfer of powers without democratic control undermine the stable relationships between the nations of the European Union in the long run? There is a self-destructive side to European integration as it is now being practised. The rise of nationalist movements that nestle in the democratic 'gap' partly created by the Union, is one of the indications of the risks that are now half-consciously being run. It goes without saying that a European Union where voting shares of about fifteen to twenty percent for extremist parties regularly occur, cannot pride itself on democratic stability. Especially now these movements have an influence on public opinion.

The indirect method to bring about a Union, i.e. the form of co-operation whereby citizens are involved only to a highly limited degree, was perhaps the only one possible indeed. No other example comes to mind of a so far-reaching collaboration between countries without the presence of a directly demonstrable outside threat. To achieve such a substantial degree of solidarity as a currency union under such conditions is quite difficult. After all, how does one create a feeling of urgency in peacetime? The economic threat of the East Asian Countries will not suffice for this, hence all these roundabout routes that are being taken.

However, the question is: how far does the old method of integration extend? We are talking about the unintended consequences of a good idea. One could compare the history of European integration with that of the welfare state. Nobody would deny that insuring people against the consequences of unemployment, illness or old age has led to a more humanitarian society. At the same time, only few people will dispute that this insurance has had many unintended effects, such as a high degree of inactivity.

‘Europe’ also intends to be a civilisation project. But the price of this collaboration based on accomplished facts may be high. The picture of an irreversible development - ‘the train is running, your criticism is too late’- is, of course, at odds with the ‘trial and error’ typical of any democracy. Obscurity sets in when the means of secret diplomacy, usually applied to treaties between states, are used to draw up a constitution for Europe. A new constitution is being made behind the backs of those involved. How long can this work?

The former president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, is right: this institutional approach is running up against its limits. At least that is how he might be understood when he writes: ‘I maintain that the method that may have been useful in the past is now no longer suited to make progress’. It is undeniable that too little identification has developed with the European institutions and the officials working in them. This hope of the founding fathers has not yet materialised. The accomplished facts have not really become facts of life. Now European integration is making itself felt in many areas of everyday life, the democratic deficit has become a pressing issue.

Only stable democracies, i.e. political communities having some self-confidence, are prepared to open themselves to integration. At the same time, a transfer of powers not subject to democratic control at a higher level will provoke an attitude of self-chosen isolation. In this way the European Union has contradictory effects, which may include stirring up nationalism. Perhaps we will grow towards a Europe of the ‘one-party states’, where, backed by domestic consensus, national delegates will be under increasing pressure to defend national interests at Brussels.

In Europe a community of fate is being developed whose outlines are slowly emerging. What is occurring under our eyes is a constitutional shift, whereby in many domains the border between domestic and foreign politics is becoming blurred. National issues are more and more becoming supranational issues. In a Europe without borders the Kurdish refugees in Italy are also our refugees, in a Europe with one currency the Italian deficits are also our deficits, in a Europe pursuing democratic cohesion the Austrian populist Haider is also our politician. Such a community of

fate, in which the import of cons occasionally exceeds the export of pros, cannot exist without accountability and responsibility.

At the same time, the fundamental question keeps gnawing: is a well-functioning democracy conceivable in a Union with such diverse languages, levels of prosperity, political cultures and legal systems? There are many signs suggesting that the European Union will not become a federation in the classical sense of the word, which implies that the position of the European parliament will remain fundamentally different from that of the national parliaments. How to deal with this in the knowledge that stable democracy is the foundation of the peace we have been enjoying for over fifty years now.

The following big issue is whether this territory of 'eternal peace' may be enlarged by the new countries in Central and Eastern Europe. To overcome the division of 1945 is the essence of the security regime the European Union intends to be. However, this goal will not so much be served by intervening outside the borders of the Union as by taking in new countries. Seen from this angle the Union has no foreign policy of consequence, which was painfully illustrated again in Bosnia. Especially by bringing countries under its civilisation regime will the Union be able to play a role in the world.

But will, in consequence, the core of peacekeeping and providing legal order not erode and finally disintegrate in a Union embracing almost the whole continent? Can such a Union with a future membership of thirty or more countries still be governed in a democratic manner? So far nobody has come up with an answer to the dilemmas connected with this systematic enlargement. The conflict between workable decision-making and equal representation of all countries, in particular, will be sharp. It is clear already now that for a foreign policy to be effective a sort of 'directorship' of Germany, France and Great Britain will be inevitable.

From the end of the sixties new countries have repeatedly been added to the old continental core. First the West (United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark); then the South (Spain, Portugal, Greece); next the North (Sweden, Finland, and Austria); and now the East (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia). The question

is how far this may go without the core starting to erode. How far can integration be stretched and with it the zone of eternal peace in Europe?

Russia will not become a member of the European Union, because who could restore the balance if a continental superpower like Russia were to become part of European integration? Not to mention for a moment the enormous economic disruption and numerous ethnic conflicts that would be involved. The war in Chechnya has revealed a demand for authoritarian government that will make relations between Russia and the West a considerable problem.

The issue of a Turkish membership of the European Union, on the other hand, has become a politically urgent question. Not that a membership may be considered in the short run, but the impression has struck root in Ankara that the Union is hiding behind the country's lagging economy or the violation of human rights in order to cover up a cultural argument. Christian Europe is supposed to be unwilling to make room for an Islamic country.

Many people look for European cohesion in a defined civilisation – i.e. Latin Christianity – which as a democratic minority has to defend itself against the powers of the Orthodox and Islamic world. The attraction of such traditions is what the American political scientist Huntington tried to describe in his study on the clash of civilisations. The chances that a new line of conflicts will run between Western Christianity, Orthodox Christianity and Islam, can certainly not be ruled out, as we can see daily in Bosnia's microcosm. In a Europe seized by secularisation, age-old religious boundaries will decidedly also play a role. In the process of enlarging the European Union affinity with Catholic Hungary, for instance, appears to be greater than with Orthodox Bulgaria.

Of course, this argument is open to criticism. The line of fracture between Orthodox and Western Christianity certainly does have its problems. Would anyone like to argue that Orthodox Greece does not belong to Europe? Surely, it would be peculiar if the birthplace of European culture were not counted as part of the European Union? At the same time, it is true that relationships with Greece are marked by suspicion,

which suggests great differences in political culture and makes many people sigh that the European Union would be better off without Greeks.

The cohesion of Western Europe is less pertinent than Huntington thinks. Using Huntington's own phrasing, one may point to differences as those between the Catholic South and Protestant North in Western Europe. Protestant like-mindedness was surely one of the reasons why the Netherlands have so strongly insisted that Great Britain and now the Scandinavian countries accede to the European Union.

The major criticism levelled at this culturalistic view is concerned with Huntington's underestimation of national states which, cutting across the pattern of the supposed 'clash of civilisations', form coalitions on the basis of power considerations. European history does prove, for instance, that within one 'civilisation' numerous crippling wars are possible. At the same time the Gulf War demonstrated that Islamic solidarity is also rather weak.

Though Huntington tends to overlook regional and national contrasts within civilisations, the 'clash of civilisations' describes a trend in international relations after 1989. This is also demonstrated by the limited power Western Europe has to influence the cultural development in its immediate surroundings. To what degree do the countries of the European Union succeed in introducing their social model outside their own borders? Can somewhat stable democracies develop in regions such as the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa? Not only economic modernisation but also cultural identities play a role. In both the Islamic and Orthodox world the historic interpretation given to the relationship between secular and spiritual power does not fit in easily with Western tradition. This history explains the weak 'civil society' in many of these countries.

Turkey is a secular state which nonetheless struggles with the fundamental problem of the separation of church and state. Shortly after the First World War Atatürk introduced a 'revolution from above', pushing Islam back into the position of a private religion. Though the separation of church and state has been successful, it has led to a democratic dilemma in Turkey: in order to maintain the secular state, political pluralism has been restricted - parties with an orthodox religious character

continuously face bans - and the role of the army, which has appointed itself guard of the constitution, is also disproportionately great. The armed forces have intervened several times in the post-war period and in this way they have added to a political culture that is responsible for fundamental violations of human rights. In short, it cannot be claimed that in judging a possible Turkish membership, Islam does not feature as an issue.

At the same time, Turkey's strategic position on the line of fracture of East and West, the economic importance of the country and, in particular, the exemplary function of Turkey as a secular state with a predominantly Islamic population make it imperative that the relationships between Turkey and the European Union be good. Can the promise that Turkey can become a member be brought any nearer in future years? A fundamental openness towards Turkey will have to be based on the recognition that the country will be the biggest Member State of the Union. Other aspects also to be taken into account are economic possibilities but also structural weaknesses, the great constitutional revolution which membership would require in practice and, finally, the strategic consequences of exclusion.

Finally, the issue of democracy returns in a different way where the future of the Union is involved. Many assert that Europe's aloofness in world politics can no longer be maintained. The primacy of 'domestic policy' so much favoured by many has been little else than wallowing in consumerism under the protective hand of America. Certainly now European dependence on the United States has painfully been exposed in Yugoslavia, great pressure is being exerted to end this situation. It is indeed unthinkable that the specific solutions that came into effect in the first decade after the Second World War should still have the same appeal. If only for reasons of self-respect Europe should take on more responsibility.

But will it not appear that this 'eternal peace' was based on the capitulation of Europe as a world power? An effective role in the world is not possible without a clear 'centre' in Europe. But the very absence of such a centre was the condition for the integration of Europe after 1945. Owing to American dominance, which took care of security and world affairs, the centre of European politics had moved away from the continent. This loss of Europe's role as a global centre was the liberation from an

imperial role, which had brought immense riches to the continent, but had exhausted it at the same time. Would not active European power politics upset the democratic balance in Europe?

Is Europe as a 'democratic empire' possible?' According to the German philosopher Sloterdijk Europe has its own mental mark. That is the recurring thought of a revival of the Roman Empire. Examples of this are the Carolingian Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Napoleonic Empire, the Russian Empire and the Third Reich. Sloterdijk: 'Europe is the stage of imperial transformations, the leitmotiv being a sort of transmigration of the Roman Empire'. In his view, it is impossible to think about European integration without having an impression of Europe as a world power.

After having been absent for fifty years, how can one play a role again on the world stage? That would ask for German dominance, not just economically like now, but also in a political sense. Perhaps it will be a Franco-German centre of gravity, or a directorate of the three major European powers, but without a centre it will not work. Any attempt to give 'Europe' a real external presence will lead to increased internal tensions. Germany's hesitation to fill the European vacuum is being met with some understanding. At the same time, the European Union is to an increasing degree exposed to this pressure to engage in big politics.

The European Union should be taken seriously as a first historic attempt to create a zone of 'eternal peace'. Will it be possible to save Immanuel Kant's old ideal under new circumstances? Eventually, we can conclude that half a century of peace and prosperity has decreased the sense of vulnerability of democracy. What are the conditions that enable citizens to be open to the world and how can these be strengthened? Maintaining a democratic culture will just have to be a sustained effort. What we take for granted in everyday reality may well turn out to be more fragile than we assume.

Never has the illusion of security better been described than in the autobiography 'Die Welt von Gestern' of the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig. It describes the decline of a provisional attitude to life. During his early years Zweig does not feel like committing himself to anything definite. The more possessions one collects along the path of life,

the heavier one's step will be, and so, the emptier and smaller the living space, the easier it will be to close the door. This feeling of I am there, but not completely so, is the way to keep reality at a distance. To be detached from a defined place and time, this is the recognisable freedom Zweig is looking for.

With the change of power in Germany and the growing pressure on Austria the feeling of temporariness is taking on an increasingly more threatening overtone. The cosmopolitan writer sees his space to move shrink before his very eyes, while he is cherishing his native soil more intensely: 'Not yet had that horrible state begun of not having a native country, that nerve-racking feeling of dropping into a void with open, seeing eyes, while knowing that whenever you think you've found a firm foothold somewhere, you may be expelled any moment'.

The free choice to live with a suitcase in one's head gradually becomes a compulsion to be ready with a suitcase in one's hand at any moment of the day. The desire to be a world citizen changes into an astonished realisation of the importance of having firm ground under one's feet. Cosmopolitanism only thrives in a secure environment. In other words: worldly life starts with a solid roof and a valid passport. Vienna of around the change of the century was such a place where slowness and liveliness went together. At the same time, the indestructible certainties of that world turned out to be deceptive. Nobody saw the signs of decline. The wars that followed were those of an 'unsuspecting generation', as Zweig wrote. One thing is sure: yesterday's world is of all times.

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