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Cultural Identity in the European Union: The Discovery of a New Challenge

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**CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION:
THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW CHALLENGE**

A THESIS FOR THE HONORS PROGRAM

MARCELLO BRUNI

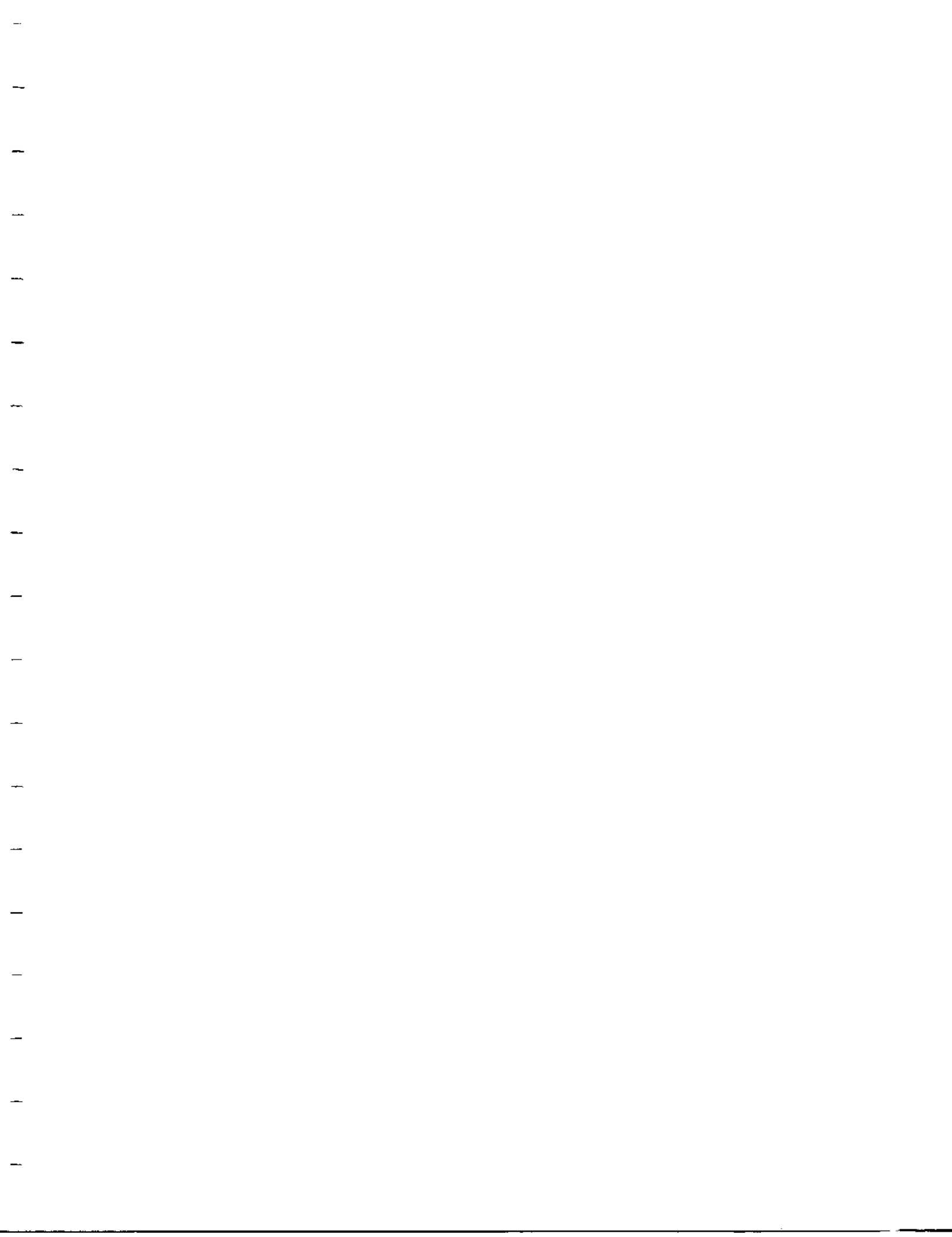
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ABSTRACT

Cultural identity represents the impending problem that must be overcome in the integration process of the European Union. The significance of the Maastricht Treaty is now embodied in its implementation from the European super-national level to the national one. In this regard, the citizens of each member state appear to be confronted by the bifurcating enigma posed by the European integration issue that challenges the psychosociological perception of nationhood. This paper emphasizes the configuration of a new European federative cultural identity which complements -- but does not substitute -- the primordial, or national, identification of each individual within the context of the member states. In order to discern this new European phenomenon, the Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, Historical, and Military factors are analyzed from a psychopolitical perspective regarding their interconnection with the European Union integration.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural identity constitutes the new wind that blows on European unification. Characterized by a multiplicity of factors, its implications require an attentive analysis, where cultural unity epitomizes the new quandary of the European Union's integration process. The Maastricht Treaty has vigorously manifested a turning point for both European and world politics since November of 1993. The antecedent political institutions forged by the pre-Maastricht European Community's relative carelessness have now matured into either a fruitful production of its recent past or into a frigid fragmentation of a belligerent memory. Given the new approach portrayed by the European consolidation, international relations have acquired a completely new flavor. In order to fully realize the meaning, as well as the rationale, behind such a supra-national integration, one must first examine the justifications of its progressive proximity.

The problem of cultural identity in the integrative process of the new-born European Union is reflected in the profound

organization of its political maturation. With the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty a consistently difficult intricacy has emerged from the identity issue on the Psycho-Political plane among Western Europeans, after a period of apparent negligence of the former European Community member States. Given the idea behind the Common Market and considering the liberalization of trade between the former European Community countries, which consists of a gradual but unavoidable capitulation of the historical borders between nation states, the evidence of a purely economic constituency of such a voluntary unification emerges. Nonetheless, our contemporary world is facing the configuration of a new socio-political entity which might incorporate the elements of a completely innovative society with new norms, values, and establishments.

Indeed, the institutionalization of the premises noted above can lead to the actual formation of the new Europe. Quite naturally, such a process must find its justification in the present political enterprise, in spite of the threatening challenges which might impede the conglomerative mechanism. Nevertheless, a new political culture must be developed during the process of European integration, although such an aim cannot be achieved if old nationalistic and regionalistic ideals are

maintained in each single member of the European Union. In addition, the creation of the supernational fusion should depart from the common ground on which modern Europe is founded, with its rich history from which the continent, at least on the west side, has absorbed its similarities.

The toleration of cultural diversity nurtures a new culturally diverse Europe, which is also integrated through an attendant political evolution.

In considering the structure of an explicit development of a European social universality, this paper presents a comprehensive examination of European identity. The sequence of expression should originate from an introductory, historically based justification concerning the relevance of an identity study from a psycho-political perspective on the European integration basis. After having observed the general argument, one should consider contrasting factors on an individual basis. Examples are found in national identity determinism and feudal-type regionalistic upheavals as principal issues for European identity discussion. Afterward, the context of extra-communitarian immigration should be examined to the extent that it might influence the legislative as well as the cultural formation of the new Europe. Nevertheless, the analysis of preoccupying negative aspects

should propel this inquiry toward the inspection of socio-political-economic aspects which would become extremely portentous in regard to the subject. For instance, the dispute over sovereignty, the super-national nature of institutionalization, the decision of power sharing and the administration of resources between members, the confirmation of a democratic republican prototype of government, and the inevitable heritage of the socialist idea, together would constitute the structure for a potential creation of the European Union's new identity.

Ultimately, this paper considers the significance of vertical versus horizontal characters of the new European Union, reflecting its own identity configuration and how the active participation of the school is indispensable. Only by obtaining an ulterior political culture could a truly new dimension be secured in the unifying Europe; until then, the study of political-psychology from the broader perspective of a socio-economic-anthropologic tissue ought to be the conducting factor in providing the key to understanding.

There are at least six factors present in the Western European integrative process: Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, Historical, and Military. A strong interrelation

between all of these will contribute to a more in-depth analysis of the "typically" European phenomenon that is taking place in the old Continent -- the birthplace of Western civilization as we know it. By investigating each variable individually, and by outlining the significance of their interaction, this paper shall demonstrate that Europe has inevitably taken the path to a single federative *European* identity.

Part I

Governmentally-Implemented

Integration

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Economic necessity has propelled Western Europe toward a constantly more progressive intensification of the interconnections between its nations' interests. Bound by the misery of World War II, the countries of Western Europe have managed to rise from the ashes left by the disastrous conflict. Moreover, the most significant aspect embracing the Western portion of the continent is delineated in the so-called "investment in man," better identifiable as the Marshall Plan. With the United States' lucrative "donation" of \$14 billion (figure from 1947-48) for the "well-being" of both the victorious and the defeated European powers, a common linkage was introduced for the first time among such very bellicose countries.¹ Of course, there were many motives leading to the U.S.' "magnanimity" towards Europe. To name a few: creating a potentially enormous exporting haven for North American goods (which is, to date, still the largest importer from the ever present U.S.A.); establishing a protectorate to obstruct the threat of a menacing Soviet Union; "preserving" the free

development of democracy in the world (especially if it is of a free or mixed market type of economy).

Since the Schuman Declaration of 1950 and more precisely since the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community, (ECSC - instituted during the Treaty of Paris in 1951), the process of European amalgamation has advanced greatly. Because of years of diverse "Communities" and a complex Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Europe has reached the point of considering and ratifying a controversial (for some) Maastricht Treaty.² This treaty includes an extremely significant single monetary policy, which makes the E.C.U. the single European currency. The ECU, constructed from the already-tested European Monetary Union [EMU], is heir to the European Exchange Rate Mechanism [ERM], as well as a deepening of the new-born European Union. In order to improve economic efficiency, though, the Common Market must reorganize, abiding by effective deregularization of its economic trade policies instead of "hiding" in even higher regularizations with the present condition. The present EU's decision-making role has now indubitably superseded the sole harmonious characteristics of the former EC.

Besides obvious functional contingent problems of further

levels of integration, the European Monetary Union will become the focal economic motivation, carrying with it a factual congruence and ultimately a nominal convergence of financial policies, in addition to public expenditures at the European level. Furthermore, the actual realization of the EU's internal market under a single currency does, indeed, transfer 80% of the decisional power on matters of politics, economics, finance, monetary supply, and society from the nations to a centralized European Union's decreeing internal structure.³ Such operation will certainly generate a new tangible and symbolic meaning for the European super-national entity. From the goal of merely reducing trade barriers, the "new" Europe has progressively augmented its socio-economic status through the inevitable spillover effect obtained from what appeared to be only a financial advantage for every member state.⁴ In fact, the new tendencies of the economy within the Union are such that interdependence has become a unique factor at the regional, national, and international levels, distinguishing the framework of the European productive power in the connotation of one single economy rather than the verge of several national ones seeking advantageous trade benefits. Industrial competitiveness, mutation from statism to privatization, institutional

decentralization, and professional relations are included in the regulatory mechanism established in the Single European Act and are further delineated in the Maastricht Treaty for each member state. Consequently, a comprehensive European Economic policy must now enumerate such differentiations, still keeping in mind the increasingly exigent aspirations of the European labor force.⁵

Presently, the Union must work its way out of economic stagnation and re-energize its socio-economic growth by increasing incentives for production and transmuting pernicious obstacles into more functional unitary policies. Furthermore, "Fortress Europe" will have to deal with outside criticisms, especially from the United States, which is already the most hindered from a more protectionist, unified Europe. In particular, one must recognize that the European Common Market has behaved more productively than the U.S.⁶

POLITICAL INTEGRATION

Political integration is the nucleus of the entire European transformation. Indeed, it constitutes the linkage between the economic circumstances which merged Europe and the further levels of integration which they already have and will continue to produce. However, this question remains: what kind of further political integration is the former European Community prepared to achieve? The Maastricht Treaty surmounted a tremendous obstacle to a deepening of the European integrative process. Nonetheless, such a Treaty has already been debated, as evidenced by Danish rejection and British skepticism, creating quite a high degree of uncertainty about the future of the Union.⁷ One must differentiate, though, because these two member states hail from diverse backgrounds. Denmark was not ready to completely renounce comprehensive social health care, particularly its provision of full maternity leave, coverage which is obviously not envisioned in the EU legislation. Great Britain, on the other hand, has constantly been battling a possible loss of cultural as well as diplomatic distinction in favor of a still amorphous European

entity. At any rate, one still must determine if European integration is developing vertically or verging horizontally. In substance, even the most pro-Maastricht members, such as France, Holland, or Italy, are puzzled by the options: strengthening the pre-existing liaisons among the member states, or opening new borders to potential new members.

One major impediment to the overall ideal of the "United States of Europe" is definitely grounded on the loss of sovereignty, which every country in the Union would undergo. The scenario of international politics is virtually dictated by anarchy, where sovereignty constitutes the main obstacle to regulated relationships. Indeed, sovereignty comprises the supreme source of law for any given country. Such a premise could better identify the nature of international politics and grasp the ultimate relevance in the understanding of the process which Western Europe is enduring. Economic benefits have, thus far, successfully reduced the danger of nations' self-reliance as autonomous entities; nonetheless, a progressive forfeiture of their right to national self-determinism might still be interpreted as a threat to one's own distinct interests.

Another political problem may be envisioned in the actual functions of the European legislative mechanism. In detail, the

current virtual omnipotence of the European Council in terms of its tacit power as the decision maker of the integrative agenda might raise particular doubts in regard to its capability to actually carry out common foreign policy, as well as sustain an "equal" internal implementation in the immense differences among its member states. The European Union's "constitution" itself must be revised, given its peculiar contrast between pluralistic principles and chronic "democratic deficit."⁸ For the Union to be a credible and trustworthy entity, existing for the welfare of its people, it must revise its governmental structure, so that "power must be checked by power."⁹ In addition, the EU will still have to deal with both a phantasmagoric "European" bureaucracy and the structural administration of its legislation. The concept of subsidiarity still relies on the will of each single member state and therefore is still subject to delays, malicious technicalities, and diverse interpretations of the law stipulated in Brussels.

The significance of such subsidiarity is contained in the actual delineation of the legislative path; it moves through the systemic and sub-systemic safeguard stipulated in the efficient aspect of the typically European corporatist essence-- from European law - to national ratification - and ultimately on to

regional implementation. In the final analysis, the course of the Union's political integration seems to have set the premises for a new stage of political history such that Europe will irreversibly re-dimension the importance as well as the necessity of national governments. This method will radically preserve its people's primary identity, fundamentally not in contrast with a newly formed, purely European characterization configured beyond a homogeneous depiction of ethnicity, history, geography, religion, beliefs, values, and mores.

One important step that the EU needs to formally face is embodied in the new disposition of the "blocking minority." From the former twenty-three blocking votes necessary to halt any legislation, such a measure will increase to twenty-seven with the formal arrival of the four new possible members: Austria, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, assuming their polities will endorse the referenda for joining the Union.¹⁰

One of the most enigmatic challenges the new Europe will confront abides in fighting the peoples' demoralization and distrust in the role of their state subordination for the European benefit. It will be absolutely imperative to preserve, to a certain extent, the societal safety-net, typical of all recent European history. In such a framework, the EU must

subscribe to a comprehensive political understanding of any European social problem, especially concerning the position of youth in a constantly declining birthrate.¹¹ The young generations in Europe have, in fact, found a contingently difficult reality when approaching the job market, in spite of how skillful and educated they might be, because job training programs are so limited. New graduates entering the job forces after years of painstaking academic achievements are faced with absolute pessimism and employers' unwillingness to absorb the risk to train young individuals.¹² Such a deleterious condition has already been addressed by the Union, but a concrete solution has not yet been determined, beyond the current and minimal number of 60,000 beneficiaries of this program.¹³

The political integration process must also consider the distinctive aspect of fiscal federalism. In spite of the members' ordinary contributions, the bitter question of "European" taxation has not been directly approximated within each country. However, the double standard of a new form of taxation appears to be a needful expedient. A federal tax might, indeed, manifest a harmonious relationship between centralized and decentralized concerns in the citizens' minds, although closer interests would still be directed toward the support of

the state. With the implementation of these federal fiscal policies, three factors might be significant when pondering the effective influence on Europeans' perceptions; *correspondence* - the participation in the decision making process of both taxpayers and beneficiaries; *fair burden* - the proportional diffusion of both benefits and ability-to-pay throughout the Union, according to specific members' financial differentiations; and *fiscal equalization* - the endorsement of heterogeneity between richer and poorer regions within the Union, rendering the distributive effects of interregional incidence increasingly operative and productive.¹⁴

Ultimately, European citizenship constitutes the elemental component of a sound and solid European integration. The political role of each citizen within the Union would eventually have to become a function of primary intensity. The citizens' "contractual" rights and obligations (between them and the state) and the pan-organization would provide their freedom from their national ties, while maintaining their affirmation to social solidarity and rights at the political and humanistic levels within each State with which they are affiliated.¹⁵

MILITARY INTEGRATION

Military integration apparently represents the last step on the EU's agenda. Maybe because of a lack of coordinated effort, and probably out of extreme caution, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization still provides definite military protection in security matters; yet, it is constituted under the umbrella of the United States' power. NATO, however, does not guarantee actual EU security, also supported by the occurrence of historical American tardiness in military response (see Hitler's march in Paris in 1940 and the necessity of nuclear missiles on European soil during the Cold War). NATO did not exist during World War II; therefore, Western Europe and the United States were not linked through an official bonding alliance.

Nonetheless, one should objectively question whether or not the US would have entered the War in Europe if Japan had not bombed Pearl Harbor. More precisely, the US had to evaluate the extent of its isolationist perception of "safety" within its boundaries. History has taught that the Americans did, after all, have vested interests in Europe and in the prevention of European unification

under one power. By the same logic the US instituted the NATO military alliance with the only difference being the prevention of the Soviets' newly found hegemonic prerogative directed toward the European Continent, instead of the overthrow of the Nazi menace. At the same time, the US' discovered interest in Europe was formed by a true *double containment* policy as well, which not only aimed at faltering Soviet expansionism, but also envisioned the resurgence of a democratic Germany under liberal circumspection.

With the fall of the Communist regime in the former Soviet Union, new significance has been awarded to the global economic and political scenario. The break-up of the Leninist/Stalinist style Soviet rule in Eastern Europe, as well as in Northern-Central Asia, has completely redesigned alliances' maps, economic influences, and ideological streams in virtually all the geopolitical areas of our contemporary world. As a painful result of such a reconfiguration of power, diverse and deeply alarming territorial and economic fragmentation has occurred on the intercontinental scene. In this regard, ethnic cleansing has become one of the major trends of contemporary political and military enigmas. The Western Allies constantly face the possibility of massive coercive interventions in many regions

around the globe. Observing the breakup of the Soviet "empire," one can distinguish something of a domino effect: the emergence of eight new independent states in Central Asia, where severe turmoil has taken place among cultures with ethnic, religious, and political differences within their populations; in Eastern Europe another six of the former Soviet Republics have experienced similar consequences. In light of such a precarious outlook, many developments give rise to quite perplexing questions, especially dealing with stability and relative well-being of the international community in general and of the European Union in detail. Indeed, ethnic despair encompasses many other factors which can easily destabilize an already delicate political equilibrium present in virtually every continent. In particular, radical religious fundamentalism and secular nationalism have replaced the fear of Communist expansionism and of the too eagerly celebrated end of the Cold War.

Some have questioned the modern necessity of NATO as a military alliance; the global contemporary predicament fully manifests the significance of the Western coalition, in spite of chronic indecisiveness and clear leadership embraced in its overwhelmingly unprepared responsibility and limited envision of

the real issue. The end of the duopolistic era in the world has activated an idiosyncratic movement leading to quite a critical bifurcation: globalism versus nationalist fragmentation. In both these prospects the significance of NATO remains a central one. One major problem is delineated in the lack of a long-term policy that would enable the Western States to deal more promptly with ethnic and religious acrimonious uprisings. Even from an economic point of view, NATO might embody an incredibly determinant role if the following were to occur: its structure could evolve from a purely militaristic alliance to a more comprehensive international institution; old rival countries could interconnect in actual cooperative common interests; such interests could be safeguarded through an integrative focus of its policies--especially concerning the military value of the alliance itself; and true economic ties could be developed to create a protection net for trade and investments among its members. These combined efforts would establish a progressive nature of a new identity for NATO, rather than a regressive one aimed at enunciating old international barriers. Such a reinvented NATO could be ready to operate in both directions of the world's integration or segmentation. In either case, it would possess the qualities to face, and eventually overcome, the

challenges of economic blocs such as NAFTA; EU; APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation); ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations); Japan; possibly China; and Russia with its renewed influence over its former republics of the Soviet era.

NATO might be directed toward such a new fundamental character through the newly idealized "Partnership for Peace" which is open to include all former Soviet republics as well as Russia itself. Given that such a "partnership" does not foresee full membership, NATO is confronted with diverse complications on the international scene, while *hamletically* questioning itself concerning the endurance of a military coalition when Communism--the common enemy--is perceived to be defunct. Contrary to such sagacity, though, a perplexed and troubled Russia seems to exist, apparently behaving no differently than in the recent past regarding its hegemonic foreign policy. In spite of the fact that Russia is still the largest country in the world, several key factors - military status, political stability, and economic imperviousness - remain in exceptionally critical conditions.

In order to thoroughly analyze the universal condition in the contemporary scenario, one must examine the actual essence of the existing displayed forces. We have already mentioned the new circumstances under which the USA sails, having lost its

principal nemesis; it wanders around in search of illusive new antagonists almost exclusively dictated by nationalist sentiments and spiritual extremism. The possible innovative function of NATO has also been identified as depending on its own will and structural substance to adjust to the world's events.

The case of American strategic indecision can be now depicted in the cases of Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, which have featured the crises of a global unipolar system. In sum, the uncertainty of the USA as the only remaining agonizing pseudo-superpower may eventually cause the Europeans to reflect upon the possibility of a self-coordinated military effort. Still, in the the Balkan situation, the U.S. has manifested a shameful (yet, according to some - astute), refusal to intervene or even to take a position. At any rate, this example demonstrates the exigence of a comprehensively self-reliant European security, while emphasizing an almost compulsory unreadiness of a coordinated European military intervention. A completely European effort would have indicated a matured understanding among the Union's members. In such a prospect an actual alternative for the North Atlantic Alliance might have been envisioned in the evolution of the "armed" branch of the European Union: the Western European Union.

Yet, the WEU has been in an embryonic stage since its birth, having to face incredible international resistance and an ocean of structural obstacles. Presently, the "Eurocorps," an actual initiative in the context of the WEU, includes 7,000 troops extracted from the armed forces of Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, and Luxembourg; it is predicted to reach 40,000 within the next three years.¹⁶ It is by no means comprehensive of all the EU's members, although it envisions concrete expansion for all members. To some extent, the formation of such a Eurocorps was designed as a bolstering incentive for a prompt alignment of the other members. So far, some of the Union's constituents have shown obvious perplexity in thinking that the actual emergence of a singular European military force would endanger the functional patronage exerted by the US, causing grave unbalance within the Union and restoring a nineteenth-century type of balance of power.

If the end of the Cold War has left the United States without a figurative nemesis, then the unification of Germany has compelled the reconsideration of the European Union's essence and internal symmetry. In the development of a common foreign policy, the EU must consider the delicacy of multiple facets such as power sharing and power administration - prospects which inevitably place military integration at the end, as the most

delicate step toward ultimate unification. Although NATO appears to remain a lasting institution, it is also largely denoted by its inertia. In addition, American ongoing military withdrawal from Europe will result in a symbiotic advent of French and German power in the European stage, leaving the British perplexed at a crossroad between its sanctimonious perception of a special relationship with its American "friend" and a deeper involvement in a new, fully implemented European security. In such a dualistic - quasi ontological scenario, the *Infidious Albion* will no longer be able to afford a solitary stand. In either circumstance the United Kingdom will have to renounce its historically detached identification from continental Europe. Otherwise, it will become progressively more dependent on the increasingly apathetic United States of America, while incrementally experiencing further dysfunctional isolation.

The Maastricht Treaty strives to eliminate the risks of military upheavals by envisioning the achievement of mutual common security. In fact, it conceives the "commitment to the eventual framing of a common defense policy, which might in time lead to a common defense" (Article B and J.4, same wording).¹⁷ In this regard, the WEU would finally become the foundation for the illustrated implementation; for now, at least, the *Eurocorps*

comprises the nucleus of a possible mutual, diplomatic, military
security.

Part II

**Effects of the Actual Political Integration:
the Significance of a New European Society**

PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The extent to which personal perceptions, values, beliefs, and emotions constitute the function of individual and group behaviors is rooted in the foundations of the culture to which one belongs. How such a culture is shaped, indeed, represents the nucleus of a people's attitudes. These elements must be deemed essential for the realization of one European entity. In this regard, one should identify the absolute importance invested in the future European generations without transcending the significance of the present cohorts' attitudes toward the possible future supra-natural entity of the Continent. Today's youth are, in fact, faced with a substantial conceptual bifurcation in their perceptions of belonging.

In Europe, youth, begin at the societal level before approaching the super-national one. Unemployment is still relatively high, while the working forces constantly tend to obstruct the access to younger cohorts within their ranks, thereby, exasperating an aging population (especially unskilled) of unemployed. In addition, the European youth are still the

expression of an ideological bifurcation within the European scenario itself. In reality, the younger forces constitute the most energetic propensity for a more integrated Europe and, at the same time, they nurture the fervor of old nationalist sentiments. Nonetheless, the young incorporate the future of European society as a whole too blatantly and, as such, embrace the true essence of "European" social cohesion in prospect. In primis, they must be considered with particular concern.

Social change, regardless of youths' peculiarities, underlines a very fundamental aspect confronting the European integrative redefinition of its populace. The concepts in which society vitalizes itself are too often identifiable in its diachronic context. The course of life is indeed directed by a quantity of rules and norms from which no one can discern. As twin events, one must consider contingent factors that determine the life course and the socialization process which shapes the belief system and the perception of the surrounding environment.

The instance in which the European Union navigates might represent only an infinitesimal circumstance of its present societal structure. The norms dictated by Western culture are inauspiciously seeded in almost two millennia of religious imposition. As Feuerbach identified in his Utilitarian-

Materialistic analysis of the end of the nineteenth century, religion is the alienating factor of humanity.¹⁸ Indeed, the Puritan ideology has never been truly eradicated from people's behavior, creating profound idiosyncrasies within our societal structure, further fossilized through the omnipotence of time.

Equality, sex roles, and responsibility alone are the smallest manifestations of mankind's limits, which, being paradoxically interminable, have thrown European society in its own definition of space and time, establishing the nature of its interpersonal and associative relationships. Such a deleteriously ontological background has quite naturally edicted the entity of the historical and contemporary socio-cultural context, the effects of which are detrimental to the formation and the evolution of the self, rendering it labile, insecure, and anomic. Observing the emphasis on the importance of social and personal consciousness, one notes that the concept of socialization assumes even more peculiar significance. Throughout infancy and childhood people are inundated with "human virtues," accumulated across their socialization experiences. As early as birth they start to be embodied in the human lineage through the family.

The problem arises in the fact that society's expectations

are inscribed in the burden of time and civilization. More precisely, individuals are socialized and function at the same time as socializing agents; consequently, family, peers and school complete the process of socialization. In such settings one learns how to be cooperative and more emphatically competitive. Here is where our perception of aggression is completed. In this situation we learn how to refer to others and supposedly we develop some kind of Millian "self-directed altruism."¹⁹ Such is also the occasion in which we should comprehend sex differences and internalize the delineation of responsibility.

However, does such a portrait reflect the actual European situation? Adherence to the Union's decree in matters of the social structure of single member States is a prerogative for an efficient single market and for further deepening of the European Union core role (Denmark, for instance). Adaptation to European social standards, though, might define the solution for national or even regional political extremism or for the affirmation of racism intended as ethnic incompatibility. Even so, such a social adjustment must be assisted by a peremptory societal guarantee found in the constitution of the previously mentioned "safety net," delineated in the most common welfare system. In

constitute the need for psychological, sociological, political and economic analyses of the matter. An inquiry approached from a socialization perspective undoubtedly has the components for an accurate discernment, which would include the interdisciplinary premises.

The term *Neo-Nazism* is currently used as a synonym for the Skinheads' ideology. This phenomenon was paradoxically born in the late nineteen seventies in England -- the country that fought the original Nazi threat most avidly. Through the years this revived doctrine has acquired the nomenclature of the "Hooligans'" menace.²¹ This new belief is obviously based upon the doctrine of Hitler's Mein Kampf, although the vast majority of its new followers have actually little or no knowledge of its contents and of the real intentions of its author.²²

The contingent peril is derived from the leading characters in their diverse environments. For example, Althan and Schonhuber play a tremendously influential role in the underground German political scene by managing Neo-Nazi propaganda first and exasperating right wing political strategy second. In France, Le Pen has created a serious radical alternative to social democratic ideas which govern the nation; in Austria, Haider is threatening concrete reappraisal against

the fast-growing number of Eastern European immigrants and former Yugoslavian refugees; in Italy, Bossi regenerated idiotic anachronistic ideas of separation between the North and South, ignoring historical Northern faults in the "*Questione Meridionale*."²³ Besides such figures, the main interrogative ascends when considering the hypnotized masses. Who are they actually? Where do they come from? To what part of society do they belong? Before examining such questions, though, it is necessary to excavate, at least partially, historical and traditional factors which have denoted Nazism in its origins.

Everyone knows who Hitler was and what he accomplished according to his will. What might escape the onlooker is the seeds which have produced such an abhorrent outcome. At the end of the eighteenth century Emmanuel Kant stated, "The sleep of reason generates monsters," concerning the Prussians of the second "Reich." Well, such a "sleep" is verifying itself again. Of course, Germany is the birthplace of Nazi radical extremism, which also constitutes the Skinheads' anthropological justification. Indeed, the Hegelian Idealism formed the deepest conviction in the Germans' minds. He even solicited the idea of a "natural" geographical predisposition that configured Germany at the center of the European continent and consequently at the

spite of extensive governmental expenditures, some degree of social assistance must be provided by the EU on the comprehensive basis of its social diversity. Probably by learning from common mistakes on the grounds of governmental assistance, actual efficiency might be furnished even within the societal strata of the lower classes, whose comfort would constitute the most significant advantage in the framework of European well-being in the respect of its developed "social" rights. A direct emphasis ought to be focused on the contemporary status of most European ghettos from which arise populist malcontent and the dissemination of right-wing types of dissatisfied radicalism.²⁹

In such a context the problem of Neo-Nazism is very rapidly rising throughout the world and with particular concentration in the cradle of its European origins. A renewed wave of extreme violence has struck many sites in Europe, where a new type of alert is grounded on the cruelty of the violent crimes which are reported with increasing frequency against extra-communitarian workers and immigrants. The number of victims appears to be relatively low now but is constantly increasing. The focal point now is to identify the potential for a revival of the Nazi ideology, which would inevitably constitute the chance for another global conflict of aberrant proportions. Such examples

center of the universe in his concept of the phenomenology of nature.²⁴ Nazi and Neo-Nazi's motto, "Deutschland Über Alles," was in fact already visualized in the immanent ideation of the role that portrays Germany as the supreme nation. This is obviously only a part of the gigantic philosophical castle idealized by Hegel, whom Nietzsche himself (the most misinterpreted and misunderstood thinker of the nineteenth century, to whom Nazi intellectualism so blatantly refers) defined as the excrement of history. Although living in such a diachronic dimension, the idea of the dominating "destiny" of Germany has always been quite widespread among its population.

German primordial history itself, from Beowulf to the "Barbarian" tales, has constantly emphasized the cultural aspect of aggression and tribal heroism. The First, Second, and Third Reichs were not created by coincidence, nor was German identity - - until now. The query is: what would be the essence of a potential Fourth Reich? How likely and how disruptive would its affirmation and uprising be? Clearly, its effects would be incredibly devastating. Quite a few instances have been detected recently. This year seventeen deaths have been attributed to Skinheads' activity in Germany alone. None of these casualties were from European countries; all belonged to different races --

mostly Turkish.²⁵ As previously mentioned, the German phenomenon is not unique at all. Czechoslovakia, for instance, is experiencing Skinheads' gang warfare in the streets of Prague, its capital. Contradictorily, Czech president, Václav Havel, had prophesied his country as "naturally thoughtful"; now even the country of Kafka and Hrabal is facing the possibility of becoming another Eastern European unidentifiable disaster.²⁶ Still, the same scenario is evident in other specified countries containing the common denominator of raging violence. Even Sweden, for years the cradle of civilization in the European industrialized age, has manifested the same kind of disease. "White only" is the Swedish Skinheads' scream. Sweden has demonstrated once again how closely correlated economy and social well-being are; when this balance is broken, nationalist extremism springs up.²⁷

Recent studies and observations, mostly funded by the former European Community, have defined Neo-Nazi members as individuals coming from precarious familial conditions. The greatest majority have lived in broken homes where the paternal figure was almost or totally absent. Many of them have even been physically, verbally, sexually and mentally abused, usually by the mother but also by peers and siblings. It has also been

determined that they come from the blue-collar class, more specifically from the lowest range of the working class on the economic scale. In addition, Skinheads maintain a worrisome low educational level and live in suburban areas of large cities and ghettos, even though this last figure is rapidly changing, since the Skinheads' movement appears to be spreading toward the countryside.²⁸

All of this information should furnish us with further insight concerning Neo-Nazi constituency. What could be of ulterior interest is intrinsic in its political identity and socialization. As observed, the recession effect can impact norms and values of an average family quite strongly. Then, if such a family were particularly troubled, populist ideas would yield to noticeable influences upon it. For example, considering Europe and the United States, democracy, being either of social or liberal nature, has underlined a major stratification within its society in which social mobility has become progressively more arduous. Teenagers, after having lived an already uneasy life, have to face and fight the impossibility of escaping their psycho-social condition. Their feelings of alienation, frustration, and helplessness are directed toward an authoritarian prototype of submissiveness. In Fromm's words,

they would seek liberation from their occlusive status, aspiring to find freedom in a congregational and ideological acquiescence which would entitle them to a new identity and even of a social role in their subculture.²⁹

When this new status is achieved, the equilibrium in a society becomes gravely altered. If a subculture, such as a Neo-Nazi one, were to viciously be in fashion, being populist in nature, then it would rapidly delineate deep idiosyncrasies within the society in which the subculture exists. Given such a condition, one must also consider the historical affirmation of Nazism under the same more or less troubled democracy with an unstable economic system and a labile societal cohesiveness. Such was the case which saw Hitler's authority seizing power in Germany at the beginning of the century in the Weimer Republic. Social passivism symbolized the unique key that unlocked the door of ambition to the morbid swastika.³⁰ As Gramsci emphasized, regarding the fascist upcoming in Italy, "it is not true that passivism is innocuous; it is active and operative."³¹ Indeed, social "laissez-faire" could lead Neo-Nazism and the new right in general to a fully accredited new entity which might be infinitely too costly for our own future. The extremist phenomenon is becoming even more seriously organized than it

seems. Its political determinism is reflecting crucial messages to the world. One of the most meaningful features is contained in the Skinheads' training camps. Arkansas and Alabama in the United States, Bavaria and Saxony in Germany, and Liverpool and Manchester in England are strictly observed by the local police forces and by a specially institutionalized international intelligence.³² In Eastern Germany in the small town of Cottbus, near the Polish border, a newly formed Neo-Nazi political party was present at the local elections. "Europe is white" and "Germany to the Germans" were its slogans. Preoccupation in the area is enormous, but concern should be global as well.³³

Presently, the German government has officially initiated a war against extremism and violence. It might already be too late to stop a process that has been boiling in the blood of the cultural spine of a nation for ages. Recently, two hundred fifty thousand people gathered in Frankfurt to prevent another Skinhead brutality. Events like this have also occurred in many other places where the fear of Neo-Nazism is high.³⁴ The potential of the Neo-Nazi conquest of power must not be underestimated. Whoever thought Nazism was a dead nightmare has greatly been proven wrong.³⁵ The menace must be eradicated and it must be achieved through a more functional social system where

education and family instruction provide a solid base for knowledge. In such a manner can extremism and social plagues be overcome while facilitating the formation of a common European culture.

Still in the perspective of societal uncertainty and for the sake of European social structure as a whole (which can be easily generalized as the social texture of any industrial or post-industrial society, i.e. USA), one must discern the trends of contemporary capitalism, even in mixed economies, as is the case of virtually all of the Western European productive powers. In a more clear picture, it is necessary to observe that the size of the contemporary European bourgeoisie is dangerously shrinking, leaving an untamed power vacuum in the moderate center political spectrum, a typical stronghold of middle class credo. More importantly, such a societal lacuna highlights radically deeper social idiosyncrasies distinctive of the industrial revolution era, when the "advanced" world observed the unequal distribution of wealth into the hands of an oligarchic new aristocracy -- at the expense of the exploited proletariat. Yet, beyond such a blatantly Marxist depiction of the industrial society, lies the substance of cruel evidence which should serve as an indication of a fundamental preoccupation.

New incentives must be found in the social aspect of the European environment with particular regard to the promotion of occupation, adequate social protection, social dialogue, development of human resources, and ousting of social exclusion. Included in the Social Charter of the Union and enlisted into the functions of the Union's legislative majority are the implementations of social integration, mutual cohesive understanding in the field of information, workers' consultation, men-women equality, and integration of social emarginates. On the other hand, the Charter envisions unanimity concerning social security, workers' social protection, workers' protection in case of contract annulment, collective representation in defense of workers and entrepreneurs' interests - including co-management, employment conditions of non-communitarian citizens regularly living in the E.U., financial contribution for the promotion of occupation, and creation of jobs. Quite importantly, one must distinguish the previous European-centered affairs from the still vital national jurisdiction on matters of wages, syndicate rights, right to strike, and right of lock-out.³⁶

With such premises and keeping in mind the Europeans' declaration of war against unemployment, the labor movement appears to be facilitated in its establishment as a European

force. Nonetheless, labor as a cross-national entity still has quantifiable problems in generating a truly international voice. Until a comprehensive set of ethical standards has been soundly authenticated, the concepts of free movement, as well as of one European body of labor, will remain exclusively a principle on paper. The idea of work goes well beyond the mere necessity of accumulation of capital, and as such cannot be treated solely from a political-economic extent; nor can it rely exclusively on the importance of its value in Western ethics. Rather, work is a notion fundamentally based upon a psycho-sociological magnitude, whose foundation is deeply germinated in each individual's conceptualization of belonging.³⁷

The definition of labor Unionism at the national level is so peculiarly distinctive for each member state that the attempt to draw analogies becomes quite arduous. Nevertheless, common traits can be detected among craft and trade unions, especially considering their political nature.³⁸ Examples can be found in the Industrialist associations, Christian-Democratic, Social-Democratic, Socialist, and Communist unions. In this context, the elemental importance of the European social structure augments the relevance of focusing on the characteristics of its bearing category. Indeed, an exclusive advantage of the European

middle class is embodied in its social underpinning of classic historical phenomena: Christian democracy, Social democracy, and Euro-Communism. These three major forces have assumed a certain connotation in the European environment, where, although often opposing one another, they have been characterized by the distinct singularity of the political struggle. They are all internationally inclusive, constituting a hidden element for the facilitation of social cohesion in the European Union. Again, the fact that such ideologies are on a declining path must be noted; that is, the middle class is declining as a social stratification, allowing space for an amorphous unidentified "mass" in the social spectrum.³⁹ Although one might think the EU is a pure industrialist concept (considering the nature of its origins), it is indeed essential to stress the vital importance of a solid bourgeoisie as the catalyst of the entire Western European society.

CULTURAL - ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

Cultural consolidation is the true embodiment of European integration. In order to achieve a truly European federative identity, a communal culture must occur. Such an ambitious goal can be achieved through some generational changes in an operative pedagogic system and in the implementation of multicultural awareness. If the economic and the compact, socio-political consolidated interconnections were more deeply established in the EU, an inevitable movement of the labor forces would be established throughout the Union. Consequently, the necessity for a thoroughly revised educational program, which would have to include an extensive plan of teaching foreign languages within the Union as well as integrating instruction of diverse cultures, literatures and history, should arise. Still, one ought to stress that it is the common humanistic and scientific heritage that delineates the feature of the "Europeanist" phenomenon. By envisioning the scholastic implementation of reforms aimed at defeating the antithetical extent of ethnic nationalism, the emergence of a new Europe would become quite significant. Its

conceptualization would be founded in the very essence of its unitary premises, from which the constitution of a truly European federative identity would manifest the assimilation of a liberally integrated Europe. Yet, each member's singularity would remain intact through the preservation of everyone's primordial identity. The constituency of two such identities must be rooted in their complementary functions rather than in their exclusivity. The understanding of their interrelation accents the extremely delicate balance on which the future of Europe, its peaceful coexistence, and its socio-economic-scientific progress lies. Thus, such an achievement remains strongly delineated in the perimeter of the anthropological foundation of the European federative conscience.

Due respect should be paid to the precedent set by the Marshall Plan in contemporary Western European history, binding together the people of the continent. Departing from such a premise and bearing in mind what has been discussed thus far, the concept of ethnic identification in terms of negative nationalism should play an undermining role in the framework of the potentially achievable European multiculturalism. To a "European" culture, the preservation of the individual primordial identity in the context of a supra-national liberal integration

would be vital, as opposed to extreme nationalist utilitarian affiliation which would endanger the entire European integrative mechanism. In this regard, the formation and the development of a new intellectual dimension would bolster the objective of a new unique federative culture, anthropologically sustained, given the cross-national nature of the factual solidarity inscribed in the European integration process. In this dimension one must still discern between the danger of an alienating-propagandist ineffectual "United States of Europe" of Churchill-like memory and the actualization of the Europe with common-permanent interests based on its distinct uniqueness of its multiplicity, on the unalienable individuality of its citizens, on the preservation of its social essence, and delineated in the strength of its diversity.

The role of communication and information systems throughout the Union should also be attentively examined. The creation of a Union's Mass-Media might sensibly facilitate cultural awareness, while bolstering cross national interests in what once were referred to as mere "foreign affairs." Indeed, the perception of the *domestic* scenario would incrementally be enlarged to include the concerns, the responsibilities, and all interests of the Union as one's own. For this matter, the Union should dedicate

particular emphasis on establishing a solid institutionalized network grounded strictly on a factual and objective overview, in which the promotion of different Unionist cultures should ensue successfully. Still, such a network should maintain the definition of its own nature, which would be endorsed exclusively as part of a pan-European pedagogical and communicative device for exchange of information, instead of being instrumentalized by partitocratic subdivisions, as is often the case for State-owned mass media.

Finally, a new European cultural identity would need to encompass the sacrosanct rights of the individual as the true foundation of its tissue, still acknowledging the previously mentioned protection of "social" prerogative. In this context one should distinguish between the importance of the individuals' identity as grounds for individualism and free will, and the significance of each person in his social setting. In this view the centrality of institutionalized guarantees -- such as pension, health care, labor's rights, housing, and work -- should be coupled with individual prerogatives and personal liberties.⁴⁰ The modernizing aspect of these extents will also have to include the economic prerogative of progressive global competitiveness. The temporal and social balance between history and future and

individual and society must underline the necessity of the new European essence justified in the evolution of individual, social, national, and supra-national autonomy and interdependence.

HISTORICAL INTEGRATION

European identity must be grounded on the common basis of a collective history. Indeed, the construction of European civilization resides greatly in the Greek, Macedonian, and Roman empires. Throughout history Europe has experienced the common effects of literary, philosophical, and scientific movements such as the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, Romanticism and Existentialism. Europe, as well as the entire world, dwells in a constantly changing environment, where it is very important to understand that ideas shape societies with complex and deeply rooted characteristics in the development of a formative culture.

In the European historical process the advent of Christianity, for instance, has quite tangibly bound people together through the centuries. From the determination of Charlemagne, the foundation of the European idea was diffused across the continent as early as the eighth century BC. The relevance of the Carolingian rule lies in truly dispersing the Christian thought throughout its dominion, also facilitating international connections with the Byzantine realm. Although the

Roman empire had already been exposed to the previous
Constantinian introduction of Christianization, the split between
the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire became a
significant aspect for the European future. Indeed, the Western
kingdom felt quite ardently the Carolingian interpretation of
Christianity together with his inheritance and that sense of
uniqueness.

One of the most significant features coming from the common
European past is probably found in the formation of the so-called
"Commons." The configuration of the city-states showed evidence
of a new conceptualization of life in which peculiarities
regarding the "free" enterprise began to exist. Throughout
Europe, *mercantilism* became the essence of the economies which
developed within each urbanized center from a typical agrarian -
feudal system. In this context, the emergence of a middle class
should be stressed. Although the aristocratic structure remained
in power as the cardinal social category, the origin of a
materialized - Christian *bourgeoisie* can be traced as an
increasingly significant factor in European life.

The affiliation among the people of Europe cannot yet be
considered as such, especially in light of centuries-long
genocidal religious differences, autarchic despotism, and

innumerable belligerencies. Nonetheless, since the Middle Ages, the Western European civilization remains identified by the existence of an independent church, which, although tyrannically influential, left a fertile terrain for a semi-secular formula of justice and for the historic reality of authority criticism, abiding from its universality to the international justification of the *raison d'état*.⁴¹

In terms of nation statehood, the example underlined by the French Revolution offered something completely new. Particularly, considering how the ideas of *liberté*, *fraternité*, and *égalité* have heavily influenced the too-often oppressed people of Europe, one can even better individuate the impact of such a new wind of democracy upon the continent. Of course, the occurrence of this innovative democratic phenomenon cannot be emphasized without the centrifugal figure of Napoleon. From Spain to Russia, from Northern Germany to the tip of Sicily, the *soldier of the Revolution* deeply transformed the social and the institutional essence of Europe, overrunning even his own defeat and the congress of Vienna, implanting the seed for the previously cited *bourgeoisie*.⁴²

If the "Napoleonic Revolution" developed a new self-consciousness in the soul of the European society, the subsequent

Pax Britannica was unable to eradicate the binding element of the people, although its *Restoration* did provide for a pseudo-democratic example during a century of formal peace and balance-of-power stability. It failed, however, to dominate the fruit of two industrial revolutions armed with an increasingly grievous liberal exploitation of the working forces, extrapolated from their bucolic pasts and now transformed into alienated individuals. The outbreak of two world wars, the second as the consequence of the first's Carthaginian peace,⁴³ can be interpreted as the disruption of the pathway enterprised by Europeans ever since their identity was formed as such after the fall of ancient empires and more vigorously after the dismantling of the historical realms. The conceptualization of nationalism, which derived from the rupture of such empires, is composed solely by the emphasis modeled in the nature of tribalism, which exclusivized the character of groups over the sovereignty of the individual as the essence of humanity.

Another important element of historical integration relies on how well the EU will respond to the challenge of its colonial past, namely, immigration. The linkage between Europe and the emarginate Third World will constitute a corollary within Europe itself and its own historical integration. If one were to

consider the age of colonialism just as the outcome of national interests and a pretext for imperial skirmishes, then its legacy could be better defined today in the massive migrations of people from the former imperial districts to the opportunities of the "mother land." In addition, there is now present the further problem caused by the fall of the Berlin Wall. The cessation of the Iron Curtain has inspired conspicuous masses to seek their freedom outside their former oppressive borders, causing a dangerous imbalance in a perplexed European unemployed class.

A genuine historical integration, though, can be traced in the common faith shared by virtually all Western Europeans in the aftermath of the second global conflict. Through the developments of the Marshall Plan and the will of personalities such as Monnet, Adenauer, De Gaulle, and Schuman, Western Europe has delineated a common approach to diverse issues, also characterizing a bondage in its contemporary chronicle.

Through the savagery of the Hundred Years War, through the even more horrifying Thirty Years War, through the uncompromising Reformation, and through the merciless Counter-Reformation, Europe has instilled the premises for a truly pluralist society. The actualization of the most pure form of pluralism incorporates the understanding of history's mistakes, regarding the future as

a consolidating force within Europe and with the outside world to most of which it bears a historical debt. Exclusively through the complete realization of pluralism can Europe rely on the virtue of tolerance -- a sentiment cultivated in its organismic growth, embraced in the deleteriousness of its conflictual tradition, and disseminated across its historical splendors.

In an ultimate analysis, the European historical integration should be viewed as the prevention of the perpetuation of history. Learning from the obsolescence of the two world wars fought on European territory, the aim to terminate political extremism and radical determinism must appear intelligible. In such a perspective the second global conflict must be identified as a political suicide for Europe and, most importantly, as the approximate death bed of European culture. In order to avoid another confrontational miscalculation, the Europeans have to construct and fully implement the panacea against the incalculability of governments' intentions, especially if coupled with fanatic ideologies. The end of World War II engineered such a medicine in the foreseeing of the European integration. Now, it is left to the Europeans to escape from the vicious circle of bloodshed and finally find their affinities for a common future beyond colours, nations, and narrow mindedness.

Part III

Prospects and Dilemmas

Before Future Integration

QUANDARIES CONFRONTING INTEGRATION

In front of that new wind sweeping from the European unification, domestic as well as international dilemmas still vividly linger. The path toward a shared culture maintains several shrouded interrogatives, including how the dismantled Soviet empire should be approached and how the failure of its doctrine redefined the character of Western Europeans' ostentatious leftists.

From the international perspective, the fall of the communist ideology has gone far beyond the limits of the former Soviet Republics. Consequently, a dangerous power vacuum has replaced what used to be the "leit motif" of the East-West traction in the containment-expansion structure of the Cold War. In fact, the arrest of Leninist-Stalinist Communism and its world-wide hegemonic influence has been freeing forces well hidden under Soviet suppression. The first action-reaction to the downfall of the Soviet Regime has been in the unbelievably lively massive movements in Eastern Europe which disrupted the Warsaw Pact and reaffirmed acclaimed independence under the new

divulgence of true self determination. Notwithstanding, Eastern Europe (the Soviet's virtual barricade of the Cold War) has been denoting very peculiar connotations regarding the developments of its new *raison d'être*. On the other hand, the countries most exposed to "Westernization" -- Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary -- have achieved a conspicuous degree of progressive industrialization, as well as democratic reforms. Additionally, to a much smaller extent lie countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, which are still far from reaching the same level of improvement concerning the main factors of political democratization and economic resurgence.

In order to analyze the linkage between Eastern Europe and the EU, one must seriously consider the potential for further political integration of the countries which have most promptly broken the ties with their former hegemon. In particular, where politics and economics should be noted to run on the same path, the Czech Republic, among others, has chosen to be divided through *legitimate* popular consensus from the Slovaks and from its former uninominal state of Czechoslovakia by virtue of its more industrialized status as compared with the "war" directed industry of the Bratislava's (Slovak Capital) area, which now happens to be quite obsolete regarding Western competition. The

Czech example, together with the Polish and Hungarian ones, might illustrate some future bewilderments regarding their possible readiness for the European Union's enlargement, assuming they will tangibly endure a truthful transition to democracy and have returned to their historical conscience freed from the Leninist legacy.⁴⁴ Of course, they may still be perceived as a closer Western threat to the Russian borders.

Indeed, the character of the "new" Russia must be envisioned. Having inherited the Soviet Union's seat in the United Nations' Security Council, Russia still sustains an inescapable position in world's affairs. It must be closely observed in its internal policies in order to conceive a globally predictable behaviour. It must be noticed that the former Soviet capability is still intact under its own remains. Obviously, uncertainty continues in interpreting Russian intentions, especially concerning a perplexing internal political instability and economic stagflation. Russia, as well as the other former Soviet countries, has been offered the reported NATO's partnership. Contrary to its former fellow members, though, it has not accomplished one of the pillar requirements of such a Western proposal: the democratization of the army.⁴⁵ Its last elections, in fact, have manifested Russian military propensity

for the ultranationalist political forces of Zhirinovsky's

demagoguery.⁴⁶ Although Russia has undergone a "shock therapy" since its enormous attempt to reform itself, it still retains the attitude of a semi-authoritarian power acquired from its authoritarian past. In this light, though, it engaged in three "revolutions"; a transformation from totalitarianism to concrete democratization; a metamorphosis from a centralized command economy to an open market; and a transmutation from an "empire" to a nation state. Ergo, the new importance of Russia depends upon the extent to which such economic-political-psychologic evolutions are successfully realized and to what amplitude its new international role reaches in regard to the interests of the European Union. Particular concern is envisioned in Gorbachev's idea of a *Common European Home*,⁴⁷ a notion to which Yeltsin's new Russia appears to be closely affiliated as it indicates in the evidence of its desperate ties sought with the West and with its European neighbours.

Russia must find the strength to invert its history within itself, given the undemocratic nature of its antecedent instances. Such a step does not appear to be easy at all. Sociologically, it has lost the status of superpower, while its internal conditions have considerably deteriorated. Since the

Gorbachev leadership, Russia has been increasingly diminishing its GNP down to a current several billion difference. Its large war-based heavy industry should serve as an index of constant possible danger. Although such a number has been reduced quite sensibly, the discrepancy seems to be related to the economic unrest in which Russia is stalling and which rendered obsolete its military production as compared to Western standards.⁴⁸ Consequently, the steel industry--"the last dinosaur" -- has been terminated leaving thousands of people out of work and desperate for means of survival.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the period following Communism completely disrupted channels of supply to factories and distribution branches, which were already in deleterious conditions prior to the "democratization" process. Notwithstanding, Russia endures as the world's largest economy, but the link between production and allocation constitutes one of the country's major obstacles to economic growth.

The promised economic help from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Group of 7 (the 7 most industrialized countries in the world: --in order-- USA, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Britain, and Canada) has been retardive and sometimes non-existent also due to Russian inability to privatize its monstrous State machine.⁵⁰ It is necessary to keep

in mind, though, that the State constitutes for the Russian a social safety net, and such is a situation not easy to resolve. Basically put, it is impossible to change people's mindsets in a relatively short period of time. Of this, even Russian officials are certain.

The Russian internal struggle, though, runs parallel with the nemesis provoked by its fallen ideology in the Western European political spectrum and in its contemporary uncertain balance. The EU's already distressed polity and leadership have to consider their own ideological transformation mainly due to the fall of the Berlin Wall, while trying to confront exacerbating economic, political, and military pragmatic-legalistic *domestic* intricacies. As a matter of fact, challenges to consider with particular focus are depicted in previously contemplated issues such as immigration, inflation, unemployment, and taxation, which operate in the reality of a post-industrial, post-Cold War Europe, where relationships within society and between working groups progressively diverge from a common understanding.

Pre-modern wars gave the world, and in particular Europe, a geo-political configuration which in principle outdated the idea of nation states. Instead of realizing, though, the necessary

pattern toward a higher quality of life inscribed in a shared common interest, global circumstances preserved each country tenaciously adherent to incoherent, stubborn, and irrational policies. The twentieth century's wars, however, set the stage for a consistently deeper, economically interdependent world, in which the European Union seeds its consolidation in its geopolitical foundations. Its contemporary position permits the empowerment of an economically more assertive singular entity distinct among other industrial powers and politically more viable. The EU must now ferment in a potentially robust supra-national institution symbolically compatible with a far ever richer, unified, and powerful Germany constituting its untamed engine.

The new Europe will have to face its own burden of tentacular intergovernmentalism, political and social inequality, progressive industrial inefficiency, stagnation of its scientific research advance, and augmenting crime. Furthermore, the next generations will inevitably experience the disfunction of today's demographic implosion, which will generate an even deeper social weight on the already existing well-fare cleavage and contentions. The greatest task, nonetheless, will be accentuated in redefining values and generating a new supra-national

political culture, in which national identity would not necessarily configure a homogeneous depiction of ethnicity, history, geography, tradition, and religious beliefs. But a European identity would exclusively embrace the merging interests in a cross state boundaries political solidarity.

The criteria necessary for a *European* civic culture will be concentrated in the shared benefit of its people, which might be manifested in its primary traditional uniqueness as well as in its multicultural identity. Such criteria are already envisioned in the responsibility of the European Commission, which should represent the highest authority guaranteeing the rationalization of national and European interests. Nevertheless, Europe still sails in a functional gridlock, in which oligarchic clusters oppose one another posing a serious doubt concerning the endurance of pluralism and people's legitimacy.⁵¹

The European Union remains one of the most successful examples of liberal-democratic integration, convincingly evidencing the path toward the death of nationalism in its most fatalistic sense. In spite of still agonizing integral fanatic national zealots, the EU entrenches the significance of the industrialized world's future trends. Its function of oracle can distinguish the dualistic dispute between globalism and

regionalism, from which it emerges a pulling force in the world equilibrium. Yet, Europe must realize that together as one it constitutes, and will persevere as, a global power; dismantled it would only turn to definite demise.⁵²

Finally, the future of Europe does not flutter on the lips of tired politicians, nor on the comfort of a post-modernized narrow-sighted society. Rather, the European strength derives from the evolution of its history, from its most contemporary emblematic significance, and in its future encompassed in the most promising youth -- a youth that cannot rely exclusively on the idea of present stability and cooperation, where conflicts are fought only on the legal dimension. History cannot be forgotten, must not be forgotten. A unified Europe models the guarantee for a long-lasting peace and premise for a progressive growth. A disgruntled one would too obviously manifest the lack of a social identity, of a historical conscience, and perhaps of a still immature civilization. Its post-materialist attitude does not furnish certainty of perennial well-fare, while national pride only emphasizes future imbalances and military interrogatives which, in the nuclear age, Europe cannot afford to investigate. Let's all remember that Europe hid the fulcrum of two world wars; a third would be the end of Europe as a political

entity, as a geographical concept, and as a cultural idea. It would be the end of civilization in its broadest meaning.

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