

unspiritual, unphilosophical, devoid of art, clannish to the point of brutality, aiming relentlessly at tangible successes, they stand between the Hellenic culture and nothingness.

(Spengler, 1918; 1928 edn, p. 32)

– no one could miss the point.

At first glance, Spengler gives the impression of being just another cultural pessimist. His main symbol of civilization was the metropolis, the cosmopolitan centre of rootless, depersonalized masses. His epoch was characterized by a loss of religiousness and sense of purpose. Money ruled supreme, accompanied by political cynicism and philosophical scepticism.

But civilization was not only the manifestation of decay and disaster; its end was also the birth of something new. Spengler held that civilizations could manifest themselves actively: if 'civilization-man', as Spengler called him, could not direct his energy inwards, an outwards expansion was possible – its name being imperialism. To Spengler, Cecil Rhodes was the first herald of a new age which was to culminate in the next two centuries. Also, occidental culture had certain unique features in being future-oriented and with aspirations towards eternity. Its spirit had manifested itself in a technical inventiveness, which has allowed European culture in its civilized phase to spread all over the world. Since the spreading of civilization was inevitable, one could just as well make the most of it, for instance by engaging in imperialist conquest rather than succumbing to decadent pseudo-philosophies like pacifism or scepticism. Spengler did in fact find a timeless truth beyond all morphological change, a principle that offered a last resort from the decadence of world history. This truth had a lot in common with the then fashionable Social Darwinism (Nolte, 1991, p. 221), dressed up in Nietzsche. In Spengler's words:

Ever in history it is life and life only – race-quality, the triumph of the will-to-power – and not the victory of truths, discoveries, or money that signifies.

(Spengler, 1922, 1928 edn, p. 507)

Spengler's book (whose first edition was published early in 1918 – the first volume only; the second volume was published in 1922 – in expectation of a German victory) can therefore also be read as a piece of wartime propaganda giving philosophical absolutism to the German war effort. In common with his above mentioned colleagues, Spengler considered the conflict to be the inevitable result of the historical transformations of the time, a conflict in which 'money' (the UK) was fighting against 'blood' (Germany). Spengler was not in doubt about the outcome:

The coming of Caesarism breaks the dictature of money and its political weapon democracy. After a long triumph of world-city economy and its interests over political creative force, the political side of life manifests itself after all as the stronger of the two. The sword is victorious over the money, the master-will subdues again the plunderer-will. If we call these money-powers 'Capitalism', then we may designate as Socialism the will to call into life a mighty politico-economic order that

transcends all class interests, a system of lofty thoughtfulness and duty-sense that keeps the whole in fine condition for the decisive battle of its history, and this battle is also the battle of money and law.

(Spengler, 1922; 1928 edn, p. 506)

Spengler's socialism, to be sure, has little to do with Marxism and even less with the Utopian socialism of the nineteenth century. It found its true expression in the Prussian *Organisationsstaat* with its ability to mobilize all resources in the imperialist struggle. So, contrary to traditional interpretations, Spengler was not a pessimist. His historical determinism was not defeatism: he had written off one culture, but only in the hope that a new one – vital, dynamic, and ruthless in a Nietzschean way – could be born in Western Europe. This is the essence of his recommendation to young generations to give up culture and philosophy in favour of technology, military force, and the politics of power (Spengler, 1918, p. 57).

### **Facing post-war Europe**

The horrors of the war, America's intervention in Europe and the post-war near collapse of the European economies convinced most observers that the days of a self-evident European world supremacy were over. All 'European-minded' intellectuals had to face this relative decline in Europe's global position, and both Catholics and liberal democrats were confronted with the growth of powerful new trends in European politics, which rejected most of Europe's past: to the adherents of Communism or Fascism in its various national versions, 'the old world' was totally discredited and both ideologies tried to exploit the metaphors of youth and vitality to increase their popularity.

Many young intellectuals, who had either witnessed the senseless losses at the front line, or the famine, deprivations and corruption at home, felt that the liberal system that had led to this warfare had lost all credibility. These feelings are strongly expressed in a poem by Ezra Pound (1885–1972) and in the harshness and ugliness of the immediate post-war drawings of George Grosz (1893–1959). Consequently, both men (and with them many of the new, young generation) looked for radical solutions, Pound in Fascism and Grosz in Communism.

### **Hugh Selwyn Mauberley**

IV

These fought in any case,  
and some believing,  
pro domo, in any case...

Some quick to arm,  
some for adventure,  
some from fear of weakness,  
some from fear of censure,  
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,  
learning later...  
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;

Died some, pro patria,  
non 'dulce' non 'et decor'...  
walked eye-deep in hell  
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving  
came home, home to a lie,  
home to many deceits,  
home to old lies and new infamy;  
usury age-old and age-thick  
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.  
Young blood and high blood,  
fair cheeks and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before  
frankness as never before,  
disillusions as never told in the old days,  
hysterias, trench confessions,  
laughter out of dead bellies.

V

There died a myriad,  
And of the best, among them,  
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,  
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,  
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,  
For a few thousand battered books.

(Ezra Pound, 1920; 1952 edn, pp. 207-8)

Liberal programmes for a united Europe such as the ones of Coudenhove-Kalergi and Briand had trouble gaining mass attraction in competition with nationalistic slogans, echoed in pamphlets with such titles as *Schluss mit Europa* ('Enough of Europe', mentioned in Schulze, 1990, p. 36). Generally the public interest in a 'European dimension' was low in these years and, with some noticeable exceptions, the same can be said about the level of intellectual engagement. No wonder, then, that Duroselle has reached this conclusion about the mood of the European-minded intellectuals:

Widespread pessimism was the dominant characteristic of European thought between the two wars.

(Duroselle, 1965, p. 287).

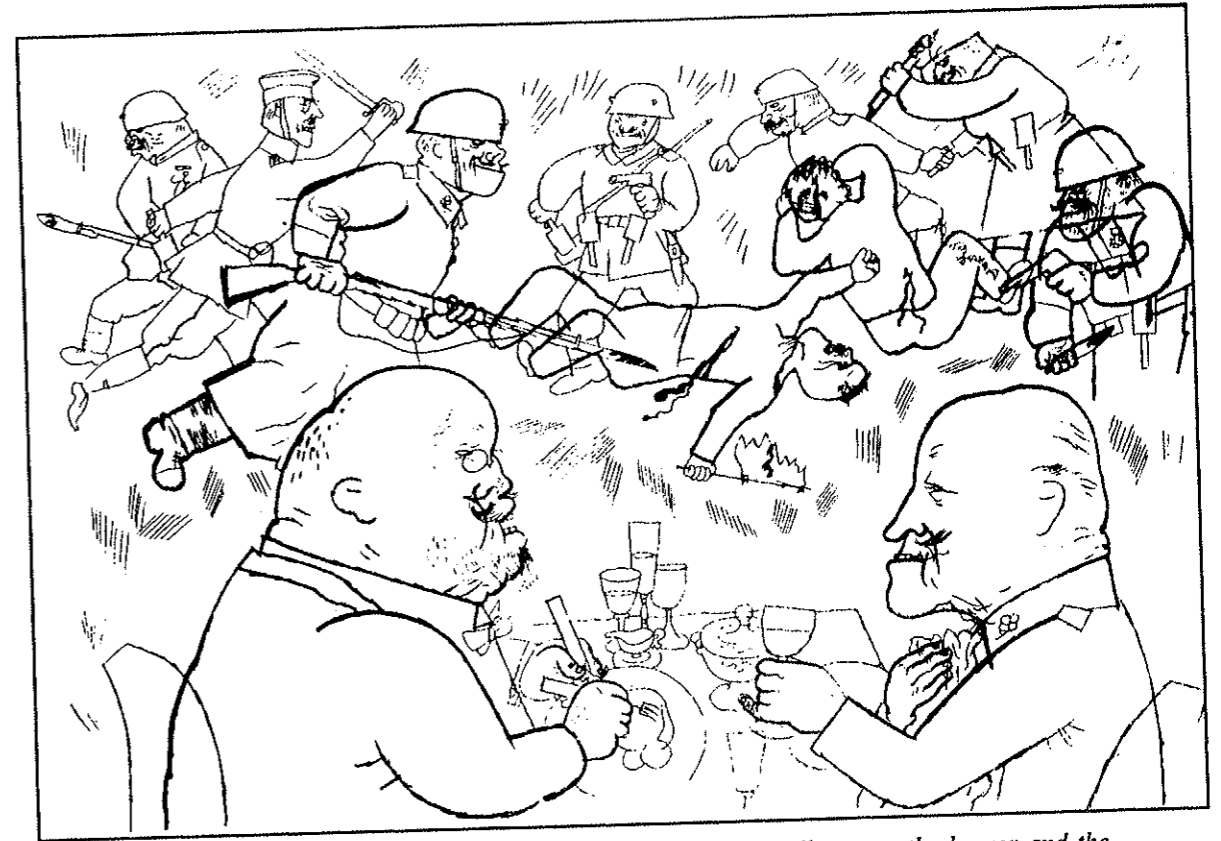
We can find exceptions, but everywhere we meet a feeling of uncertainty which is far from the complacent optimism of the previous century.

### The comfort of European culture

After 1918, a liberal's belief in Europe could hardly anymore be a faith in unlimited progress. In fact, it was hard not to overlook how the USA rather than old Europe was becoming the vanguard of invention and modernity. In this situation, in the relatively peaceful years from 1924 to 1930, European intellectuals could use features from the dichotomy of culture versus civilization to support their somewhat flawed feelings of superiority.

With an ambiguous attitude, both affirmative and sceptical, to modern civilization they noticed that this fruit of the European mind had spread all over the world and permitted non-Western countries to make impressive progress. Japan had become a strong industrial power and 'in Central Africa the negroes also ride in motor-cars and dose themselves with aspirin', as the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1956) remarked in his *Revolt of the Masses* (Ortega y Gasset, 1930, p. 66). Still, only the immense success of America meant a real challenge to the European self-consciousness. But, no matter what they did, there was one thing the Americans could never have: and that was the European cultural heritage.

Scheler in 1915 was sure that if North America should suddenly cease to contrib-



Some got slaughtered and others got rich. George Grosz graphically illustrates the horror and the corruption of war (credit: Akademie der Künste, Berlin).

ute to the field of culture, the loss would be minute in comparison to the loss of a European nation such as France or Italy, at least so far as quality was concerned (Scheler, 1915, p. 287). Fifteen years and a peace settlement later, Ortega y Gasset noted (*ibid.*, p. 20), that the living standard of the average American might be higher than in Europe but, by comparison with Europe, the level of their 'select minorities' (i.e. their intellectual élites) was still relatively low.

Despite this, Europeans still felt somewhat defensive: the Czech writer Karel Čapek (1890–1938) in a letter to the *New York Times* tried, in 1926, to explain why he would find it dangerous if American ideals were to spread to Europe. Some aspects of the American way of life particularly alarmed him. First, the speed and bustle, since for Čapek work efficiency was not the be-all and end-all in life, and also because most of what was valuable in Europe was the product of people who were not in a hurry:

Europe wasted its time for thousands of years; that is where its inexhaustibility and fertility comes from.

(Čapek, 1926, p. 48)

It takes a certain laziness to fully appreciate life, Čapek noted, and in the same vein he complained about the American cult of success. Europeans used to have a heroic tradition, they died for their faith, for love, for truth or for similar irrational things. In its craziness Europe had managed to care for thousands of other things besides success, and while these things remained, the devil took whatever there was of success in history. Finally, Čapek found it hard to accept the cult of quantity:

The Creator of Europe made her small and even split her up into little parts, so that our hearts could find joy not in size but in plurality.

(*Ibid.*, p. 50 – author's translation from Czech)

Čapek was a liberal democrat, a pragmatist, but this did not preclude a touch of nostalgia and romanticism intruding in his view of Europe. Once again, one wonders if capitalism was not after all a European invention.

Facing the same problems, and explicitly basing his analysis on the dichotomy of culture and civilization, Čapek's countryman, the writer and literary critic F. V. Krejčí (1867–1941), in his book *Czechhood and Europeanness* (1931), tried to analyse the essence of Europe.

Civilization, he said, was easily transferable as could be seen from the way European civilization – in its specific Anglo-Saxon version – had conquered all continents. Culture in contrast was specific and historical, it was a structure of aesthetic, ethical and intellectual norms and practices generated over centuries. According to Krejčí Europe, since antiquity, had proved to possess a special ability to open new dimensions for all humanity and even now its moral and social thinking incarnated the conscience of humanity. Always – and the exact sciences had added new dimensions to this – Europe had sought to make the fruits of its spirit become a *lived experience*, a daily affirmation of the virtues of Europeanness. When successful in this, culture and civilization became one, as could be seen in Western Europe and parts of Central Europe.

The difference between culture and civilization was very visible in the case of the USSR and the USA. Both of them had daringly adapted the newest ideas of European civilization and even added new dimensions to them, but in spite of these efforts they were not even getting close to the level of European culture. Krejčí found proof of this in the barbarian practices of the Bolsheviks in Russia and in the violence, racism, and fierce antisocialism of American society. Krejčí was a social democrat, and socialism in the basic sense of care for the weak and the poor was to him the culmination of European humanism, which consciously strove to make European culture a 'lived experience' for everybody. To him, the USA and the USSR were strikingly similar in spite of their antagonistic social systems, since both adhered to principles of empty materialism and primitive utilitarianism, principles alien and dangerous to true European values (Krejčí, 1931, p. 175).

I chose to present two Czech voices to show that Europe was not only the concern of the great nations of the West. And their views were definitely shared by many people in other European countries as can be seen from the great popularity of Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future* (1930; immediately translated into English and published in the USA as *America: the Menace!*), a travel report from the USA describing it in terms evoking some gigantic purgatory. The whole book is a powerful plea for Europe to avoid the dangers of 'Americanization'. We see in conclusion that even good democrats and liberals in the inter-war era began to seek refuge in history and tradition from the strange fruits of the export of Europe's own civilization. A few decades ago the authority of the whole world, now the shaken European ego found comfort in the cosiness of the past.

### **Europe and the Nazi myths**

From an ideological standpoint, Fascism and National Socialism were, as previously mentioned, highly heterogeneous and even contradictory in their curious blend of anti-modernism with a technocratic modernizing ethos, their search for roots in ancient myths and history and their claims to represent the youth and the future, their 'anti-capitalist' anti-socialism and so on. Can one really speak of reactionary revolutionaries?! If we are to attach this ideology to any of Pim den Boer's different identifications of Europe we must – however paradoxical it may sound – see Nazi self-perception in the tradition of 'Europe as freedom'.

At least, that is how the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946) presented Nazism in his book *Der Mythos des 20 Jahrhunderts* (1930). Rosenberg conjures up a powerful myth of the blood – the blood in which the soul of every race is expressed. Extensively mixing myths and legends with pseudo-science, Rosenberg attempts to demonstrate how the unalterable racial soul and the values attributed to it have ruled the life and history of the races. In Europe, Rosenberg sees three principles fighting a life-and-death struggle: the authentic Nordic *Abendland* resting on freedom and honour struggles with both the Catholic church, this child of decay and racial chaos in Rome with its tyrannic dogmas and demands for submission, and the heralds of chaos – the Jews and their adherents with their materialist individualism, Marxism, and mock democracy which only hides the rule of Jewish money.

In Rosenberg's eyes, these three powers were fighting 'um die Seele eines jeden Europäers' ('about the soul of every single European' – Rosenberg, 1930, p. 118), and the war had shown that no coexistence between them was possible. Everywhere, all forces had to concentrate on cleansing the national spirit of ideological dregs and the national body of racially alien elements. France, for instance, would have to desist from racial degeneration before the country could rightfully claim its natural position in Europe. In this racial and ideological struggle, Rosenberg called all 'real' Europeans to arms:

Europe's states were all founded and maintained by Nordic peoples. This Nordic man has been in part poisoned and in part exterminated by alcohol, world war and Marxism. It is clear that the white race cannot maintain its position in the world unless it creates order in Europe... If Europe is to be preserved, the first priority must be to revive the Nordic sources of Europe's power – these are Germany and Scandinavia, with Finland and England.

(Rosenberg, 1930, p. 640)



Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi ideologist, who drew a racial (racist) interpretation of Europe to the extreme (credit: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin).

Rosenberg tolerated no racially mixed 'Franco-Judean' Paneuropa, nor the 'rasse- und volksloses Mitteleuropa' ('a Mitteleuropa void of races and peoples') suggested by Naumann. Instead, a Nordic Europe was envisaged with Scandinavia guarding the north-east and a strong German Central Europe with the necessary *Lebensraum* for future German generations as its core. Britain was to secure the West and the oceans, and in the south, Italy was supposed to lead some vague Mediterranean alliance. Russia, if it ever recovered from Bolshevism, would have to accept a future as an Asiatic power.

Two years later, at a conference on Europe in Rome, Rosenberg in his lecture, *Krisis und Neugeburt Europas* ('The crisis and rebirth of Europe'), was more open towards the southern European people. He calls for a European unity based not on an abstract assumption of one uniform principle for all peoples, but on a respect for the distinctive characteristics of the four great nations of Europe. Small nations have the right to exist and their qualities recognized, but only as long as they accept the primacy of those who really shape Europe. Italy, with its proud notion of the state as the highest possible value, will need to expand along the Mediterranean; France, with its idea that French soil shapes the mind of the French people, will for a while have to defend Europe from African penetration; Britain, with its traditions and understanding of the nation as society, will represent Europe abroad; and finally Germany, with its belief in the blood, will have to see all Germans united in one state before this Germany can fully recognize Europe. Only if these four nations respect each other will Europe be able to defend itself against Bolshevism and the threats from the awakening inferior races, and at the same time avoid unnecessary wars dictated by the interests of a national plutocracy without national identity.

Here, one can still hear a remote echo of an older, conservative nationalism, according even small peoples the right to some existence (as long as they got rid of the Jews); but as *Ostminister* during the war, Rosenberg did not stick to his own principles. He led an *Ostpolitik* marked by the most ruthless genocide and terror, and was sentenced to death at the Nuremberg trials after the war.

### **The revolt of the masses**

Fascism and Communism were mass movements – or at least they tried intensively to exploit and evoke the masses. The whole phenomenon of masses – so different from the upper-class individual liberalism of the nineteenth century – provoked a host of reactions and studies by such people as Sigmund Freud, Elias Canetti, Hermann Broch, and many others. One such study from 1930 gained much attention, perhaps because its author, José Ortega y Gasset, in *The Revolt of the Masses*, had found yet another very seductive title. Ortega y Gasset's diagnosis was clear: Europe was experiencing a severe crisis because the masses had penetrated into all spheres of life, including those that in earlier days had been reserved for a privileged minority. Politics ought to be the domain of a qualified minority offering a selection of programmes to the masses, but today the masses ruled alone although they were by nature unable to rule. The result was a threatening decay of norms. However, there were also positive features in the process that had brought the masses to their new position. Ortega y Gasset welcomed the technical progress that

had allowed many people to obtain a standard of living, which only a few decades ago would have been the exclusive privilege of the wealthy few. Now nothing seemed to prevent a life of freedom and luxury.

But if the masses possessed modern techniques, they still lagged far behind in moral upbringing. They were like spoiled children who considered the whole complicated material and social organization of society, from which they benefited, natural like fresh air, instead of realizing that it was the frail product of a specific civilization. Only the combination of nineteenth century liberalism, capitalism, and experimental science had made the explosive social progress possible. But 'mass-people' hated the nobility and generosity of liberal democracy, since they had an antipathy to values that were different from their own, to everything that was unfamiliar to them. They refused to listen and learn and favoured the tyranny of mediocrity, devoid of ideas and values. Politically, they could only express themselves in 'direct action' or violence, since any dialogue would imply some higher 'rules of the game' – a principle unacceptable to 'mass-people'.

No wonder, then, that 'mass-people' felt attracted to the nihilism of Fascism and Bolshevism, two movements cynically mocking the principle of freedom that had made them possible. Bolshevism and Fascism were symptoms of decay; they were anachronistic and offered nothing but a return to an outlived archaic world, which had once been defeated by liberalism. They were empty, but dangerous since the masses could now usurp the state apparatus (which had grown alarmingly in importance) and turn it into a perfect apparatus of violence and exploitation. If it happened, it would be the end of historical spontaneity and the death of Europe.

But the masses alone were not to blame. Ortega y Gasset was a staunch supporter of liberal democracy, to which he saw no alternative. He called it 'the loftiest endeavour towards common life' and a noble act of self-limitation and tolerance (Ortega y Gasset, 1930, p. 58). Liberalism was to him the essence of civilization, and civilization the negation of barbarism. Still, liberalism had obviously suffered from 'certain radical vices', since it had brought into being such characters as 'mass-people' who were in revolt.

Liberalism had somehow lost its alertness and forgotten its need of a dynamic programme; probably it had been too complacent. It was symptomatic how specialization had made even scientists 'mass-people', absorbed in their own little worlds without knowing the inner philosophy of the science they cultivated. The lack of elementary historical knowledge left people without firm guidelines; they had become rootless, aware of their possibilities but uncertain of how to use them. Petty nationalism, which had become so influential after the war, was just one proof of this.

Ortega y Gasset was convinced that the decline of Europe was essentially a myth perpetuated by the Europeans on themselves, and that it only revealed their own lack of a programme. Without the will to progress, all European values and all its creativity would disappear. It would not have mattered so much if only some other authority had been ready to take over, but so far nothing new was in sight. Europe had landed itself in a vacuum, but perhaps the present crisis could lead to a renewal of its most valuable principles. Europe still had a mission to perform; it only needed a new philosophy and a goal.

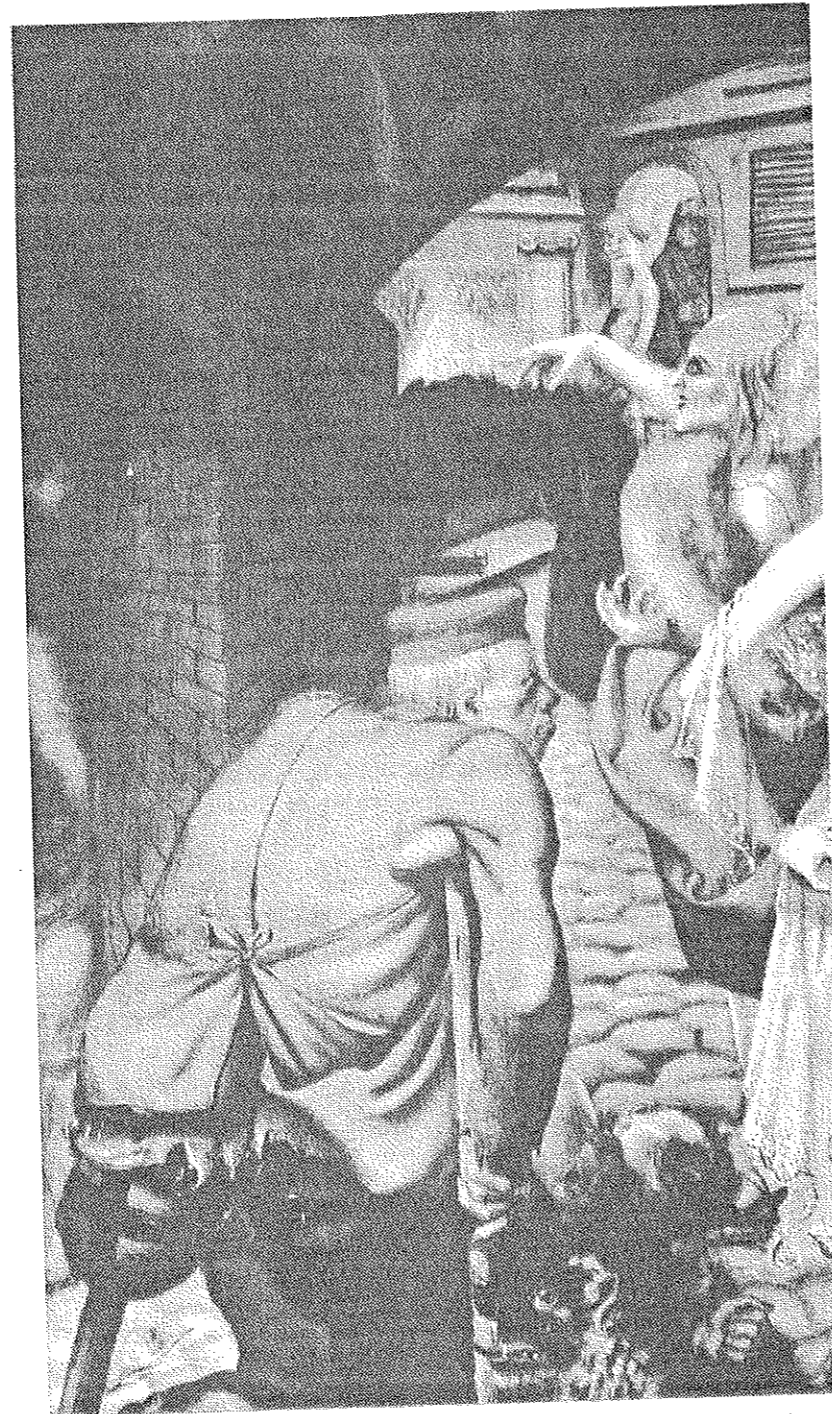
Ortega y Gasset suggested a programme of large-scale political reform aiming at the creation of a 'United States of Europe'. Technical developments and the steadily growing exchange of ideas had made the nation state obsolete, and since a national community was basically a future oriented ideological product it ought to be possible to make Europe into a national concept. This would be the only way to revitalize Europe and to present a genuine, morally superior alternative to Soviet Communism.

In sum, although Ortega y Gasset blamed modern civilization and the technical specialization inherent in it for the rise of the new barbarians – the 'mass-people' – he mainly sought a solution on the political level (ascribing only a minor role to the detrimental effects of technological development itself) through the unification of Europe in a new nation state. 'Mass-people' were more a symptom than the cause of the crisis, he said, but he abstained from detailed analysis of the flaws in modern European culture that were really to blame.

In a brilliant essay, *Achtung, Europa!* (1935), Thomas Mann unmasked the brutality and the lies on which Fascism was built. Accepting Ortega y Gasset's main analysis of the revolt of the masses, he directly attacked the question only hinted at by his Spanish colleague. Mann saw the roots of the present miserable state of Europe in the way in which the bitterly idealistic nineteenth century seekers after truth had torn apart the idealistic philosophy of liberalism. In a tragic way, reason had undermined its own foundations: Marx and Nietzsche were noble idealists, but they (or rather their later interpreters) had lacked a sense of responsibility since they did not see the danger of anti-intellectual romanticizing inherent in their thinking. As the masses learned about the dethroning of spirit and reason, nothing could prevent them from revelling in cheap irrationalism and intellectual fraud. To Mann, the cult of the irrational of the 1920s and 1930s was utterly pathetic.

Today's masses had no ambition but to escape from the 'I' (and thus from morals and reason) and take refuge in collective ecstasy. Of course their totalitarian masters knew what kind of ideologies to feed them with in order to control them (Marx in his day wanted to enlighten the masses, the Nazis had no such ambitions), since the masses were sentimentally romantic and took pleasure in a vocabulary of blood and soil in spite of their thoroughly modern trappings. The traditional European ideas of truth, freedom and justice were replaced by 'myths', i.e. by a destruction of the borderline between truth and falsehood. There was nothing Christian in this revolt of the poor in spirit, since all they preached was the destruction of human rights; nor was there any heroic ethos, since heroism demanded higher moral values than lies and murder.

Mann was in no doubt that if the rule of the masses and their masters lasted for any length of time in Europe, war would follow and bring about the end of civilization as we knew it. But what frightened him most of all was the weakness of the old, educated world when confronted with this new barbarism. He saw in all humanism an inherent weakness caused by its own good nature and called for a renaissance of a new *militant European humanism*, ready to fight resolutely against fanaticism devoid of shame and doubt. Without this rebirth, Europe would be destroyed to the point where only its name was left.



Mass people in an impoverished mass society was a harsh reality after the First World War. The picture shows a crippled ex-serviceman begging: left-hand side of the triptych 'Metropolis' by the German Otto Dix (1891–1961) (credit: Otto Dix Stiftung, Vaduz; photo: Galerie der Stadt, Stuttgart).

As mentioned above, Mann had in 1917 been an ardent defender of culture (authenticity) in its struggle with civilization (political convenience without deeper spirituality). It is therefore tempting to interpret this later defence of civilization as a 'defection' to the other side, but Mann's later work can be seen as an attempt at a synthesis (Nolte, 1991, p. 616). In a speech in the USA in 1937, *Vom kommenden Sieg der Demokratie* ('The Coming Victory of Democracy'), Mann compared democracy to the temporary attraction of the novelties of Fascism (the only quality of Fascism being its 'youth'). In contrast, democracy was 'timeless-human' and contained a potential youthfulness stronger than any ephemeral fashion. Violence too was part of human nature, but what really separated people from animals was a consciousness of the frailty of being, which gave birth to conscience and to a link to something inherently absolute. True democracy saw and honoured this secret dignity ('Geheimniswürde') of humans. And without this spiritual dimension, mechanical democracy or 'the rule of the people' was not worthy of its name:

We must define democracy as that form of government and of society which is inspired above every other with the feeling and consciousness of the dignity of man.

(Mann, 1937, p. 121)

Democracy in this sense is no less the worldly agent of a transcendental principle than the Prussian state.

### **Catholic dilemmas**

For a long time, the Catholic church had trouble finding the right attitude to the new phenomenon of Fascism. The main enemy of the Church for a century had been liberalism, later joined by socialism; and when nineteenth-century liberalism experienced its great crisis after the war, clerical conservatism saw its chance. In both Italy and Germany it chose to support the new Fascist movements (in spite of their anti-clerical rhetoric) as the most potent opponents to both socialism and liberalism. Later, in Spain and Portugal, the alliance with dictators who were probably more clerical conservatives than 'genuine' Fascists worked well, but in Germany and Italy the Church was to find out that no unholy alliances with such nihilist revolutionaries as Hitler and Mussolini were possible and that the Church could not hope to control them (Trevor-Roper, in Woolf, 1981, pp. 23–36).

Thomas Mann's thoughts indicated that there were intimate ties between a democratic humanism aware of its transcendental roots and Christianity. But the alliance was not an easy one. To some, for instance to many social democratic intellectuals, humanism and democratic socialism were the natural heirs to a Christianity that had had its day, and many Christians – especially in Catholic circles – were as likely to see the root of present evils in democracy rather than the reverse.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A few words of terminology: in Catholic circles there has at times been a tendency to prefer the word 'Abendland' ('Occident' or 'West') to 'Europe', whereas liberals and socialists have almost uniformly preferred the last concept. No clear difference of definitions can be found, but 'Abendland' was obviously to evoke connotations of medieval Christendom in Europe (cf. den Boer above), united against the heathens of the Oriental world. In this view, only Mediterranean, Roman Catholic Europe was 'real' Europe (Gollwitzer, 1964, p. 15; Schulze, 1990, p. 18).

Definitely anti-totalitarian, but also sceptical towards liberalism, the British Catholic Christopher Dawson (1889–1970) presented a complex discussion of the problems of Europe in his book *The Judgement of the Nations* (1943). In 1945, his book was translated into German and published in Switzerland. With his thorough analysis of the dangers of a secular civilization and recommendations for Christian social politics, Dawson became an important representative of an *Abendland* trend in Catholic thought, which became influential in Western and Southern Europe after 1945 (Nolte, 1991, p. 455).

So far, little has been said about British views on Europe. Of course, British interest in questions of Europe and Europeanness was not absent, but all the literature I have consulted suggests that it was generally low. Europe was 'somewhere else', so to speak. Exceptions were mainly found among Catholics such as Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton (Duroselle, 1965, p. 283), as they had obvious religious ties to the Continent. Christopher Dawson, who had published his historical study *The Making of Europe* in 1932, was no exception to the rule. In contrast, most of their countrymen were more concerned about the future of the British Empire and the Commonwealth than about Europe.

To Dawson, the decades after the First World War had seen the total collapse of all the optimistic illusions of nineteenth-century liberalism. Western civilization – and through it all of humanity – was being exposed to a destructive totalitarian nihilism, which threatened to annihilate it. The threat left no room for neutrality: first, the evil came from inside Western civilization as a result of its own decay and, secondly, the totalitarian systems had the power to control minds as well as bodies, to brainwash people and destroy everything good in them. This danger was more serious for Christianity than any earlier invasion of barbarians, since the new evil was depersonalized and inspired not by the naïve cruelty of primitive warriors but by what Dawson called 'the perverted science of a corrupt civilization'. Civilization itself had become dubious, since its material power and wealth was growing rapidly while simultaneously its moral foundations were eroded. The more the power, the more complete the destruction, it seemed.

The evil threatening Europe was essentially of a spiritual kind; and Hitler and Stalin were its 'creatures, not its creators'. But since 1918, such evil had been institutionalized in the totalitarian state, which had come into being as two reactions against liberal democracy came together. Individual liberalism was threatened from inside by the mechanization of culture, and externally it was faced with national opposition in countries without democratic traditions. To Dawson, the totalitarian idea was distinctively Russian before it became German or Italian, and he explains the appeal of Communist collectivism by placing it in the context of Russia's theocratic ideals of Orthodoxy and Tsarism.

Dawson's 'real' Europe was only the parts with a Roman Catholic past, and even here he makes a distinction between 'Western civilization' and what is at times called Central, at times Eastern Europe, within which he includes Germany. Dawson was sceptical about this region, which he found culturally susceptible to the spirit of authoritarianism and collectivism:

But for Western civilization as a whole the victory of such a spirit means death, because it is the denial and destruction of the spiritual principles by which the West has lived.

(Dawson, 1943, p. 48)

Dawson uses the concepts of 'Europe' and 'the West' almost as synonyms, but while Britain (and the USA) are definitely part of the 'Western civilization' it is less obvious if 'Europe' also includes the British Isles.

Much of the blame for the present malaise was put on the unhealthy elements of Orthodoxy and Lutheranism (Dawson sees a direct link from Luther to Prussian militarism), and thus on the divisions of Christendom. If the splits had not arisen, no 'neutral territory' for a secular politics could have emerged and religion would not have been squeezed out of the public sphere and into the private. Still, Dawson does not consider the resulting humanistic liberalism (inspired first of all by Calvinism and the Free Churches) sinful; on the contrary, he is convinced that religion played a much greater role in this culture than is usually admitted. He even talks about the 'sublimated Christianity of the liberals and the humanitarians'. But liberalism forgot its roots in Christianity, which made it unable to reform itself when faced with the challenge of socialism and mass society:

...for Christianity and humanism and social freedom are not conflicting ideas that have alternately dominated the European mind, they have a spiritual affinity that was not apparent to the reformers and revolutionaries who were enveloped in the dust of conflict, but which is now becoming visible when all of them are threatened alike by inhuman forces that have no kinship with any of them.

(Ibid., p. 16)

Therefore, friends of justice and liberty were natural allies of true Christians in the ongoing war, even if the reformers hesitated to recognize the Christian foundation of their ideals. But they would have to understand that humanity could not save itself by its own powers, as freedom alone would not bring salvation. A victory over Germany would be of little value if it was achieved by means that made the victor all too similar to the defeated. Only the restoration of a Christian spiritual order could save the world through a return to Christian unity. By recognizing that most schisms in the Church had been unnecessary, since they had their roots in national or political disagreement, a spirit of tolerance, accepting differences of rites and national cultures, should be possible within the same Christian faith.

Thus Dawson accepted a pluralistic Europe, and he was careful not to demand a universal return to the Catholic church. Without national differences, religious unity might have been possible, but European civilization would have been much poorer and religious life would probably have suffered as well. The national principle was to be respected as long as all Europeans remembered that they were part of a 'community of culture' that had been based on Christianity for a thousand years. Only modern nationalism had to be abandoned, morally because it did not respect the Christian-European community and politically because global trends had made whole civilizations, not nation states, the basic unit of international politics. Europe would have to organize in a free democratic federation, similar to the USA or perhaps first of all to the British Commonwealth. In the event, it is clear

from the context that Dawson's vision of a 'Western European federation' does not include Britain, which politically was to remain outside Europe.

### Europe's regions and borders

Dawson had little to say about Germany's eastern neighbours, and in most of the literature discussed so far, the European horizon has been essentially Western European. Ortega y Gasset understood Europe to be 'primarily and probably the trinity of France, England, Germany' (1930; 1961 edn, p. 103), and east of Germany, perhaps only enigmatic Russia was noted. We therefore need a discussion of Russia's complicated and ambiguous relationship to Europe as seen both with Russian and Western eyes. But before that, I will focus on the smaller peoples of Eastern Europe, since our understanding of what Europe has meant to Europeans would remain insufficient if we only entertained views from one dominant region. And finally I will discuss a fundamental, complicated and painful aspect of Europeaness: the Europeans' attitude to their colonies and to races: did race matter, and if so, who was 'allowed' to be part of the 'European race'?

### Europe seen from Czechoslovakia

I have chosen to take a closer look at Czechoslovakia to see how intellectuals and politicians in this new state looked at the Europe of which they had now become a politically independent part. But Czechoslovakia is just one example, and in the East Central European region one can find a diversity of views on Europe – all of them probably very much determined by what we could call *formative events* in the history of these countries.

In Poland, the many *divisions* of the country and the permanent pressure from both East (Orthodox Russia) and West (Protestant Prussia) has been crucial in the formation of an ambiguous Polish attitude to Europe. On one hand, the Poles feel themselves to be a Western European nation, even the bulwark of (Catholic) Christianity against the barbarians from the East. But simultaneously there was the feeling that the unreliable West had all too often sacrificed Poland as a 'Messiah of the nations'. Politically, this has at times resulted in an almost 'schizophrenic' anti-Western attitude linked to the view that by comparison with the Lithuanians, the Ukrainians, and the Russians, the Poles *are* European. And at times, such sentiments led in the inter-war period to a self-assertive anti-Western nationalism (Krol in Herterich, 1989, pp. 102ff).

Hungary had also traditionally seen itself as a defender of Christianity against 'Oriental barbarism'. But the country's attitude to Europe was in the inter-war period totally dominated by the 'Versailles syndrome'. In 1919 Hungary lost most of its territory, and millions of Hungarians were included in the new neighbour states. A wave of emotional anti-Western nationalism ran through the country. Some stressed Hungary's links with the 'German Christian World' in order to seek justice through an alliance with Germany, others wanted to abandon Europe completely: in a reaction against the treacherous West a 'Turanian movement'<sup>7</sup> became popular. It stressed the Hungarians' Asiatic roots (based on an erroneous theory of a linguistic relationship

<sup>7</sup> Turanian languages – the family of languages related to Turkish.

between the non-Indoeuropean Hungarian and the Turkish languages – in fact Hungarian is only related to Finnish and Estonian) and called for a union of all 'Turanian peoples' from Mongolia to Hungary (Varda, 1989, pp. 158ff).

By comparison, the Czechs felt unconditionally (Western) European. Before the war Czech patriots had striven to emancipate the nation from its solid embedment in German culture. In their sometimes exaggerated search for non-German inspirations, the Czechs turned in various directions from Russia to France and, as an independent national life began to flourish, the Czechs found themselves in the somewhat unenviable position of 'knowing all about Europe and being completely unknown to her' (Krejčí, 1931, p. 208). As the war changed that, most Czechs and Slovaks saw the creation of Czechoslovakia as a culmination of a progressive trend in the European civilization they felt part of<sup>8</sup>. They all knew that the survival of their state was dependent on the preservation of the post-war international order. So, politically, Czechoslovakia had great interest in European cooperation and the country played a very active role in the League of Nations and in different regional organizations.

Foreign minister Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) was honorary president of the Czechoslovak Pan-European Union, and another top politician, the Slovak Milan Hodža (1878–1944) was seriously involved in the 1930s in projects for an agrarian economic union in Central Europe. To him, regional structures such as this would be the best – and only viable – foundation for any 'Paneuropa'. Hodža argued that all Central European nations shared the same historical experience, in which they had been more objects than subjects of their own history and, to avoid nationalistic conflicts and economic chaos, the new nations in the region would have to unite spiritually and economically (Hodža, 1931, pp. 384ff). Without such cooperation, all Central European nations would some day be ground between the millstones of Russia and Germany.

Hodža's Central Europe was the land between Russia and Germany. The East begins with Russia, he stated, and Germany was presented as a part of Western Europe or perhaps as a regional entity in its own right. The agrarian character of central Europe should help it find its own identity, and Hodža expected it to develop a new kind of cooperative farmers' democracy in defence against the super-capitalist mechanization of America and Western Europe. To him, the West needed new vitality and he predicted that Central Europe could become such an inspiration. Politically and economically, Central Europe was to mediate between the West and the Russian East.

Hodža's plans for a Europe of regions were at times influenced by short-term political expediency, but his general line of thought was typical of most Czech writing. For instance, no Czech would regard his country as being part of 'Eastern Europe', and many voices predicted a shift of influence and energy from the West to Central Europe.

<sup>8</sup> The Slovaks had been under Hungarian rule and a ruthless politics of 'Magyarization' had left the Slovak national movement very weak – the alliance with the linguistically very close, but culturally more distant, Czechs was therefore a necessity for Slovak national survival, in spite of later long-term Czech predominance in the relationship.



F. V. Krejčí in his above mentioned *Czechhood and Europeanness* also presents a Europe of distinctive cultural zones. In the controversial issue of Czech–German relations he accepts what Hodža perhaps for political reasons denies: the close Czech cultural affinity to the Germans. To Krejčí, the main axis in the long march of the European spirit stretched from Greek antiquity through renaissance Italy to France and England. The European lifestyles unfolding on these historical stopping-places were, in their heyday, objects of desire for all of cultural Europe. With Italy politically weak and England half withdrawn from Europe, France for two centuries became the incarnation of European cultural progress and was envied and imitated everywhere. But France had become decadent, seduced by its own splendour and careless about its cultural heritage. In Krejčí's words, France had become self-sufficient and, in so doing, had forgotten about Europe.

So adjoining this first axis, where Europe was a lived experience, a new Central European cultural axis passing from Scandinavia through Germany to the Austrian Empire began to make itself felt with Germany in the lead. The region's sincere, introverted and perhaps slightly gross spirit gave Europe the Reformation, for which the region paid dearly in the Thirty Years' War. As German culture finally recovered a century and a half later, the lifestyle of the German élites had none of the French *élan*. No wonder, then, that the culture of the region became speculative and romantic. In this axis, Europe was first of all an *idea* – a dream and a future project.

Tied to the continent, the Germans were fully aware of not being alone in Europe, and they soon became preoccupied with the principle of nationality. Knowledge of Europe became a means to realize the idea of Europe and, as Krejčí put it aphoristically, the French thought they *were* Europe, whereas the Germans tried to *know* her. Much of the same was true about the Czechs who could not escape a close cultural relationship with the Germans. The Czechs were put in a difficult situation since they were the Slav tribe that had penetrated furthest into the West. Though fully integrated in Western European culture since the acceptance of Christianity, the Czechs had been reluctant to accept Western civilization, as it usually came through German mediation and contained a danger of assimilation. Only in recent years had the Czechs become strong enough to give up romantic Pan-Slav nostalgia and vote for a fully integrated Europe.

To Krejčí, true Europeanness consisted in accepting a double adherence to one's own nation and to a shared European culture. In fine romantic tradition, Krejčí believed in the existence of 'national souls' and in tribal-linguistic national affinities. To him, all European nations had to appear on stage before a fully authentic Europeanness could evolve. He mentioned the recent wave of Scandinavian literature as proof of the richness of such a multi-cultural Europe, and he found the élites of small nations more European than those from the great powers, since they had to be 'transnational' and know foreign languages to enrich their own cultures. Like many of his compatriots, Krejčí saw no conflict between a culturally heterogeneous Europe and political integration, and his book ends on a note of support for Briand's plans for a European confederation.

### **Russia, the Soviet Union and Europe**

To Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary it was more difficult to be *discovered* than actually *accepted* as part of Europe, since for a thousand years they had been part of (Roman Catholic) Christianity. Russia's case was almost the opposite, and for centuries Russia's relationship with Europe had caused endless trouble both for the Russians themselves and for the (Western) Europeans. Most discussions of Russia's 'otherness' are based on the fact that Russia, for centuries, developed independently of (Western) Europe. In religion, the country went its own way since the breach between the Roman and Byzantine churches in 1054, and the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century and later military pressure from the West kept Russia isolated and hence xenophobic. However, from the time of Peter the Great (1672–1725), Russian leaders made serious efforts to shape the Russian state in a European way. It was also in Peter's time that the notion of the Urals as the boundary between Europe and Asia was established in Russia (Bassin, 1991, p. 6). In politics, Peter and later tsars managed to make Russia a European power (cf. den Boer above), and during the nineteenth century Russia on several occasions intervened directly in (Western) European affairs.

Only then did Russia's relations with Europe become a problem to both sides. The whole discourse was of course highly politico-ideological and views often differed greatly on both sides. In Russia, 'Westerners' lamented the country's backwardness and isolation and wanted it to catch up with Europe as fast as possible: the reactionary government first of all wanted Western efficiency, Prussian style, liberals looked to the political freedom of England and France, and radicals found inspiration in Marxism or anarchism. They all shared the will to import ideas to overcome the menace of the 'lost' centuries (Schubart, 1938, pp. 279ff). But soon nationalist reactions to the admiration of the West set in. The 'Slavophiles' praised the uniqueness of the Russian national spirit and called Russia a world of its own. There was a deep historical and cultural gulf between Russia and Europe so it would be detrimental for Russia blindly to imitate the West. Somewhat inconsistently, this protective attitude was often combined with pan-Slav demand for a union of all Slav peoples, evidently under Orthodox Russian supremacy (Bassin, 1991, pp. 9ff). The denunciation of the West was primarily a critique of present-day European society in all its materialist degeneration. The common roots of Russia and Europe in Greek and Christian culture were stressed, and often Russia was accorded a messianic role as 'saviour' of Europe.

Western attitudes were at least as varied and may roughly be divided into four groups. One considered Russia European, due to Christianity, perhaps also to race and culture. Another saw Russia as Asiatic – primitive and oriental underneath a thin veneer of Europeanness upheld mostly by German, Baltic, or Jewish élites. A third saw in Russia a mixture of European and Asiatic elements and a bridge between the two worlds and, finally, many argued that Russia was a whole universe of its own, neither European nor Asiatic. It is interesting that the 'discovery' of the USA (as a strong independent power) also had repercussions for the perception of Russia. The Europeans began to see themselves as an entity *between* other powers, i.e. America and Russia, not just as the centre of the world. It was an early warning, when Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59) predicted in 1835 that some day

the two powers would each control the fate of their half of the globe (Tschizewskij, 1959, pp. 13, 108), but at the turn of the century such a notion was becoming increasingly common.

The Bolshevik takeover seemed to make the task easy for most European observers. A political and cultural pariah, Russia required little effort to be excluded from cultural Europe proper. Hardly any of the texts discussed here accept Russia unconditionally as part of Europe, the general tendency being to see in Russia a world of its own. Some took into account socialism's European origins, but dismissed the Soviet version as primitive and alien and deeply marked by the Asiatic or Orthodox traditions of Russian history.

Somewhat paradoxically, this repudiation of Russia took place at a time when the challenge of the revolution and the resulting wave of Russian immigrants greatly increased European interest in Russia and contact with its culture. Also the emigrants themselves had lively views and one group, represented here by the linguist N. S. Trubeckoj (1890–1938), brought the notion of the otherness of Russia to its logical extreme. For the first time Russians presented Russia as being fundamentally *outside* the European cultural world. Though politically often just as critical of the West as the Slavophiles, the 'Eurasians' used modern scientific methods in their analysis, which gave their work a curious blend of ideology and serious academic research. An area approximately coinciding with the Soviet territory was identified as a cohesive geographical unit that neither belonged to Europe nor to Asia and which was termed *Eurasia*. Furthermore, historically, culturally and anthropologically this Eurasian melting pot had formed an independent world, and Trubeckoj could quite agree with the Westerners who found that the war and the revolution had torn the European mask off the Russian face. He made a sharp distinction between the Russians (whom he called 'Turanian') and the Slavs and placed the border between the West and the East between the two (Trubeckoj, 1927, in Tschizewskij, 1959, p. 523).

But more influential in Western intellectual circles was a critic of Eurasianism, the philosopher Nikolay Aleksandrovic Berdyaev (1874–1948). Born an aristocrat, he had flirted with Marxism in his youth before turning to Christianity. In 1922 he settled in Paris, and two years later his book *The New Middle Ages* was published to great acclaim.

The book can be seen as a Russian parallel to the line in German thinking that disliked Western liberal civilization and preached its end. According to Berdyaev, history, like nature, moved rhythmically, and now the world (i.e. the Christian world – he has no interest in the rest) faced a new Middle Ages. The war and the revolution in Russia proved that the modern era was spiritually burnt out and that the old liberal principles could no longer be restored. Some good elements of the modern era would live on into the next epoch, but while humanism had liberated man *from* something – from the theocracy of the old Middle Ages, for example – it had been completely unable to raise man *to* a new spiritual awareness. The whole theory of democracy was based on the absence of any higher truth and humanism's pride had brought its downfall, since if God did not exist, neither did man.

This was reflected in Berdyaev's views on ideologies. Socialism was a logical result of capitalism, and both shared the cult of Mammon and the denial of God. But unlike capitalism, socialism was dynamic; it had a vision and was right in putting matter above form. But its messianism was false and allowed the proletariat – or rather its self-appointed vanguard – to become a monstrous, absolutist tyrant, destroying all spiritual freedom in the name of an empty goal.

Still, Communism had one foot in the new era since it was openly Antichrist and thus destroyed the liberal illusion of not-believing. From this perspective, Fascism also was a harbinger of the new era. In general, the loss of neutrality was a good sign, although Communism sought an international, sacral community with the devil. It demonstrated by negation the features of the new Middle Ages, which would be marked by a return to a transcendental spirituality in which the Kingdom of Christ was sharply opposed to Antichrist. Poverty and misery would follow, but through ascetic purification a spiritual community in Christ would arise. This community would be organic and hierarchical, ruled by a spiritual aristocracy and true parliaments of corporative guilds.

Berdyaev believed that Russia had a special mission to save the world. Unlike Europe, Russia had never fully left the Middle Ages or mastered the secular rationality of bourgeois society. Therefore, in 1918 the radical Antichrist of Communism had much more appeal than the lukewarm principles of liberal democracy: 'The Russians ... are spiritually a non-political people who aspire only to the highest point of history, the actualization of the Kingdom of God' (Berdyaev, 1924; 1933 edn, p. 149). Apocalyptic as they were, the Russians wanted either a brotherhood in Christ or a comradeship in Antichrist. Berdyaev expected the terror of the revolution to make the Russians understand their sins and return to Christ, and this spiritual renewal would be an example to the whole world. A true universalism would have to waken in all peoples if Christendom was to triumph. And:

The Russian people is by nature the most universalist of all the peoples of the world, the quality is part of the very framework of their national spirit, and their calling ought to be to work for world-unification and the formation of a single spiritual cosmos.

(Berdyaev, 1924; 1933 edn, p. 100)

Berdyaev shared this messianism with the Slavophiles, but he condemned any nationalism or belief in a God with national affiliations. He rejected old forms of theocracy, and in his appeal to all individuals to make a personal choice between good and evil seems more inspired by Protestantism than by orthodoxy.

Berdyaev's apocalyptic visions and condemnations of the God-forsaken West appealed to flagellating natures, and even his belief that Communism, by negation, could bring the world closer to salvation through the reborn Russian people found some adherents in the West. Walter Schubart (1887–c.1940; he 'disappeared' in the USSR) in his *Europa und die Seele des Ostens* ('Europe and the soul of the East', 1938), with arguments curiously mixing Spengler and Berdyaev, predicted the end of the (Western, German, bourgeois, soulless, etc.) 'Promethean epoch' and the coming of a new era (Eastern, Russian, spiritual, brotherly, etc.) for which Bolshevism indirectly paved the way.

### Europe, races, colonies

The reluctant or even dismissive attitude of most Western Europeans towards Russia suggests that the awareness of borders and non-'Europeanness' has been vital to the construction of a feeling of European community. Often the perspective of an imagined (a fictional traveller or inhabitant of some Utopia) or real outsider was needed to make visible a European identity. Max Scheler observed how Europeans had only come to notice their common identity when they discovered how similar they looked in the eyes of non-Europeans; he wanted the Europeans to utilize this experience in remembering their roots instead of naively believing in the global possibilities of European civilization (Scheler, 1915, p. 261) in a world of incompatible cultures.

The anti-liberal German stance with its emphasis on culture and tradition almost 'had to' produce theories of European singularity, but even in liberal thought we often meet notions of a unique – mostly superior – Europeanness rooted in culture or race. Aristide Briand's memorandum of 1 May 1930 mentions European 'racial affinities and common ideals of civilization' (quoted in Coudenhove-Kalergi, 1934, p. 115). In 1953, the first half of the same sentence in a publication from the German Foreign Office has 'technische Zusammengehörigkeit' ('technical affinities') (Europa, 1953, p. 33).

This piece of reinterpretation (or 'censorship') is hardly accidental. To any post-Auschwitz observer it is striking how frequently the concept of race appeared in pre-war texts. It was in no way taboo, nor was it reserved to the Nazis. Vital to some and marginal to others it was widely accepted as at least one element relevant to the understanding of Europeanness. Sometimes the concept was used at the level of nations (the German, Russian, French, etc. race), and some people spoke of a European (Caucasian, white, etc.) race as a whole. Some examples serve to illustrate this range:

The whole of Europe forms one single race, one single blood fraternity, which is divided into many strains.  
(Coudenhove-Kalergi, 1934, p. 273)

...the disunity and lack of balance that marks the German national temperament is rooted in the racial and historical origins of the German national being.  
(Dawson, 1943, p. 20)

...even in the case of Eastern orthodox Jewry, where the weaknesses as well as the merits of the whole race are more intensely manifested...  
(Zweig, 1943a, p. 20)

In all cases the bearer of the European intellect is seen to be of a generatively cohesive mixed race made up principally of Celts, Latins, Slavs and Teutons, plus a vanishing Judeo-semitic minority, which, when considered from a geographical point of view, can be divided into broad categories of the fair, Nordic, blond race, the Alpine race and the Mediterranean race.  
(Scheler, 1915, p. 293)

Of course there were also sceptics. Spengler accepted the idea of a subjective racial community, but virtually ridiculed biological racism:

A strict classification of races – the ambition of all ethnology – is impossible. ...Race, in contrast to speech, is unsystematic through and through. In the last resort every individual man and every individual moment of his existence have their own race.  
(Spengler, 1922; 1928 edn, p. 131)

Nevertheless, racial anthropology had become both academically acceptable and popular in the late nineteenth century, and despite a huge growth in anti-racist literature it had by no means disappeared in the period between the wars. Ortega y Gasset:

...the human species has flourished in zones of our planet where the hot season is compensated by a season of intense cold. In the tropics the animal-man degenerates, and vice versa, inferior races – the pygmies, for example – have been pushed back towards the tropics by races born after them and superior in the scale of evolution.  
(1930; 1961 edn, p. 77)

Not least, such theories of racial (biological) and cultural difference between Europeans and non-Europeans were very convenient in granting legitimacy to European colonial adventures. Generally, colonialism was found acceptable wherever the Europeans were unable to see any 'higher' culture (i.e. typically a culture strong enough to make serious military or cultural resistance to the European penetration). China and Japan had won a certain respect, but nobody saw anything wrong in the exploitation of Africa. To later observers the era's unreflected acceptance of colonialism gave the idea of Europe a tragic ambiguity, as the concept *inframuros* often meant freedom, human rights, and democracy, but *extramuros* domination, exploitation, and subjugation (Morin, 1987, p. 147; Duroselle, 1965, p. 318). Only in the Resistance programmes do we find a denunciation of 'Euro-imperialism' and calls for a release of the colonies (Lipgens, 1968, p. 18).

It is worth remembering that Europe between the wars was still overwhelmingly 'white' and in a 'global' sense ethnically rather homogeneous (though of course migration took place, and Danes in 1910 felt no less distance from the alien Polish creatures imported to pick sugar beet than they do to the Turks today). Japanese tourists were not a frequent sight, and people from the European colonies had not yet begun to move in great numbers to the colonial centres. This perceived homogeneity may be one reason for the great interest devoted to the 'Jewish question'. These very visible 'internal foreigners' were (no matter for how many centuries the Jews had been present in a country) a permanent reminder of the 'otherness' of the world and posed a problem of interpretation. In the first half of this century racial terminology was commonplace and, as the quotation above by Stefan Zweig shows (he himself a Jew), this was once again no Nazi monopoly.

But for any discussion on the Jews in Europe it is helpful to go back to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). Nietzsche, in his remarkably anti-nationalistic reflections, introduced the concept of the 'good European' and he believed that the European peoples would fuse into a new superior 'Mischrasse' (mixed race). This process

would also solve the 'Jewish problem', which he contended only led to conflicts in nation states. In the upbringing of this new European man, Nietzsche found the Jews as useful as any other national 'ingredient' (Gollwitzer, 1951; 1964 edn, p. 326), and the Jews had even won immortal merit by being the Best Europeans in the Dark Ages:

In the darkest hours of the Middle Ages, when the bank of Asiatic cloud hung heavy over Europe, it was the Jewish free thinkers, scholars and doctors who kept aloft the banner of the Enlightenment and intellectual independence in the face of the most pitiless personal duress, and defended Europe against Asia. Even when Christendom has done everything possible to orientalize the occident, Judaism has played a major part in occidentalizing it again...

(Quoted from Gollwitzer, 1951; 1964 edn, pp. 327ff)

In many ways the Jews (at least better-off emancipated Western European Jewry) formed a European élite, somehow *above* the (other) nations – at the same time 'foreign' and representing the essence of civilized Europeanness. In the characteristic language of the time, Walter Schubart explained that the obvious success of the Jews in the last 150 years came about less by their own efforts and more by the fact that European history was taking a shape very familiar to the deepest nature of the Jewish national character (Schubart, 1938, p. 24). Jews were often identified (and identified themselves) with cosmopolitanism, anti-nationalism, progress, and so on (of course also with money and commerce), i.e. with the principles of the liberal order and its socialist offshoot. According to Theodor Lessing (1874–1933, killed by Nazi extremists in exile in Marienbad), the permanent sufferings of the Jews had led many of them to identify with all oppressed peoples and thus to engage strongly in European revolutionary movements – an attitude in paradoxical contrast to the painfully conservative Jewish national soul (*Volksseele*) without which the Jews could not have survived for two millennia (Lessing, 1923, pp. 318ff). Though repeatedly referring to the Jewish *will* to be different Lessing, like Nietzsche and Spengler (Spengler, 1918, p. 399), assumed the disappearance of (Western) European Jewry through assimilation in the rising cosmopolitan, secular civilization.

But to those who did not believe in a liberal (socialist), European 'civilization' the Jews posed a problem. Of course racial anti-Semitism described the Jews as fundamentally non-European, but others also had problems of interpretation. The adherents of 'Europeanness' as 'Christendom' often found it hard to avoid anti-Semitism, and the heavy engagement of the Jews in secular capitalism and socialism led no less to their castigation than their role in the crucifixion of Christ. Berdyaev is one example of this and he manages to condemn both Jewish messianism (for being exclusive and collectivist) and racial anti-Semitism, suggesting that the two just mirror each other:

One could call racial teaching a distorted, secularized, godless and biologized imitation of the Jewish national ideology. The Jews represent the only classical form of the racial idea... Judaism has in many periods of Jewish history ascribed a religious meaning to 'the people' and attached the religious inseparably to the national.

(Berdyaev, 1935, p. 125, author's translation from the Danish version)

By contrast, Berdyaev said, Christianity could not preach exclusivity or hatred towards the Jews, since the religion was open to anybody willing to convert. But the Jews were rarely willing to give up their identity – a problem also faced by the adherents of a Herderian vision of Europe as a sum of nations. It was highly inconvenient to have contingents of Jews in all countries, when only the nation state could form the nucleus of an ideal Europe. And for those who neither wanted to give in to racism, nor to abandon the validity of nationality as *the* constituent feature of any culture, the only options were a politics of assimilation or a support of Zionism as an expression of Jewish nationalism. Masaryk, for instance, whose Czechoslovak republic was a haven of tolerance towards Jews compared to most neighbouring countries, was an ardent supporter of the Zionist movement.

Europe's pride, its belief in its own intellectual superiority, and its contempt for the 'lower races' is summed up in the quotation below from the Bohemian-German-Jewish philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). It also illustrates a typical feature of European self-understanding: in order to be part of the spiritual community you have to be settled and to 'build the European home', i.e. to contribute to the continued growth of a culture that considers itself unique – since it alone has defined itself as an 'historical teleology of an unending series of goals of reason'. The quotation can also remind us that the fate of European Jewry – this people 'above Europe' – was tragically mirrored in the fate of other 'internal foreigners', the Gypsies, invisible to most in their position 'below Europe'.

In the spiritual sense the English dominions, the United States, etc., clearly belong to Europe, whereas the Eskimos or Indians presented as curiosities at fairs, or the Gypsies, who constantly wander about Europe, do not. Here the title 'Europe' clearly refers to the unity of a spiritual life, activity, creation, with all its ends, interests, cares and endeavours, with its products of purposeful activity, institutions, organizations. Here individual men act in many societies of different levels: in families, in tribes, in nations, all being internally, spiritually bound together and, as I said, in the unity of a spiritual shape.

(Husserl, 1935; 1970 edn, p. 273)

## Conclusions

Only thirty-one years separate 1914 from 1945. It is a short space of time, but it contained two world wars, a series of immense political and social upheavals and breathtaking transitions in all spheres of life. It was an era of extremes, and it took Europe from a state of self-confident global superiority to near exhaustion. Intellectual life was no less turbulent than the world surrounding it, and it may seem impossible to identify any prevalent notion of Europe in the midst of all this. However, in the material treated here, one single concept manifests itself with an overwhelming authority. Of all the aspects contributing to the era's notion of Europe, the *national dimension* was pivotal and it determined the character of most lines of argument.

First, the political life of the period was ruled by a disastrously triumphant nationalism. It accompanied if not fostered both the wars, and in the inter-war period it characterized the behaviour of most actors on the European stage.

Secondly, even people devoid of nationalistic chauvinism unconditionally accepted 'the national principle'. The Europe of Versailles was founded on it and was for many protagonists a vital step in the realization of the ancient European ideas of freedom and equality. If cultural Europe was primarily composed of its national cultures, then political Europe ought to be the sum of its nation states. We saw how the main political initiative towards European unity between the wars, that of Briand, did not even dream of violating the principle of national sovereignty, and the prestige of the nation in the hierarchy of values is perhaps best described by this quotation from Briand's loyal supporter, Édouard Herriot:

[Briand] affirmed the necessity to preserve the sovereignty of different countries destined to become united in a federation. Occasionally, he blamed the fundamental differences of conception on certain internationalists who wished to suppress nations in favour of abstract notions, without having any point of contact with history and life.  
(Herriot, 1930, p. 50)

Thirdly, those who warned against nation state pettiness were also deeply influenced by this line of thought. Coudenhove-Kalergi and Ortega y Gasset – major advocates of a 'United States of Europe' – both considered the nation state as an intermediate step on the way to the creation of a common European nation, one to which all inhabitants were to feel *nationally* attached. In Italy in 1932, the influential liberal historian Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) wrote:

...just as, seventy years ago, a Neapolitan of the old kingdom or a Piedmontese of the sub-Alpine kingdom became Italians, not by denying that which they had been, but by elevating it and incorporating it into that new existence, so will the French, Germans and Italians and all the others elevate themselves to become Europeans and their thoughts will turn to Europe, and their hearts will beat for it, as they had done for their smaller fatherlands, which they will not have forgotten, but love the more.

(Quoted from Rijksbaron, 1987, p. 67)

Once again people's loyalties were seen to be arranged in concentric circles, and only after learning to behave as Europeans could there be a start to discussion about the possibility of a truly global civilization start.

Europe was regarded primarily as an interplay of nations rather than of, say, groups of consumers or producers, regional communities or interest groups devoted to specific issues, and so on. There were, of course, attempts to stress non- or trans-national communities of interests (for instance, the German Social Democrats had a 'United States of Europe' in their party programme) but, in general, the perspective in such claims as the solidarity of workers, Catholics, pacifists, and so on, almost inevitably ended up being global rather than European.

Nationality was a seemingly stable component, without which Europe at this time could not be imagined. Dynamically, most observers identified the *explosive growth in modern civilization* as the main *challenge* to Europe. No one was left unimpressed by the possibilities opened up by aeroplanes, radios, electric light, and cinemas, but the double-edged nature of technological progress had been demonstrated in the mass destruction of the war. In many texts we find a highly ambiguous attitude to a process that seemed to challenge everything known and established.

There was general consensus that Europe was not sufficiently prepared for changes of this magnitude, which threatened Europe both internally and globally. In Europe's 'internal' political life a conflict appeared between, on the one hand, the strong trends towards large-scale production, economic centralization, and international interdependence and, on the other, the seemingly untouchable 'national principle'. Stefan Zweig – one of the few intellectuals absolutely untarnished by nationalism – in an essay from 1932, *Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung* ('the idea of Europe in its historical development'), dedicated to the unifying elements in European culture, lamented the present strife between the peoples:

...if I were to try to formulate the intellectual situation today, I would say that the present drive to unite Europe has more to do with *things* than it has with *people*.

(Zweig, 1943b, p. 348)

Most plans for European unity from Naumann to the propaganda of the Nazis stressed the need for economic cooperation and for an adjustment to a world of global competition. But at the same time, there was an unwillingness to give up any national sovereignty to create customs unions, or common markets. On the contrary, economic autarky had a high priority and dovetailed with political nationalism. Attempts at unification either neglected the dilemma (Briand's official memorandum), tried to eliminate it by moving national loyalties to a continental level (Coudenhove-Kalergi), or implicitly or explicitly counted on the hegemony of great power according satellite status, only, to smaller nations (Naumann, Nazi Neuropa).

Modern civilization did not restrict itself to undermining the foundations of national self-sufficiency; it also ruined the political values of nineteenth-century Europe. Mass production created a mass society with mass politics, which did its best to destroy the principles that had made it possible. Not everybody was willing to bury the 'decadent bourgeois liberalism' and opt for the totalitarian solutions, but many democrats did see some truth in Marx's dictum about the bourgeoisie being its own gravedigger, and were left irresolute when asked for a dynamic alternative to Communism or Fascism. 'Europas grösste Gefahr ist die Müdigkeit' ('The greatest danger to Europe is tiredness'), said Husserl (1935; 1954 edn, p. 348), but his calls for a rebirth of Europe through a 'heroism of reason' had no more effect than Mann's desired new 'militant European humanism'.

Finally, modern civilization mercilessly revealed to Europe that it was no longer the undisputed power centre of the world. Europe was now only one of several

global powerfields, a condition often used in arguments for European unity, but not yet fully comprehended. Often, the traditional feeling of European superiority, in all its pride and arrogance, was mixed with an almost paranoid wish to protect a culture that had suddenly discovered intimations of its own mortality.

In my introduction I discussed the dichotomy between projects and perceptions of Europe, stressing the analytical purpose of the two concepts. The aim was to clarify different aspects of a complex phenomenon, but obviously the two dimensions were contained within each other. If the distinction has turned out to be reasonably applicable for the period treated here, it is perhaps because the political projects for Europe were so stunningly far from any practical realization that they could easily be singled out for analysis. Both politically and intellectually, 'European-ness' experienced a strong recession, and the few who still cared enough to insist on seeing Europe as an entity were so preoccupied with making a diagnosis that they had little time for actually suggesting cures. Finally, in 1945, the 'doctors' moved in from abroad.

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