

*The Direction of European History*

*TIMOTHY GARTON ASH*

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TIMOTHY GARTON ASH is Senior Research Fellow in Contemporary European History at St. Antony's College, Oxford. After reading modern history at Oxford, his research into the German resistance to Hitler took him to both the eastern and western halves of the divided city of Berlin, where he lived for several years. In 1986–87 he was a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is a governor of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and a fellow of the Berlin-Brandenburg (formerly Prussian) Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of Arts. He has been honored with both the Polish and the German Order of Merit. He was the foreign editor of the *Spectator*, and for several years wrote a column in the *Independent*. He remains a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*, the *TLS*, and the *London Times*. He is the author of *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (1989); *The Magic Lantern* (1993; British title: *We the People*); and *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (1983), which won the Somerset Maugham Award.

It is a great pleasure to deliver the first Tanner Lecture to be held behind the line of what used to be called the Iron Curtain, here in Prague, in this historic building of the Charles University. Since what I have to say may be regarded by some guardians of European political correctness as mildly heretical, I take comfort in the thought that since the days of Jan Hus and John Wyclif, the Charles University and my own University of Oxford are old partners in heresy.

It would have been a very particular pleasure to have delivered this lecture —as was planned —in the presence of President Václav Havel, a man who has himself contributed so much to shaping the direction of recent European history. I very much hope that he will be with us again before too long. Meanwhile, I am much looking forward to the comments tomorrow of Senator Petr Pithart, Professor Pierre Hassner, and Professor Arnulf Baring, three colleagues and friends whose work I have greatly admired, and learned from, for many years.

As the Czech Republic is set fair to achieve, within the foreseeable future, what in 1989 we started calling “the return to Europe,” it seems appropriate to consider what this “Europe” is that the Czech lands are rejoining, and what we can say about the direction in which it is developing. But is there anything meaningful we can say about that? Did not the events of 1989 show, once again, the folly of any attempt to predict the future? Which of the countless models and theories of political science, or from the academic field of international relations, suggested that the world of Soviet communism would end in that way, let alone at that time? As one American scholar ruefully observed, “None of us predicted these events, and all of us could explain why they were inevitable.”

Historians, including those of us who try to write the history of the present, should be especially wary. What happened in 1989 was, amongst other things, a further demonstration of the poverty of historicism, in Karl Popper's particular usage of that word. Historicism understood, that is, as the claim to be able to detect scientific laws of historical development. Would it not be wiser to stick with R. G. Collingwood's injunction that the historian's task is only to show how the present has come into existence? History, says Collingwood bluntly, ends with the present.

Nonetheless, I have decided to ignore this old wisdom. From deep immersion in recent history one does, I think, emerge with some strong impression, some half-intuitive sense, of the way things seem likely to develop. And this kind of historically informed guesswork —I make no larger claim for it —may be marginally useful for European policy, in a period of European history that is unusually open. The contemporary shorthand often used is "a time of transition." A time of transition has been well defined as the period between one transition and the next. Yet it is certainly true that modern European history has oscillated between generally shorter periods of openness and disorder and generally longer periods of a more settled order: the order of Westphalia, Vienna, Versailles, Yalta, and so on. Thus, on past precedent, it seems unlikely that this openness will last for decades. It therefore matters a great deal what we might be moving toward, and what we should, realistically, be trying to move toward.

Despite the spectacular failure of grand theory to predict what happened in 1989, since 1989 the intellectual skies have in fact been full of competing grand theories about the direction not just of European but of world history. There was Francis Fukuyama's "End of History." There was John Mearsheimer's neo-realist vision of Europe going "back to the future" — with a return of unbridled, violent competition between nation-states. There is the notion of a "new Middle Ages," first cautiously advanced by Pierre Hassner, then flaunted in full feather by Alain Minc. There is Samuel Hunt-

ington's "clash of civilisations," with its implication that Europe is now likely to be divided along the historical fault-line between western and eastern Christianity, while confronting the world of Islam to the south.

My own remarks will be largely confined to the internal arrangements of the European continent, although this necessarily involves some consideration of its relations with the rest of the world, I will not be concerned with the philosophy of history, but will remain somewhat closer to the earth, at the point where political theory and political reality intersect.

For there is Europe and there is "Europe." There is the place, the continent, the political and economic reality, and there is Europe as an idea and an ideal, a dream, as project, process, progress toward some *finalité européenne*. These idealistic and teleological visions of Europe at once inform, legitimate, and are themselves informed and legitimated by the political development of something now called the European Union. The very name "European Union" is itself a product of this approach. For a union is what it's meant to be, not what it is.

At its most vertiginous, this comes as the dialectical idealism of German Europeanism. The title of a German work on the recent development of Europe is *Europa der Gegensätze auf dem Wege zu sich selbst*: The Europe of Contradictions on the Way to Itself. In English, this makes about as much sense as "the London of traffic jams on the way to itself." Less giddily, though, even in Britain we have grown accustomed to what I call the Whig interpretation of recent European history. European history since 1945 is interpreted as a story of progress toward more freedom, more democracy, more prosperity, more integration, and in the end —or as the end —to unity.

Among the continents, this view is peculiar to Europe. There may be talk of "Asian values," for example, or attempts to find a Pan-African identity, but it would be hard to argue that the analyses and policies of the political elites of Asia or Africa are

routinely informed by any teleological or idealistic notion of their continent “becoming itself.” The same would seem to hold for the Americas. That leaves Australia.

A classic example of this European self-interpretation is Jean-Baptiste Duroselle’s *Europe: A History of Its Peoples*, published simultaneously in several European languages in 1990. Discussing several different ways of viewing the post-1945 history of Europe, he writes, “One may, finally, see this phase of history in a European light” —by implication, the other lights must be un-European — “and observe how many objective factors have combined with creative acts of will to make possible the first step towards a united Europe.” Reflecting, in conclusion, on “the decline of Europe, the result of two World Wars after centuries of violence,” he avers that “the only remedy is to build a Europe which at first will be confederal and later federal, while maintaining freedom and democracy. This project is natural, realistic and legitimate, because there has long been a community of Europe —embryonic at first, but growing with time, despite centuries of war and conflict, blood and tears.” Note particularly the word “natural.”

This idealistic-teleological discourse puts at the very centre of discussion a single notion: unification. European history since 1945 is told as a story of unification; difficult, delayed, suffering reverses, but nonetheless progressing. Here is the grand narrative taught to millions of European schoolchildren and accepted by East Central European politicians when they talk of rejoining “a uniting Europe.” It is a narrative whose next chapter is even now being written by a leading German historian, Dr. Helmut Kohl. The millennial culmination is to be achieved on January 1, 1999, with a monetary union that will, it is argued, irreversibly bind together some of the leading nations and states of Europe. This group of states should in turn become the “magnetic core” of a larger unification.

However, European unification is seen not just as the product of political will, of visionary leaders from Jean Monnet and Robert

Schuman to Francois Mitterrand and Kohl. It is also seen as a necessary, even an inevitable, response to certain deeper forces. "Globalisation" is the current buzz-word used to describe these forces. Nation-states are no longer able to protect and realise their economic and political interests on their own. They are no match for transnational actors like global currency speculators, multinational companies, or international "mafia"-type criminal gangs. Both power and identity, it is argued, are migrating both upward and downward from the nation-state: upward to the supra-national level, downward to the regional one. In a globalised world of large trading blocs, Europe will only be able to hold its own as a larger political-economic unit.

We have all heard the arguments. It would be absurd to suggest that there is no force in them. Yet I will contend that, when combined into the single grand narrative, into the idealistic-teleological discourse of European unification, they result in a seriously misleading picture of the real ground on which European leaders have to build at the end of the twentieth century. In what follows, I will merely glance at the millennia before 1945, look a little more closely at the now finished period of the divided Europe of "Yalta," from 1945 to 1989, and then concentrate on developments since 1989.

## 1

One of my favourite index entries is that under "Europe" in Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History*. Toynbee's first reference reads: "Europe, as battlefield," his second: "as not an intelligible field of historical study," and his last: "unification of, failure of attempts at."

The most fundamental point is, of course, his second one: "not an intelligible field of historical study." Toynbee has a splendid dig at H. A. L. Fisher, who in his *History of Europe* famously claimed to detect "no pattern" in history. Actually, says Toynbee, in calling his book *A History of Europe*, Fisher embraces one of

the oldest patterns of all, “for the portmanteau word ‘Europe’ is a whole *Corpus Juris Naturae* in itself.” It is, Toynbee claims, a “cultural misapplication of a nautical term” to suggest that Hellenic history —the mediterranean ancient history of Greece and Rome —and Western history are successive acts in a single European drama.

He gives more credence to the Polish historian Oskar Halecki’s periodisation, in which a Mediterranean Age is followed by a European Age, running roughly from 950 A.D. to 1750, that in turn is succeeded by what Halecki called an Atlantic Age, today we might refer to it simply as a global age). But even in the European Age, the continent’s eastern edge remained deeply ill-defined: Was it the Elbe? Or the dividing line between Western and Eastern Christianity? Or the Urals? Europe’s political history was characterised by the astounding diversity of peoples, nations, states, and empires, and the ceaseless and often violent competition between them.

In short, no continent is externally more ill-defined, internally more diverse, or historically more disorderly. Yet no continent has produced more schemes for its own orderly unification. So our teleological-idealistic or Whig interpreters can cite an impressive list of intellectual and political forebears, from your own Bohemian King George of Podebrady through the Duc de Sully and William Penn (writing already in America) to Aristide Briand and the half-Austrian, half-Japanese prophet of Pan-Europa, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi.

The trouble is that those designs for European unification that were peaceful were not implemented, while those that were implemented were not peaceful. They involved either a temporary solidarity in response to an external invader or an attempt by one European state to establish continental hegemony by force of arms, from Napoleon to Hitler. Yet the latter, too, failed, as Toynbee’s index drily notes.



## 2

The attempt at European unification since 1945 thus stands out from all earlier attempts by being both peaceful and implemented — and, so far, successful, at least in the rudimentary sense of lasting longer without being undone. The idealistic interpretation of this historical abnormality is that we Europeans have at last learned from history. The “European civil war” of 1914 to 1945, that second and still bloodier Thirty Years War, finally brought us to our senses.

Yet this requires a little closer examination. For a start, “peaceful” applies only in the sense of “the absence of hot war,” and even that applies only to the continent west of the Iron Curtain. I hardly need to remind this audience of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, or martial law in Poland in 1981/82. Moreover, the whole continent was deeply shaped by the experience of Cold War. It has become almost commonplace to observe that only after the end of the Cold War are we discovering just how much European integration owed to it. Minerva’s owl again flies at dusk.

First, there was the Soviet Union as negative external integrator. West Europeans pulled together in face of the common enemy: as they had before the Turks or the Mongols. Second, there was the United States as positive external integrator. Particularly in the earlier years, the United States pushed very strongly for West European integration, making it almost a condition for further Marshall Aid. (In later decades, the United States was at times more ambivalent about building up what might be a rival trading bloc, but in broad, geographical terms it did support West European integration throughout the Cold War.)

Third, the Cold War helped, quite brutally, by cutting off most of Central and Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain. This meant that European integration could begin with a relatively small number of nation-states, bourgeois democracies at a roughly

comparable economic level and with important older elements of common history. As has often been pointed out, the frontiers of the original European Economic Community of six were roughly coterminous with those of Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire. It was also centered around what historical geographers have nicely called the "golden banana" of advanced European economic development, stretching from Manchester to Milan, via the low countries, eastern France, and western Germany.

Moreover, within this corner of the continent there were important convergences or tradeoffs between the political and economic interests of the nations involved. Alan Milward has powerfully argued that what happened in the political economy of the postwar years was not the end of the nation-state but, to quote his striking title, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*. The crucial tradeoffs were, of course, between France and Germany. Painting with a broad brush one could say: between French iron and German coal, making the European Coal and Steel Community; between the protection of French agriculture by the Common Agricultural Policy and easier European market access for German industry, in the European Economic Community; and, especially from the Elysée Treaty of 1963 onward, between France's interest in maintaining its position as the *grande nation* by exercising the political leadership of "Europe" and Germany's interest in international rehabilitation after Nazism, exporting to the European market and securing Western support for its Ostpolitik.

None of this is to deny a genuine element of European idealism among the elites of that time. But the more we discover about this earlier period, especially through the opening of archives previously closed under the thirty years rule, the more hard-nosed and nationally self-interested the main actors appear. Winston Churchill, so often cited abroad as the British Moses of European unification, thought France and Germany—but not Britain—should get together, in the classic British interest of preserving the balance of power on the continent. Konrad Adenauer emerges

from the recent biographies as a clear-sighted national realist. Of the architect of West Germany's economic miracle he once remarked: "Ludwig Erhard, wissen Sie, das ist ein Idealist" (Ludwig Erhard, you know, there's an idealist). This was not a compliment. Certainly, Adenauer was not a committed federalist. "There are," he once said, "anti-Europeans, Europeans, and hyper-Europeans. I'm a European." And of course there is Charles de Gaulle, Adenauer's co-architect of the Franco-German special relationship, who, when asked by Henry Kissinger how France would resist German domination, startlingly replied, "Par la guerre."

Contrary to the received view, the idealists are, I believe, more to be found in the next and next-but-one generation. The generation of Helmut Kohl rather than Konrad Adenauer. There is no mistaking the genuine enthusiasm with which Helmut Kohl describes, as he will at the slightest prompting, the unforgettable experience of lifting the first frontier barriers between France and Germany, just a few years after the end of the war.

To be sure, the national interests were still powerfully present in the 1970s and 1980s. Britain, most obviously, joined the then still European Economic Community in the hope of reviving its own flagging economy and buttressing its declining influence in the world. In a book of 1988 revealingly entitled *La France par l'Europe*, none other than Jacques Delors wrote that "creating Europe is a way of regaining that room for manoeuvre necessary for 'a certain idea of France.'" The phrase "a certain idea of France," was, of course, de Gaulle's. In my book *In Europe's Name* I have shown how German enthusiasm for European integration continued to be nourished by the desire and need to secure wider European and American support for the vital German national interest of improving relations with the communist East and, eventually, for the reunification of Germany. European unification in the cause of national unification !

Besides this mixture of genuinely idealistic and national-instrumental motives, however, there was undoubtedly a growing

perception of real common interests. In a world dominated politically by superpowers and economically by larger units and trading blocs, the countries of Europe were much less capable of realising their national interests on their own.

As a result of the confluence of these three kinds of motives, and those three favourable external conditions, the 1970s and 1980s saw an impressive sequence of steps toward closer political cooperation and economic and legal integration. Starting with the Hague summit of December 1969 (which coincided, not coincidentally, with the launch of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik), through direct elections to the European Parliament and the founding of the European Monetary System, to the Single European Act and the great project of completing the internal market in the magic year of "1992."

Now this dynamic process, against a background of renewed economic growth and the spread of democracy to southern Europe, contributed directly to the end of the Cold War. To use, just for a moment, the language of systems theory: if the European Community started life as a subsystem of the Cold War, the subsystem then fed back powerfully into the larger system. To put it more concretely: there is ample evidence that one of the reasons behind Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy was Soviet alarm at the prospect of being left still further behind by, and excluded from, a "Europe" that was seen to be technologically advanced, economically dynamic, and integrating behind high protective walls.

How much more was this true of the peoples of East Central Europe, who felt themselves to belong culturally and historically to Europe, felt this with the passion of the excluded, and for whom the prosperous Western Europe they saw on their travels now clearly represented the better alternative to a discredited and stagnant "real socialism." George Orwell once said that "seen from inside, everything looks worse." The European Community certainly looked better seen from outside. Indeed, traveling to and

fro across the Iron Curtain in the 1980s I concluded that the real European divide was between those in the West, who had Europe, and those in the East, who believed in it. Accordingly, one of the great slogans to arise from the velvet revolutions of 1989 in Central Europe was “the return to Europe.” In this sense one could argue, in apparent defiance of historical logic, that “1992” in Western Europe was one of the causes of 1989 in Eastern Europe.

The Whig interpretation of recent European history, so widely taught and accepted in the 1980s, might not face the music of historical facts. But the very prevalence and wide appeal of this interpretation was itself a major historical fact: 1989 seemed to be the ultimate confirmation of its rightness.

## 3

What, then, have we witnessed since? It is possible to construe the last eight years—and the leading German historian I mentioned earlier would undoubtedly so construe them—as one more chapter, even a decisive one, in the pilgrim’s progress to European unification. The Community has been renamed a Union. The major states of Western Europe have devoted extraordinary efforts to readying themselves for the unprecedented step of uniting their currencies. At the same time, preparations have been made to enlarge the Union. Negotiations should start next year with five new post-communist democracies. Certainly, there have been difficulties along the way; but never in its history has Europe been so close to the peaceful achievement of unity.

Against this optimistic, even Panglossian view, we have to enter a number of major objections. The first is that in this same period war has returned to the European continent; war and, in the former Yugoslavia, atrocities such as we had not seen in Europe since 1945. One of the central claims for European integration has been that it has made war in Europe unthinkable. What remains of that claim now? At moments the contradiction between West European rhetoric and East European reality has been positively

grotesque. “War in Europe has become unthinkable,” said the politicians in Strasbourg or Brussels. Crash went the artillery shells into Sarajevo. The question remains open whether it was West European integration that kept the peace in Europe until 1989, inasmuch as it was kept, or rather the hard fact of the nuclear stand-off between the two superpower blocs in the Cold War. Perhaps it was not the EC but the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) — or, to put it still more sharply, not Europe’s unity but Europe’s division — that prevented the outbreak of hot war?

Second, even in core states of the old European Community, we have seen a popular reaction against the technocratic, elitist model of “building Europe from above” epitomised by the impenetrable detail of the Maastricht Treaty. The French referendum vote on the Maastricht Treaty, so narrowly won, was a telling symptom of this. This popular resentment still persists, as does a sense that the institutions of the European Union are perilously short on democratic legitimacy.

Third, while these years have indeed seen further incremental diminution in the effective powers and sovereignty of established nation-states, they have also seen the explosive emergence of at least a dozen new nation-states. Indeed, there are now more states on the map of Europe than ever before in the twentieth century. In the former Yugoslavia, these new states emerged by blood and iron, through ethnic cleansing and the violent redrawing of frontiers. In the former Czechoslovakia, the separation into two states was carried out peacefully, by negotiation. In the former Soviet Union, there were variations in between.

I am not going to argue that these deunifications reflected some deeper necessity or laws of historical development. There is a specific aetiology, different in each case, but very often having to do with the conduct of post-communist politicians, making manipulative use of nationalist agendas to gain or maintain power for themselves. Nonetheless, a diplomatic observer who went to sleep in 1897 and woke up again in 1997 would surely exclaim: “Ah yes,

I recognise what is going on. This modern passion for each nation to demand its own state has clearly proceeded apace." As Ernest Gelher, the late-lamented Prague doyen of studies of nationalism, always argued, the case for what he called "one culture, one state" is an eminently modern one. Moreover, its logic is, or can be, closely related to that of democracy. Democracy requires trust. It requires that the minority is prepared to accept the decision of the majority, because the minority still regards the state as fundamentally "theirs." The argument is hardly original—you find it already in John Stuart Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government*: "Among a people without fellow-feelings, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative government cannot exist."

Nor is this phenomenon of deunification confined to the post-communist half of Europe. The cliché of "integration in the West, disintegration in the East" does not bear closer examination. I am always surprised, for example, when the progressive disintegration of Belgium is cited as evidence for the decline of the nation-state and the rise of regionalism. For the tensions that are pulling Belgium apart would be entirely familiar to a nineteenth-century liberal nationalist. Each ethno-linguistic group demands a growing measure of self-government. My own country, Britain, has for decades been an unusual modern variation on the theme of nation-state: a nation composed of four nations (or, to be precise, three and a bit). But now the constituent nations, and especially Scotland, are pulling away toward a larger measure of self-government.

And what of Europe's central power? It would be hard to dispute the simple statement that since 1989 Germany has reemerged on the European stage as a fully sovereign nation-state. In Berlin, we are witnessing the extraordinary architectural reconstruction of the grandiose capital of a historic nation-state. Yet at the same time, Germany's political leaders, and above all Helmut Kohl, are pressing with all their considerable might to surrender that vital

component of national sovereignty —and, particularly in the contemporary German case, also identity —which is the national currency. There is a startling contradiction between, so to speak, the architecture in Berlin and the rhetoric in Bonn.

I do not believe that this contradiction can be resolved dialectically, even in the homeland of the dialectic. In fact, Germany today is in a political-psychological condition that might be described as Faustian (“Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust”) or, in the loose colloquial sense of the term, as schizophrenic. If in 1999 monetary union goes ahead and the German government moves to Berlin, then the country will wake up in its new bed on January 1, 2000, scratch its head, and ask itself: “Now, why did we just give up the Deutschmark?” Dr. Kohl’s unspoken answer, “Because we cannot trust ourselves,” will not, I believe, suffice for a new generation. They will say, “Why not?”

This brings me to the central, unavoidable subject of monetary union. We could spend a whole day on this subject alone. I will confine myself to three brief remarks: one about causes, two about consequences. There are, of course, economic arguments for monetary union, as a complement to the single market and a disciplinary mechanism promoting tight budgets, low interest rates, and therefore higher growth. But monetary union is primarily an economic means to a political end. In general terms, this is the continuation of the functionalist approach used by the French and German architects of the Community ever since the 1950s: to move through economic integration to political integration. It was in this spirit that the project of monetary union was revived in Paris, Brussels, and Rome in the late 1980s, as part of the dynamic pre-1989 sequence I have already described.

But there was a much more specific politics of the decision to make this the central goal of European integration in the 1990s. As so often before, the key lies in a compromise between French and German national interests. In 1990, there was at the very least an implicit linkage made between François Mitterrand’s anxious



and reluctant support for German unification and Helmut Kohl's support for a decisive push toward European monetary union. Indeed one could describe the German commitment to European monetary union as a postdated cheque for German unification. The Federal Republic may have paid billions of Deutschmarks to the Soviet Union for its reluctant assent to unification, but this was nothing compared to the cheque given to France. Postdated January 1, 1999, it read: We promise to pay the bearer, on demand, not so or so many billion Deutschmarks but the Deutschmark itself! Or, as one of the diplomats involved put it: the whole of Deutschland for Kohl, half the Deutschmark for Mitterand.

Yet in large measure, this is a price that Helmut Kohl himself wants to pay. He wants to see the newly united Germany bound firmly and, as he himself puts it, "irreversible" into "Europe." Even more than his mentor Konrad Adenauer, he believes that it is dangerous for Germany, with its critical size and mass — too big for Europe, too small for the world" as Henry Kissinger once pithily put it —to stand alone in the centre of Europe, trying to juggle or balance the nine neighbours and many partners around it. The question is, however, whether the particular means chosen are the right ones to achieve the desired end.

One consequence of monetary union has been seen even before the union has happened. There is no doubt that the Maastricht agenda of internal unification has taken the time, attention, and energy of West European leaders away from the agenda of eastward enlargement. To be sure, there is no theoretical contradiction between —to use the familiar jargon —the "deepening" and the "widening" of the European Union. Indeed widening requires deepening. If the major institutions of the EU —the Council of Ministers, the Commission, the Parliament, the Court —originally designed to work with six member states are still to function in a community of twenty and more, then major reforms, necessarily involving a further sharing of sovereignty, are essential. But these changes are of a different kind from those required for monetary

union. So while there is no theoretical contradiction, there has been a practical tension between deepening and widening.

I believe, to put it plainly, that our leaders set the wrong priority after 1989. We were like people who for forty years had lived in a large, ramshackle house divided by a concrete wall down the middle. In the western half we had rebuilt, mended the roof, knocked several rooms together, redecorated, and put in new plumbing and electric wiring, while the eastern half fell into a state of dangerous decay. Then the wall came down. What did we do? We decided that what the whole house needed most urgently was a superb, new, computer-controlled system of air-conditioning in the western half. While we prepared to install it, the eastern half of the house began to fall apart and even—because the wiring was so rotten—to catch fire. We fiddled in Maastricht, while Sarajevo began to burn. Whether we could have prevented it from burning is another question; but certainly we did not devote to the problems of the eastern half the efforts we might have done, had we not embarked on this internal project of perfection.

Even if we leave aside these enormous political “opportunity costs” (to use an economist’s term), what is the prospect now for this project, in its own boundaries and terms? Despite a substantial lack of public support, particularly in Germany, and grave doubts on the part of many bankers, business leaders, economists, and politicians, a monetary union of a number of European states now seems almost certain to proceed on January 1, 1999. Does that mean it will succeed?

Unfortunately, I find very powerful arguments that it is quite unlikely to succeed. The main ones are from political economy and from history. Very briefly, the argument from political economy is as follows. Different areas of a very large economic entity like the European common market need to be able to adjust to economic shocks and dislocations that affect them differently. Flexible exchange rates are a mechanism for so doing, allowing simple

adjustments between the member countries. Other mechanisms would be price and wage flexibility, labour mobility, or direct financial transfers to the adversely affected areas. Now the monetary union of the United States of America possesses all these adjustment mechanisms. It has flexibility, mobility, *and* provision for large-scale budgetary transfers to adversely affected states. The cost of these transfers is accepted by citizens and taxpayers, because they belong to the same nation, speak the same language, would expect the same in return; and simply because these habits of solidarity have grown up over a long period of shared history in the same state.

Europe has neither the flexibility nor the mobility to compare with that in the United States. So the only major adjustment mechanism would be budgetary transfers. But the European Union currently redistributes less than 2 percent of the GDP of its member states, and most of that is already committed to existing schemes. What, then, will happen when a part of France (or Belgium or Italy) is badly hit, and the disadvantaged French go on the streets (as they are rather inclined to do) and their government appeals to its better off partners, above all Germany, for financial transfers? We have seen in the years since 1989 how reluctant West German taxpayers have been to pay even for their own compatriots in the East. Do we really expect that they would be willing to pay for the French unemployed as well? That essential minimal trust and mutual solidarity between citizens that is the fragile treasure of a democratic nation-state does not, alas, yet exist between the citizens of Europe. There is no European *demos*, no European *polis*, and certainly no Nation Europa. So without any other mechanism of adjustment, the tensions could only grow as the experiences of different parts of the union diverged.

This sombre analysis from comparative political economy may be supplemented by one from history. Historically, successful monetary unions have *followed* not preceded political union. As the German Constitutional Court pointed out in its judgment on

the Maastricht Treaty, this was the case with the first unification of Germany. Indeed, the German Reich only finally achieved a single currency in 1909, thirty-eight years after political unification. As for the United States of America, they did not have a full monetary union until the establishment of the Federal Reserve Board in 1913 — some one hundred and twenty years after the political creation of the state!

I have perforce reproduced the arguments in telegraphic brevity. But the conclusion they lead to is an alarming one. The “Europe” that I hope the Czech Republic will join in the year 2000, or very soon thereafter, is quite likely to be subject to increasing rather than diminishing tensions between its major member states and nations. For at Maastricht, the leaders of the EU put the cart before the horse. Out of the familiar mixture of three different kinds of motives —idealistic, national-instrumental, and that of perceived common interest —they committed themselves to what was meant to be a decisive step to uniting Europe, but now seems likely to divide even those who belong to the monetary union. At least in the short term, it will certainly divide those existing EU members who participate in the monetary union from those who do not: the so-called ins and outs. Meanwhile, the massive concentration on this single project has contributed to the neglect of the great opportunity and challenge that arose in the eastern half of the continent when the wall came down.

The best can so often be the enemy of the good. The rationalist, functionalist, perfectionist attempt to “make Europe” or “complete” Europe through a hard core built around a rapid monetary union could well end up achieving the very opposite of the desired effect. One can, I think, all too plausibly argue that what we are likely to witness in the next five to ten years is the writing of another entry for Toynbee’s index, under “Europe, unification of, failure of attempts at.”

Some contemporary Cassandras go further still and suggest that we may even witness the writing of another entry under “Eu-

rope, as battlefield.” One might answer that we already have, in the former Yugoslavia. Yet the suggestion that the forced march to unification through money will bring the danger of violent conflict between West European states does seem drastically overdrawn — for at least three reasons. First, there is the powerful neo-Kantian argument that bourgeois democracies are unlikely to go to war against each other. Second, we have a new situation, compared with pre-1945 Europe, in that we have a benign extra-European hegemon in the United States.

Third, this is to ignore the huge and real achievement of European integration to date: the unique, unprecedented framework and deeply ingrained habits of permanent institutionalised cooperation that ensure that the conflicts of interest that exist, and will continue to exist, between the member states and nations are never resolved by force. All those endless hours and days of negotiation in Brussels between ministers from fifteen European countries, who end up knowing each other almost better than they know their own families: that is the essence of this “Europe.” It is an economic community, of course, but it is also a security community, in Karl Deutsch’s classic definition of a group of states that do find it unthinkable to resolve their own differences by war.

#### 4

I could end this lecture in several different ways. I could go even closer to the ground of political reality and try to suggest how the dangers I have indicated might be averted. I could go back to the skies and talk about the implications of this story for historiography, about the interplay between individuals and deeper forces in recent European history and the danger of politicians learning the wrong lessons from that history. Instead, I want to propose a modest paradigm shift in our thinking about Europe.

One could certainly argue that Western Europe would never have got as far as it has without the utopian goal or telos of “unity.” Only by resolutely embracing, and in many cases actually

believing in, the objective of “ever closer union,” solemnly affirmed in successive treaties, have we attained the more modest degree of permanent institutional cooperation, with important elements of legal and economic integration, that we have. Yet as a paradigm for European policy in our time the notion of “unification” is fundamentally flawed. The most recent period of European history provides no indication that the immensely diverse peoples of Europe, speaking such different languages, having such disparate histories, geographies, cultures, and economies, are ready to merge peacefully and voluntarily into a single polity. It provides substantial evidence of a directly countervailing trend: toward the constitution —or reconstitution —of nation-states. If “unity” was not attained among a small number of Western European states, with strong elements of common history, under the paradoxically favourable conditions of the Cold War, how can we expect to come anywhere near it in the infinitely larger and more diverse Europe — the whole continent —that we have to deal with after the end of the Cold War?

Yet it is equally unrealistic to think that we can or should return to a Europe that is simply Harold Macmillan’s glorified free trade area or de Gaulle’s Europe des Patries. I trust no one here will make the mistake of confusing my intellectual scepticism with the chauvinistic Euroscepticism of some of my compatriots. I see Europe as much from a Central European viewpoint as from a British one and, unlike those British Eurosceptics, I care passionately about preserving what has already been achieved in constructing a new kind of Europe. But it is precisely this achievement that I see imperilled by the forced march to unity.

How, then, to characterise positively what has been achieved, and what it is both desirable and realistic to work toward in a wider Europe? I believe the best paradigm is that of *liberal order*. The quest for liberal order is an attempt to avoid both of the extremes between which Europe has unhappily oscillated through most of its modern history: violent disorder, on the one hand, and,

on the other, hegemonic order that itself is built on the use of force and the denial of national and democratic aspirations within the constitutive empires, blocs, or spheres of influence. (The Czechs know better than most of what I speak.) The European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe are all elements, building blocks of such a liberal order.

Liberal order differs from previous European orders in several vital ways. Its first commandment is the renunciation of force in the resolution of disputes between its members. Of course, this goal is an ancient one. We find it anticipated already in King George of Podebrady's famous proposal of 1464 for "the inauguration of peace throughout Christendom." There we read that he and his fellow princes "shall not take up arms for the sake of any disagreements, complaints or disputes, nor shall we allow any to take up arms in our name," But today we have well-tried institutions of what might be called bourgeois internationalism in which to practice what Churchill called "making jaw-jaw rather than war-war."

Liberal order is, by design, nonhegemonic. To be sure, the system depends to some extent on the external hegemonic balancer, the United States — "Europe's pacifier," as an American scholar once quipped. And, of course, Luxembourg does not carry the same weight as Germany. But the new model order that we have developed in the European Union does permit smaller states to have an influence often disproportionate to their size. Another key element of this model order is the way in which it allows different alliances of states on individual issues, rather than cementing any fixed alliances.

Liberal order also differs from previous European orders in explicitly legitimating the interest of participating states in each other's internal affairs. Building on the so-called Helsinki process, it considers human, civil, and, not least, minority rights to be a primary and legitimate subject of international concern. These

rights are to be sustained by international norms, support, and, where necessary, also pressure. Such a liberal order recognises that there is a logic that leads peoples who speak the same language, and share the same culture and tradition, to want to govern themselves in their own state. There is such a thing as liberal nationalism. But it also recognises that in many places a peaceful, neat separation into nation-states will be impossible. In such cases it acknowledges a responsibility to help sustain what may variously be called multiethnic, multicultural, or multinational democracies, within an international framework. This is what we disastrously failed to do for Bosnia; what we can still do for Macedonia or Estonia.

You will notice that missing from this paradigm is one idea that is still very important in contemporary European visions, especially those of former Great Powers, such as France, Britain, and Germany. This is the notion of “Europe” as a single actor on the world stage, a world power able to stand up to the United States, Russia, or China. In truth, I don’t share this vision. I don’t think the drive for world power is any more attractive because it is a joint enterprise than it was when attempted —somewhat more crudely —by individual European nations. Certainly, in a world of large trading blocs we must be able to protect our own interests. Certainly, a liberal order also means one that both gives and gets as much free trade as possible. Certainly, a degree of power-projection, including the coordinated use of military power, may be needed to realise the objectives of liberal order even within the continent of Europe and in other adjacent areas of vital interest to us, such as North Africa and the Middle East. But beyond this, just to put our own all-European house in order would be a large enough contribution to the well-being of the world.

Now someone may possibly object that I am paying too much attention to semantics. Why not let the community be called a Union, and the process “unification,” even if they are not that in reality? In his 1994 New Year address, President Havel seemed



to come close to this position when he said, “Today, Europe is attempting to give itself a historically new kind of order in a process that we refer to as unification.” And of course I hardly expect the European Union to be, so to speak, unnamed. After all, the world organisation of states is called the United Nations! But I am, I freely admit, too much the English empiricist to be quite happy with a systematic misnaming. Much more importantly, though, I hope to have suggested how the pursuit of unification may be threatening even the achievements it is supposed to crown. Indeed, if we convince ourselves that not advancing further along the path to “unity” is tantamount to failure, then we risk, so to speak, snatching failure from the jaws of success. For what has been done already to build liberal order in a large part of Europe is a very great success.

To consolidate that liberal order and to spread it across the whole continent is, I submit, both a more urgent and, in the light of history, a more realistic goal for European statesmanship at the beginning of the twenty-first century than the vain pursuit of unification in a part of it. Nor do I accept that liberal order is necessarily a less idealistic goal than unity. For unity is not a primary value in itself. It is a means to higher ends. Liberal order, by contrast, directly implies not one but two primary values: peace and freedom.