



pean history since the beginning of the cold war is already the nearest thing to a great power between the Atlantic and the Soviet border. Before long, it may be the nearest thing to a great power between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Irrespective of political forms, irrespective, for that matter, of Germany's own wishes, the Europe of the 90s will therefore be German-centred in a sense which was true of Bismarck's or, for that matter, of Frederick Barbarossa's Europe as much as of Hitler's but which has not been true since 1945.

**T**he Germany on which it will be centred will not, however, be the old Federal Republic writ large. Forty years of history cannot be wiped off the slate. East Germans cannot suddenly become West Germans. They may have loathed the regime in whose tentacles they were caught, but they were nevertheless shaped by it. For good or ill, they will bring to the new Germany the hopes and fears, the memories and longings, which they have inherited from their past and which must condition their future. In doing so, they will change their fellow citizens in the west, just as their fellow citizens in the west will change them. Behind the much-discussed economic and political dimensions of German unification, there lies, in short, a more complex cultural dimension. Willy-nilly, the Germans are engaged in a prolonged, almost certainly painful redefinition of their identity as a people. And in redefining their own identity, they will necessarily redefine the identity of the Community of which their country is the hinge.

That leads on to the third and fourth trends. The problems of transition in eastern Europe have turned out to be enormously more difficult and the solutions more painful than anyone expected in the euphoria of 1989. Czechoslovakia apart, the societies which will be suffering the pains have few or no democratic traditions to draw upon and, in almost all ethnic hatreds and irredentist ambitions are rife. Fragile new regimes, long on hope but short on experience, necessarily dependent on the bureaucracies they have inherited from their Stalinist predecessors and encumbered by expectations they cannot satisfy, may well see in these ambitions their only reservoir of popular support. If they do, it is hard to believe that smug and prosperous western Europe could insulate itself from the ensuing conflicts, any more than the western Europe of our grandparents and great-grandparents could insulate itself from the consequences of the assassination at Sarajevo.

If this is true of eastern Europe, it is doubly true of the Soviet Union, where the Stalinist terror was even more savage and did even more to destroy the mutual trust which provides the basis of a civic culture. Partly because of this, and partly because of the very nature of the Soviet state, economic dislocation has gone much further there, while eth-

nic conflicts and resentments are even fiercer. For the unravelling of the Soviet Union spells more than the unravelling of another economically irrational and politically illegitimate communist regime. It also spells the end of the last great European empire; and the end of empire is usually a bloody business. So far bloodshed has been relatively rare, but upheavals on the scale of those that accompanied the end of the British Raj in India and French rule in North Africa should come as no surprise.

**The Europe in which the 1992 project comes to fruition will, in short, be almost unimaginably different from the Europe in which it was conceived. That Europe - the Europe of the Single European Act - was still, in essentials, the Europe of Bevin, Marshall, Adenauer and Monnet and by the same token the Europe of Stalin, Ulbricht and Gottwald. It was, in other words, the Europe that emerged, unplanned and unwanted, from the crucible of the Czechoslovak putsch, the Berlin blockade, the North Atlantic Treaty and the Schuman Plan. Of course, it had changed a great deal since its original emergence. The western tip of the continent, at any rate, was far more united, far more prosperous and far more confident than anyone had thought possible in the immediate post-war period. The power relationships within the Atlantic world had been transformed, to its advantage and to the disadvantage of the United States. The modestly supranational coal and steel Community envisaged in the Schuman Plan had doubled its membership and acquired extensive new competences. Partly because of this, the economies of its member-states had become irreversibly interdependent as well as unprecedentedly productive - not the least of the reasons why their governments were prepared to pool sovereignty on the scale the 1992 project required.**

But, in the last analysis, the similarities between the Europe of 1985 and the Europe of 1950 were more striking than the dissimilarities. Both halves of the continent were still subject to the magnetic pulls of the superpowers from whose rivalry the postwar settlement had emerged. The communist regimes in the east were still kept in power by Soviet tanks. The Carolingian little Europe in the west was still the eastern province of an Atlantic imperium whose capitals were New York, Washington and Cambridge, Massachusetts and whose western outposts were Los Angeles and the Bay Area of California.

It was a rich and flourishing province, no doubt, but the nerve centres of its world were still on the eastern seaboard of the United States. As befitted a rich and flourishing province in someone else's empire, it was also rather inward-looking. There was much talk of the need for a European voice in world affairs, balancing the American voice, but when the voice made itself heard, it rarely had anything interesting to say. Above all, little Europe did not need to

tailor its own development to the needs of the wider Europe of which it was part. The notion that the postwar settlement might one day be undone, that the whole continent might come together again and that the Community should frame its policies with that possibility in mind, was too far-fetched for serious people to take seriously.

**N**ow all that is changed. Just as the new Germany cannot be the old Federal Republic writ large, so the new Europe cannot be the old Carolingian little Europe, with a few suppliant extensions on its eastern borders. Indeed, Carolingian little Europe is already a thing of the past: German unification has seen to that. Even if the Community does not take in new eastern members, its centre of gravity has already shifted several hundred miles to the east. Whatever its political arrangements may be, the Europe of the 21st century will have more in common with the Europe of the late 19th than with that of 1985 or 1955. Prague, Warsaw and Budapest will be as much part of it as London, Paris and Brussels. There is a good chance that Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad will be part of it as well.

What might be called the 'endist' interpretation of the revolutions in eastern Europe - the interpretation offered, in its most extreme form, in Francis Fukuyama's notorious essay, 'The End Of History', and echoed in a thousand newspaper editorials on both sides of the Atlantic - holds that this wider Europe will be, in all essentials, an extension of western Europe, or perhaps of that mysterious entity known as the Western world. For according to that interpretation, the real significance of the last two years is not so much that the cold war is over as that the West has won, and that the West has won because Western values have won. The obvious implication is that eastern Europe will now have to set about learning those values. The West will teach and the East will learn. For the West knows the secrets of the market economy and pluralist democracy; and the East does not. The only hope for the East is to learn them from the West as fast as it can.

That, or something like it, is the logic of the British government's approach to eastern Europe and, for that matter, of the European Community's approach as well. It hardly needs saying that the reality is enormously more complicated. It is true that part of the driving force behind the east European revolutions was a passionate longing to re-join the mainstream of European civilisation. But the key word in that sentence is 're-join'. The values which inspired the great crowds that thronged the squares of eastern Europe in the closing weeks of 1989 are not Western values. They are human values, or perhaps European values: values, in any event, to which the cultures of what used to be the communist *bloc* - including, of course, the cultures of what is still precariously the Soviet Union -

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have as strong a claim as do those of western Europe and North America. When it comes to deciding what these values mean, or ought to mean, in today's world, we have as much to learn from them as they from us. Indeed, we may well have more: their attachment to the values in question has, after all, been tested far more sorely than ours. Who has sacrificed more to 'live in truth'? President Havel or President Bush? And who has done more to earn our attention?

In some areas, of course, eastern Europe does have things to learn from the so-called west. But it also has things to teach. In any case the language of teacher and pupil is misleading as well as patronising. The important question is not who learns what from whom. It is how the two halves of the re-united continent will interact with each other: what kind of soup will emerge from the pot into which each will throw its memories of the past and its hopes for the future. We will not know the answer to that question for some time, but it is already clear that Community Europe will no longer be able to insulate itself from wider Europe, even if it wants to. Because it will be inextricably part of wider Europe, it will be less susceptible to the tug of the Atlantic, less likely to share the American perspective on the rest of the world and more conscious of the differences between its interests and the interests of the United States.

This leads on to a more complex point. It is a truism to say that the Stalinist command economy has failed. Indeed, its failure has turned out to be far more complete, and far more destructive in its human and environmental consequences, than anyone - West or East - realised before the seismic upheavals of 1989 began. The question, however, is what to put in its place. 'A market economy', say the 'endists', as though that were the end of the matter. But what kind of market economy? Casino capitalism on the model of Britain and the United States? Or social-market capitalism on the model of central Europe and, with some relatively unimportant differences, of Scandinavia?

If the east Europeans opt for casino capitalism they are likely to end as impoverished, resentful and eventually mutinous economic helots in a system dominated by alien multinationals. But the pressures to take that option are enormously powerful. In present-day eastern Europe, it is in fact the easy option. It is quick, it is attractive to short-sighted foreign commentators and investors and, by a terrible paradox, it is also attractive to native populations for whom the slogans of the free market have become a kind of cargo cult, promising a speedy route to a western standard of living.

The social-market option, on the other hand, is very slow - one of the reasons why British governments in search of a quick fix have never taken it. For social-market capitalism depends upon an ex-

traordinarily subtle and sophisticated network of mutual dependencies and co-operative intermediate institutions, growing out of a flourishing, solidaristic civil society. And the most terrible legacy of Stalinist totalitarianism is a stunted civil society, systematically and deliberately corrupted by the agencies of a totalitarian state. The east Europeans will, of course, decide for themselves which path they want to take. But their ability to take it will be hugely affected by western attitudes and policies - above all, by the attitudes and policies of the Community. If it adopts the simplistic triumphalism and market fetishism of the 'endists', as so many British commentators insistently urge it to do, the consequences for the entire continent are likely to be tragic.

**That is only the beginning of the story.** The Community has given western Europe a way to have its cake and eat it: to transcend the sovereign nation state, whose ambitions and jealousies have so often drenched the continent in blood, while still respecting national diversities and national interests. Now that eastern and central Europe have emerged from the prison-house unity of Stalinism, and rediscovered the ambitions and jealousies which the Stalinists suppressed, they desperately need a similar safeguard against the demons of the past. They may not find one, of course: one of the most alarming features of present-day eastern Europe is that these demons have plenty of work for plenty of not-so-idle hands. But their best hope of finding one is to join the Community - the one undeniably supranational political entity in Europe and, as such, the most successful solvent of national conflicts which this conflict-ridden continent has ever known.

Whether they realise this themselves, I do not know. But there is not much doubt that sooner or later they will be knocking on the Community's door. Like the Portuguese, the Greeks and the Spanish after their escape from fascism, they will be asking for a manifestation of European solidarity; and as with the Portuguese, the Greeks and the Spanish, the manifestation they will want will be full participation in the decision-making processes of the Community. The arguments for allowing them to participate will be at least as powerful as were the essentially similar arguments for allowing their southern predecessors to do so.

But participation in what kind of Community? The conventional wisdom is that a wider Community would also be a shallower one. Those in this country who still hanker for a shallower Community - those who still dream of the loose-knit free-trade association of sovereign states which, for 30 years, has danced before successive British governments like a will o' the wisp - welcome a wider one for that reason. Those on the European mainland who recognise that 1992 implies more supra-

nationalism, not less, want to deepen first and widen later, if at all.

Despite the obvious differences between them, both schools of thought share the same premise. Yet that premise no longer looks anything like as convincing as it once did. The assumption that widening and deepening pull against each other derives from the Monnet conception of the early 50s, in which economies had to be integrated first, and politics later. If that assumption is taken for granted, then it does follow that enlargement to the east would result in a looser, less integrated Community. The battered, unproductive, skill-starved and environmentally destructive economies of eastern Europe cannot possibly stand up to the rigours of post-1992 competition for a long time to come; if they were forced to do so, their chances of taking the social-market option rather than the casino one would be nil. As apprentice social-market economies, determined to be something more than reservoirs of cheap labour for more fortunate societies, they would need derogations from the rules of the internal market for a long - perhaps for a very long - time ahead. If integration is seen primarily in economic terms, their membership would either slow the process down or do them more long-term harm than good.

What that proves, however, is that it is time to question the orthodoxy inherited from the early 50s. In the early 50s, superpower hegemony was unchallenged, and the division of Europe newly-minted. The Carolingian little Europeans whom Monnet was trying to unite had no choice but to huddle together in the shadow of American power. There was no point in dreaming grandiose political dreams and no need to articulate a distinct European perspective on the world. The founding fathers of the Community were almost certainly right in thinking that if Europe were to be united at all, it could only be united through the bread-and-butter, step-by-step functionalism of economic integration. But it does not follow that this is still true in the quite different circumstances of the early 90s, when Europe is no longer divided, when one superpower is unravelling, when the other is in decline and when - as the Gulf crisis shows - even little Europe's interests are diverging ever more sharply from the interests of its erstwhile protector on the other side of the Atlantic.

In these new circumstances, why go on treating economic integration as the only possible foundation for eventual union, and political integration as the coping stone? Would it not be better - certainly for central and eastern Europe, and perhaps for the whole of Europe - if they changed places? And if they did so, the whole scene would change. Integration would cease to be a matter of creating the conditions for Community-wide free competition before all else. It would become a matter of creating a political structure, in

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which the functions of government were divided on federal lines between supranational, national and regional tiers, but which tolerated considerable economic diversity and protected the weak against predatory competition from the strong.

**T**he result would certainly be untidy. Politically, the Community would be at least proto-federal. It would be at least as concerned with the 'high politics' of foreign, security and monetary policy as with the 'low politics' of agricultural support, merger policy and product standards. Indeed, some areas of 'low politics' might well be returned from Brussels and Strasbourg to member governments, or even devolved to a regional tier below them. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament would share legislative power; a Commission responsible to the Parliament and deriving from it would be the union executive. Economically, things would be much less clear. In the little-European heartland there would be a single market, on 1992 lines. To the east, and perhaps also to the south, there would be a variety of economic regimes, all moving towards full incorporation, but at different speeds. At first sight it would look rather like the Europe of 'variable geometry' which has sometimes been seen as a way of solving the British problem. But economic variation would be combined with political union.

At this point, the European debate and the parochial British debate intersect. We have had to redefine our identity too; and the redefinition has been much more difficult than some British supporters of European integration like to admit. The options are only too plain. We can be an increasingly junior partner to an increasingly inward-looking and slowly declining United States. We can be a rather shop-soiled island Sweden. Or we can be part of an evolving European Union. For nearly 30 years, our heads have told us that the only sane option is the last. But our hearts have rebelled. For although we are part of Europe, and have been part of it ever since the Roman legions first set foot on our shores, we are also separate from it, not just geographically, but culturally and in our image of ourselves. No other European country has a church like the Anglican church; no other European political culture has been shaped by the doctrine of absolute and inalienable parliamentary sovereignty; no other country in western Europe successfully fought off both Napoleon and Hitler. Because of all this we have found it extraordinarily painful emotionally and extraordinarily hard intellectually to come to terms with the choices we now face. But we are part of Europe, all the same; and we are also part of the European Community. We cannot leave the continent to which we belong, and re-locate ourselves in some mysterious island of the

blessed somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. Nor can we be excluded from any European Union worthy of the name.

It is as important for the rest of Europe as it is for us that our dilemma should be resolved. Successive British governments have tried to evade it, to pretend that Community membership has to do with economics rather than with politics, that the clear commitment of the Rome Treaty to an 'ever-closer union' does not mean what it says, that we can belong to it on our terms rather than on its. But these evasions have not worked. They have made our dilemma more painful, not less, exacerbating our identity crisis instead of resolving it. Perhaps it is time to take the bull by the horns, to make it clear that union really does mean union, that the Community's fundamental purposes are political after all, to confront our fears instead of shying away from them. If the Community took the political road I have tried to sketch out, that is what we would have to do. Conventional wisdom takes it for granted that the British people would balk. I am not so sure. More than once in our history, we have shown that, when we have no alternative, we are better at facing facts than our rulers have given us credit for being. •

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