

Sketches of Europe

“Europe – Our Common Home” is no longer what it used to be. It has grown old. But the metaphor is still capable of provoking irritation. For some, it is trivial, for others anachronistic. And in the worst case, it produces a sigh of resignation or dismay, a euphemism for “Europe, Europe”. It was not always like that. When this metaphor began its triumphant march around the world in Mikhail Gorbachëv’s suitcase, it sounded brilliant. Its charm derived from the continent’s division, a state of affairs that seemed irreversible at the time. It was subversive, because it sought common ground in ending the separation with that worn-out mindset of the East-West conflict and called into question the logic of fear. This fear ran from the denial of human rights and civic liberties, to the persecution of dissidents, and to the permanent threat of mutually assured destruction – a doctrine that military strategists in both camps cynically and rationally still embrace to this today. It was not a friendly household the Europeans lived in. Now some 20 years have passed, about a generation, and in this time span, Europe has changed beyond recognition. Where the Berlin Wall once used to divide Germany’s capital and sharpshooters shot at “deserters of the republic” seeking to get away from the German Democratic Republic’s authoritarian and bureaucratic socialism, pedestrians today stroll about leisurely, right through the Brandenburg Gate and past the collected embassies of France, England and Russia. The confrontation between

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact has become reminiscence, and for those born since, it is just as remote as the Napoleonic Wars and the Holy Alliance. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, once Soviet republics, are today members of the European Union. Poland and Bulgaria help shape NATO policy and have sent soldiers to support the United States in Iraq. As a result of capitalism's impact on Russia's largest cities, life in Paris now more closely resembles that of Moscow and St. Petersburg than that of *la France profonde*. The normative power of mass tourism has made Russian menus in the Czech spa town of Karlovy Vary no less common than German ones, and when combined, these outnumber Czech menus. And sociological investigations into mass consumerism's integrating force and the levelling effect it has on cultural differences are no longer needed; one simply observes the results: Lavazza coffee has reached Lipetsk, and Nokia mobile phones are no less seldom in Novosibirsk than in Norwich. In short, Europe never had so much in common as it does today.

To stress such commonalities in no way means slavishly deferring to the search for harmony and making society, politics, and the European order look in better shape than they are. Such an image would do no justice to reality. Europe is far from being in an ideal situation. Sticking to the metaphor, anybody who looks closely at the Common Home in the summer of 2005 and refuses to be bedazzled by the Potëmkin façades – and these are just as visible in Brussels, Vienna and Strasbourg as in old Russia – recognizes that the place is in bad shape. A crack is running through the framework, and three of the supporting walls show signs of severe strain. That applies to all those institutions that significantly influence Europe's economic, political and social development: the European Union the

Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

No sooner had the EU completed its first round of eastward expansion in May 2004 – which overcame the Yalta order and took a step of historical magnitude toward European unification – structural conflicts over the EU's future began to emerge. At the heart of the matter are fundamental political questions: Who is the sovereign? How much democracy should there be? How much freedom of the market and what kind of social model? The failure of the French and Dutch referendums on the draft EU constitution and the collapse of the EU summit in Brussels in June 2005 have made it clear that, with the completion of the internal market the introduction of the euro, the largely technocrat driven European project of the European Community has for all intents and purposes reached its limits, without it becoming clear in the meantime what the EU should now be: Is it to be just a free-trade zone or a political union? Not only do the aforementioned fundamental issues depend on the answers to this question, so do the EU's role in the world, its common foreign policy, the desire of Croatia, Turkey and Ukraine to join the EU and the character of the EU's relations with Russia.

Thirty years after the founding of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE, the conference's institutionalized successor and the only genuinely pan-European international organisation, finds itself in the greatest crisis in its history. The 55 member states are no longer united on the organisation's purpose and tasks. For several years, an erosion of the OSCE's standards has been observed. Several member states accept these standards only selectively. Important OSCE activities such as observation missions in "frozen conflicts" in the post-Soviet realm and election monitoring have encountered

criticism and obstruction in Russia and parts of Eastern Europe. The observation mission in Chechnya had to be ended and withdrawn. The necessary extension failed due to objections from Moscow. Similarly, Russia prevented the continuation of the observation mission on Georgia's border to Russia. The political situation in Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where open dictatorships have emerged, make a mockery of the Paris Charta of 21 November 1990, when all OSCE member states professed their faith in democracy based on human rights, rule of law and basic freedoms. All of this has brought the OSCE to the brink of paralysis: The organisation's Ministerial Council has failed for years to find a consensus on basic political declarations, the budget is blocked and, without money, the OSCE's activities could be desiccated.

In the Council of Europe, the continent's leading promoter of human rights and rule of law, the lines of conflict have been drawn similarly. The reason is clear: Developments in Russia increasingly contradict the norms and standards that the country has had to fulfil since becoming a council member in 1996. Russian President Vladimir Putin's "managed democracy" has advanced so far that only the management remains: The Council of Europe expressed concern about curtailments on the freedom of the press and the management of the electronic mass media; the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly sharply and unequivocally condemned the management of justice and the interference in the procedural rights in the case of oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovskii; and complaints about the serious violations of human rights in Chechnya have become a chorus of *ceterum censeo* without changing a single thing in the Kremlin's methods of managing the conflict there.

In light of this mixture of crises and dissent, it is not surprising that the EU and Russia, which are bound by an oft sworn "strategic partnership", have also failed to move

sworn “strategic partnership”, have also failed to move beyond go in their efforts to form “common spaces” in economics, culture and domestic and foreign policies. In short, Europe never had so little in common as it does today.

Nevertheless, the overall approach of the Common Home has lost none of its political plausibility. Peace and security, stability and prosperity as well as ecologically sustainable development cannot be considered, let alone realised, in isolated solutions but only within an all-European framework. Even present-day political differences change nothing in that. A little less than 20 years ago, the nuclear cloud emanating from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant failed to stop at the border dividing the Cold War political camps. The Kyoto Protocol could go into effect around the world only after the State Duma in Moscow ratified the treaty. And Europe’s mutual dependence in energy is blatantly obvious. The interdependencies are so great that Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia simply cannot be ignored when it comes to the continent’s political shape and its future.

The credo of integrating Eastern Europe, and at the time Russia in particular, into European politics and bringing it into the orbit of West European academia was a driving force behind the founding of the journal *Osteuropa* in 1925. It is certainly not presumptuous to mention it in the same breath with the Anglo-Saxon world’s flagship publications in East European Studies such as America’s *Slavic Review* and Great Britain’s *Europe-Asia Studies* (formerly *Soviet Studies*). Both of these English-language journals have been appearing for almost six decades. *Osteuropa*, at first glance younger, shares with these journals the same purpose. It is an interdisciplinary, academic journal dedicated to a pluralism of inquiry, methods and theories and is based on em-

pirical analysis. It consciously opposes the ostensibly inevitable trend to increasing specialisation, which has led to a growing loss of communication skills among representatives of individual disciplines, between the disciplines themselves and between academia and the public. This lack of communication has its price. It is accelerating the drifting apart of intellectual debate between the general public and academic praxis. Working against this trend lies at the heart of our journal's purpose.

Vis-à-vis the most renowned Anglo-Saxon journals, there are two important differences. *Osteuropa* is the only journal in East European Studies to appear as a monthly – and that for five decades. And its tradition reaches back farther in time than it appears. In fact, this year marks the 80th birthday of the journal. In a way, *Osteuropa* – launched in Berlin in 1925 by Otto Hoetzsch, historian, politician and indefatigable architect of projects – is a mirror of German history. After the 1922 Rapallo Treaty, which brought Germany and the Soviet Union back into the international community, the journal directed its attention to “Soviet Russia”, while many of the authors were anti-Polish. After the Nazis came to power, Hoetzsch, who was German National in his politics, was denounced as a “parlour Bolshevik” and forced from the journal's editorial board. Some of his colleagues emigrated. Many could not save themselves and were murdered in Auschwitz. And others either conformed or tried to pursue a career in the service of the Third Reich. Despite the efforts of the would-be conformists, the Nazis suspended the journal's publication in 1939. Karl Schlögel has explored all of this in a biographical sketch of Otto Hoetzsch, which at the same time looks back on intellectual life in Berlin in the 1920s. His essay offers the introductory article to this special edition of *Osteuropa*, “Sketches of Europe”.

“Sketches of Europe” has three functions: First, it is a tribute to all the participants at the World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies who have come together in this city where the course of German East European Studies was charted. It was at the Humboldt University in Berlin that the first chair of East European studies was created. It was in Berlin where Hoetzsch formulated his memo on the need for founding an association for the study of Russia, from which the publisher of *Osteuropa*, the German Association for East European Studies, ultimately emerged. And it was in the Berlin of the Weimar Republic that served as the heart of international East European Studies. Today, Berlin once again has the intellectual and institutional potential to build on the legacy of this fruitful period.

Second, this special issue is a calling card. *Osteuropa* sees itself as a forum for the dialogue between East and West in Europe and about Europe. The German language, in which this journal regularly appears, limits the journal’s distribution and reception. This English-language digest, which contains contributions from the past German editions, thus offers the opportunity for a broader audience to take a look at our journal’s merits and achievements.

Finally, this issue opens up insights into several rooms inside the Common European Home. The cultural East-West dialogue is sketched by the Lithuanian lyricist and Slavicist Tomas Venclova (Yale), taking as its example, the Königsberg theme in Russian literature and the Königsberg poems of Joseph Brodsky. Dorothea Redepenning (Heidelberg) reconstructs the intercultural dialogue within the field of classical music during the 19th century and shows that what is known as “Russian music”, in its constructive appropriation of compositional techniques and aesthetic, has very different roots than “national Russian”.

Europe's historical room is set off by three authors: With a systematic, comparative study of the annihilation by famine of millions of people in Ukraine, the Holodomor, Egbert Jahn (Mannheim) addresses the dark side of Europe in the 20th century, which was indeed a century of mass annihilation. Boris Dubin (Moscow) and Stefan Auer (Dublin) analyze the cultural, intellectual and political legacies that Central and Eastern Europe introduced through the political thought of its intellectuals in the "Central Europe discourse" and the non-violent revolutions of 1989, and how this has changed and shaped Europe's identity.

Georg Vobruba (Leipzig), with his theoretical considerations on dynamic integration in Europe, offers an outline of the political room. Dynamic integration influences the internal shape of the EU, future expansion and policies toward Eastern Europe. Elmar Rieger (Bremen) elaborates on the institutional, modernization and socio-political meaning of EU agricultural policy, which by means of transforming European farmers' ability to compete has an effect that goes beyond the EU borders.

Finally, the economic room is illuminated by Roland Götz (Berlin) with an empirical study of energy relations between Russia and the EU as well as by a team of authors around Andrzej Szromnik (Cracow), which addresses the framework conditions, structures and functions of cash and carry wholesale trade based on a case study of Poland.

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Translated from German by Ray Brandon, Berlin