

NOUS SOMMES TOUS ANTI-AMERICAINS:  
AMERICA IN THE EYES OF WEST EUROPEAN LEFT

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Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of Nationalism Study

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2008

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to professor Kovács András for his supervision, guidance and tolerant attitude for my unavoidable missteps, and for the help provided throughout the entire period of the Master Program.

I am very grateful to professor Andrei Markovits from University of Michigan Ann Arbor who was kind enough to give me enlightening suggestions pertaining to the methodology and content of these herewith paper.

Last, but not least, to my parents and Rebeca Dan for unconditional moral support, love and occasional wake up calls to reality.

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## Introduction

The unfolding of the era that started after the terrorist attacks that toppled Lower Manhattan and destroyed parts of the headquarter of the American Department of Defense in September 2001 proved that the end of history and the death of ideologies that were to be proclaimed after the fall of the Soviet system were harder to reach than it was expected. The United States, committed to its sense of global responsibility, abandoned the defeated red enemy and focused more on the Middle East. The plan backfired violently and the shade of war was once again cast over the world. For the first time in history, the myth of intangible America was shattered. Hit on its own territory by an anonymous, unconventional force, the raging giant sought vengeance. Its pursuit of the invisible enemy, embodied by various putative threats had made the United States and its government vastly unpopular in virtually all the corners of the world, but also prompted old European grudges to be uttered once again.

In the aftermath of the Cold War America remained the sole true superpower through its economic superiority, geo-strategic position and military dominance. Nonetheless, its achievement of global hegemony was not accompanied by a correspondent increase in respect and respectability. On the contrary, history notes a growing hostility for America's deeds and misdeeds, a sense of disdain linked with its use of military might. In the vacuum of ideology created after the political specter was restructured in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, anti-Americanism seems to become the new world religion. From South-Asia to North Korea, from Kabul to Berlin, from London to New York, hostility and disapproval of the new – and at the same time old – American apprehension on international relations represent common attitudes. If the breakthroughs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had built the foundation of what was largely accepted to be

the American century, paradoxically, the circumstances created after America won the geo-strategic chess game with the Soviet Union had made scholars consider – not without good reason – the last decade the beginning of the unfolding of an “anti-American century”<sup>1</sup>. Anti-Americanism has a truly global reach and its existence in post-history should not come as a surprise, as disdain for America is by no means a novelty. What has changed is only the historical context, the intensity of its manifestations and the underpinning political stakes.

There are two major transformations that negative feelings for America have animated in the dawn of the new century: the apparition of a hardcore, murderous anti-Americanism that has led to the infamous terrorist attacks, along with a light version of anti-Americanism that resurfaced in Western Europe after a period of quietude kept in the virtue of an unsigned partnership. It is the latter that makes the topic of this herewith paper because of its conceptual complexity and because of the implications it entails pertaining to Europe’s relationship with the U.S. In Europe, opposition to the United States is far from the egregious, blood-shedding, primordial manifestations of terrorism that have send thousands of innocents to death. It is a more refined opposition that operates indirectly, behind the battlefronts, using no other weapons besides principles, ideologies, politics and philosophy.

History furnishes irrefutable proofs that Europe, first and foremost through its intellectual elites, has never been particularly sympathetic to the United States, a European creation that went astray. The reasons behind European condemnation of aspects of life in the New World were linked either with the elitist perspective on Europe as cradle of civilization, to whom the emerging America represented a forever undeveloped, coarse, unworthy product of modernity unable to ever equal the European grandeur, either with the ideological cleavage between

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Krastev. “The Anti-American Century?” in Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson. *The Anti-American Century*. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press. 2007. p. 3

capitalism and communism. What is new in the post Cold War epoch, and especially in the short after 9/11 picture is the partial divorce of anti-Americanism both from its pure prejudice form and, more or less, from the communist roots. Bits of both sources have been mixed into a conjurer's hat and the result seems to be a new magic wand that does not serve the implementation process of ideologies, it does not legitimate regimes, or class struggles, but fuels the very idea of Europe united, at least in the projection of the continental Left.

The focus of this paper will be set on the way the Left, and especially the intellectuals that adhered to its principles, have perceived the United States. It is no secret that the Left, ever since it was credited with global salience has had its most critical eye set on the coordinates of America. The history of post-war negative sentiments is dominated by the tropes the left has betaken. The Marxist rejection of capitalism as the supreme evil, and the American embodiment of liberalism and capitalism had, and still has to some extent, a heavy impact on the Left's grievances pertaining to the United States. Furthermore, in post-history, traditional leftist trademarks like anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, pacifism, internationalism and environmentalism are recycled and now represent the ideas that primarily stand at the foundation of the new European negative projection of the United States. It would be utterly wrong to maintain that the Right side of the European political spectrum is a complete stranger from scorn of America. On the contrary, the conservative perception of uncultured America and the extreme Right image of America being the puppet of an *iudaeus ex machina* still haunt the minds of some people.

However, the voice of the elitist Right wing anchored in the argument of a purported cultural superiority of Europe over the United States was clearly superseded by a less prejudiced criticism coming from the Left, whose critical apparatus sometimes employs some of the rhetoric that traditionally belong to the Right. In one phrase, since WWII, the driving force behind

Western European anti-Americanism is represented by the Left and its various internal factions, as the culturalist differentiation was more or less isolated to the fringes of the political extremes.

The very concept of *anti-Americanism* holds a pivotal position in the logical unfolding of the thesis. Anti-Americanism represents a polemic category of “isms” with a polemic status that hasn’t been yet clearly defined in the scholastic world that overuses and misuses it. Academics, as well as journalists juggle with the term with peculiar generosity, putting most, and often all, of the criticisms (be they targeting the political dimension or cultural aspects) of the United States in the category of anti-American manifestations. Under these circumstances, several questions regarding the agency of anti-Americanism and the sources this position or attitude draws its consistency from are bound to be discussed.

How much do ideologies and the political cultures created on their foundation count when one is labeled *anti-* or, conversely, *philo-* or *pro-*American? Are there specific ideological practices that require or entail a skeptical attitude toward the United States? I would look at this aspect from broader horizon, and set the debate in a transatlantic framework. Discussing the looming of an incipient American anti-Europeanism as a response to long lasting European scorn, Timothy Garton Ash, whom is almost impossible to picture as a conventional West European anti-American (and this is not only because of his British origin), observed that the level of dismay directed to Europe is correlated with the political persuasion of the perpetrator. The Oxford scholar concluded that the line that separates the attitudes in pro- and anti-European, and correlatively, in philo- and anti-American is drawn with an ideological pencil – whose thickness oscillates, depending on the context it is looked upon. In Ash’s perception, American democrats are more “European” while, European conservatives are closer to American values than to their

leftist European counterparts<sup>2</sup>. Francis Fukuyama, disagrees with the opinion uttered by Timothy Garton Ash, and stresses the national dimension as the factor that cross-cuts – at least in the political spectrum of the United States – through the ideological cleavages thus putting Bill Clinton or Collin Powell much closer to George Bush than to Gerhardt Schroeder or Jacques Chirac<sup>3</sup>. The antagonistic dimension of the indirect debate between the two reputed academics proves that the adherence to one ideological package might be a good starting point for predicting the proportion of positive versus negative feelings contributing to a West European’s disposition regarding the younger neighbors on the opposite shore of the Atlantic Ocean. Ultimately, in the context of negative utterances of the Left for the United States conjugated with the quest for European supra-national cohesion, the question that deems to be posed and answered is: What is the source of Anti-American attitudes in Europe? Is anti-Americanism the result of a Europe versus America constellation or the result of the ideological perception of the Left?

A critical expose of the main directions undertaken by scholars engaged in the study of the European rejection of America will get its place within the frontiers of the first chapter of the herewith paper. Such a demarche has a twofold purpose: on the one hand, to identify the ideological underpinnings that have influenced the nuances of the lens through which the phenomenon was looked upon; on the other hand to asses the character and meaning of the concept of anti-Americanism, a term that vitally demands to be defined as it plays a key role in the argumentative construction of the thesis.

In the second chapter, the main tropes employed by the European intellectuals and the afferent contextual framework in which various European intellectuals have expressed their

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Garton Ash. “The New Anti-Europeanism in America” in Tod Lindberg (ed.) *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America, and the future of a troubled partnership*. New York: Routledge. 2005. p. 127

<sup>3</sup> Francis Fukuyama. “Does the West Still Exist?” in Tod Lindberg (ed.) *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America, and the future of a troubled partnership*. New York: Routledge. 2005. p. 157

perception of American way of life will be presented in order to Special attention will be given to the changes and shifts in the intellectual discourse and the historical moments that have triggered such phenomena. The focus will fall on the anti-Americanism of the Cold War, stressing the importance of the communist influence over intellectuals in Europe and of the mass movements of the 1960s and 1980s and the impact they had in shaping the European perspective of America.

After the main trends defining the Western European scrutiny of symbolic and palpable America have been brought into the spotlight, a closer examination of the post-1989 period will be undertaken. The accent will be placed on the systemic hostility for America displayed by the anti-globalization movement and on the reactions of European press and intellectuals triggered by the September 11 events. The purpose of this chapter is to underline the European reaction to what is perceived as American unilateralism and thus to set the background for the following chapter that deals more closely with the transatlantic relations after during and after the Iraq war.

The fourth chapter will then reveal the debates about European identity in reference to America and the role of the two entities in the New World order. Anti-Americanism appears in the context of pan-Europeanism with the United States playing the role of a negative other for a European identity needed to ensure the success of a federal, united Europe The analysis shall focus on the intellectual dispute set alight in 2003 after an article cosigned by Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, two of the most brilliant contemporary European minds, was published in German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Paris based La Liberation. Mostly based on Leftist elements, the Habermas/Derrida statement declaring Europe not only different but better than the United States should reveal the substantial importance of European disapproval of America in the campaign for a coagulated European identity.

## Chapter 1 – Toward a Definition of Anti-Americanism

In the last years, debates about anti-Americanism abound in most of the popular media and in the works of many scholars on the both sides of the Atlantic. Because it is not the purpose of this essay to review the discourse present in the popular media, and also it would be a tremendous challenge even for an entire media analysis department in a specialized institute, the focus will fall on the scholarly narrative regarding anti-Americanism. As it might have been expected, due to the delicate character of the topic, the discussions are polemic, partisan or both. In spite of its popularity and salience, anti-Americanism is understudied and often misunderstood. Generally, the tone of the underlying theme regarding anti-Americanism is dictated by the personal political views and persuasions of the authors. Scholars closer to conservative values tend to depict anti-Americanism as resulted from an endogamous phenomenon in which America is hated for what it is, for its fundamental values and they tend to generally discard any possibility that anti-Americanism is rooted in the negative perception of the policies. They underline the fact that hatred of America is completely divorced from any real basis. On the contrary, commentators on the Left, like Ziauddin Sardar or Noam Chomsky are more likely to give a more nuanced definition of anti-Americanism by taking out from under the stigmata of anti-Americanism what they perceive to be justified criticism of American international and economic endeavor. The dichotomy noticeable in the way scholars conceptualize, measure and operationalize anti-Americanism depend more on the personal biases that often put the authors' objectivity behind a thick fog and not on the way America behaves or on the characters of the anti-Americans and the functions this feeling bears for Europeans.

Anti-Americanism is a particular key concept in the construction of the argument of this

thesis, therefore a proper definition of the phenomenon is compulsory for the methodological dimension of the herewith quest. What is anti-Americanism? What are the causes that stand behind its presence in Western Europe? What is the difference between condemnable anti-Americanism and justified criticism of the United States? This chapter will be a vital step in addressing the larger subject and questions posed by the relation between European identity and the role the United States play in the penning of European identity.

Three views on the nature of anti-Americanism stand out in the literature published so far. Anti-Americanism is seen as a highly irrational feeling based on prejudice and cultural disdain of the fundamental American values, a feeling neighboring other doctrinal “isms” like anti-Semitism or racism. An opposite view, using a more conflict-based explanation blames the resurgence of anti-Americanism on the United States itself. In this framework, resentment for America is just a negative response to the US governmental policies involving, among others issues like imperialism, unilateralism, militarism, disregard for the environment etc. A third and more balanced position is occupied by scholars that observe an ambivalent relation between Europe and America, a love and hate module.

### **1.1. Pre-political Anti-Americanism**

Prominent in the first view of literature on anti-Americanism, that places anti-Americanism in the same category with racial bigotry or anti-Semitism, is the work of Paul Hollander, professor of Sociology at University of Massachusetts. He defines the concept as “an unfocused and largely irrational, often visceral, aversion towards the United States”<sup>4</sup>. In the quoted book, like in other pieces of his voluminous work on this topic, Hollander underlines the irrational component of anti-Americanism considering it to be a “predisposition to hostility” that

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Hollander. *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1992. p. 334

precedes and thus defies reason. The argumentation of the reputed American sociologist discredits virtually all the possible criticisms directed toward the US by rendering them under the stigmata of anti-Americanism. He considers to be part of the anti-American apparatus criticism of “American social, economic, and political institutions, traditions, and values”, “aversion to American culture in particular and its influence abroad, often also contempt for the American national character” and “dislike of American people, manners, behavior, dress, and so on” but also “rejection of American foreign policy and a firm belief in the malignity of American influence and presence anywhere in the world”<sup>5</sup>. Although such a definition is meritorious for its consistency, and it is backed up by a number of examples of exhibitions of anti-Americanism in Europe (most of the examples are phenomena mainly observed among the leftists: protests against missile deployment, anti-nuclear power, pro-environment to name just a few), the US and in the rest of the world, Hollander's approach seems to be fallacious on a semantic level. Because it is very inclusive, his definition can be used in an unorthodox manner, as a cheap excuse to discard any vociferations, first of all against the way the US government understands to engage in international relations.

Following a similar train of thought, Jean-Francois Revel labels Anti-Americanism as an “obsession” for Europeans. In an argument strikingly resembling Hollander's, Revel, uses the projection theory to explain the European resentment for the U.S. Basically, for Revel, first and foremost, America is a subject of European scapegoating<sup>6</sup>, and the most glaring characteristics of the thinking mode that leads to this attitude are “selectivity with respect to evidence and indictments replete with contradiction”<sup>7</sup>. It is noteworthy that the French author admits that proofs of American misdemeanor do exist, but there are projected disproportionately in reference

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibidem* p. 339

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Francois Revel. *Anti-Americanism*. San Francisco: Encounter Books. 2003. p. 159

<sup>7</sup>. *Ibidem*. p. 149.

to the achievements.

The complete irrationality and lack of justifiability of anti-Americanism is supported by other scholars as well. Russell Berman, an academic specialized in German literary history and in cultural politics at Stanford University found a new passion in comparing American and European public policies. Linking these two streams of interest, he engaged in an analysis of European, especially German anti-Americanism, materialized in a book entitled *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A cultural problem* (Hoover Institution Press. 2004). Berman localizes the epicenter of anti-Americanism in Europe, a puzzling premise since Europeans, unlike Middle East terrorists, did not menace in any way the American institutional or political establishment. In his view, anti-Americanism is “a political fantasy, an irrational, ideological view of the world that spreads largely independently of any objective contact with the United States or its culture”<sup>8</sup>. Berman argues that anti-Americanism is a long-lasting European ideology in which the perception of a puritan violent and fundamentalist America, probably valid in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century still holds a place of honor.

In a much more accurate argumentation, looking at Western European anti-Americanism, Andrei S. Markovits, notices that it is a long lasting hostility that has deep historical roots. Anti-Americanism invariably merges antipathy towards what America is with what America does<sup>9</sup>. If the latter is characteristic more to the Islamic world, Markovits considers the former to be more specific for Europe. Basing much of his argumentation on Hollander's definition he compares anti-Americanism with its “closest relative” anti-Semitism and he draws a clear causal direction from the latter to the former, showing that modernity and the Jews had contributed to a mutation

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<sup>8</sup> Russell A. Berman. *Anti-Americanism in Europe. A cultural problem*. Stanford. California: Hoover Institution Press. 2004. p. 36.

<sup>9</sup>Markovits, Andrei S. *European Anti-Americanism (and Anti-Semitism): Ever Present Though Always Denied*. Ann Harbor: Center for European Studies, Working Paper Series #108. p. 3

towards a new type of resentment toward America.

To sum up, for the authors whose opinions fit the pattern presented so far, there seem to be not many aspects of America that can be justifiably criticized. Such an explanation offers a cheap excuse, a blame proof vest anyone can use for discarding critical assertions regarding America. For Hollander and Berman the only Europeans – if any - that have not been anti-American are Alexis de Tocqueville, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and perhaps Raymond Aron. As Eduardo Mendieta points out, the one-sided reaction of the literati had circumscribed the meaning of the term anti-Americanism to a sphere of “pathology”<sup>10</sup>. The lack of nuance of this approach creates what Gregory Johnston calls “a fake dichotomy of anti-Americanism” that would separate Europeans in two categories: anti-Americans and the non-anti-Americans.

## **1.2. Political anti-Americanism**

The second approach can be called “reflexive”, “political” or “circumstantial”, in opposition to the “psychological” and “culturalist” explanation, maintains that it is the actions and behavior of the United States that elicit hostility. Contrarily to the authors that maintain that anti-Americanism is mostly related with what America is, the scholars that share this perspective put an accent on what America does. Such an approach de-emphasizes the irrational component and highlights instead the alleged provocative actions of America. Eduardo Mendieta calls this view the “imperial anti-Americanism” as it revolves around America's militarism corroborated with its refusal to give up a part of its sovereignty to international structures like the UN, but also around other accusations regarding the issue of globalization and environment protection. It is generally the Republican governments - i.e. Nixon's Vietnam War, Ronald Reagan's veto of the UN resolution against an intervention in Nicaragua or the Bush dynasty's wars against Saddam's

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<sup>10</sup> Eduardo Mendieta. “Patriotism and Anti-Americanism”. *Peace Review*. 15:4 (2003). p. 435

Iraq - that are held guilty for pumping air into anti-Americanism. Such a view is mostly part of the critical apparatus of the Left on both sides of the Atlantic, but also characteristic for the Arab world standpoint. The disdain for the policies issued by the Republican governments is voiced out even by renowned writers like the satirical writer Kurt Vonnegut Jr. who remarked that “conservatives are crazy as bedbugs. They are bullies.”<sup>11</sup> Scholars like Ziaudin Sardar, Meryll Wyn Davies, Noam Chomsky or William Blum support in their writings this thesis<sup>12</sup>. It is also worthy to mention that academics who adhere to this perspective are often awarded the anti-American medal.

Looking at the attitude of West Europeans, two scholars that work for the US government<sup>13</sup> explain anti-Americanism by gauging the amount of negative feelings towards the US. In their study published in 1992, thus excluding the entire George W. Bush period from the discussion, using substantial quantitative data, Steven Smith and Douglas Wertman observe a direct correlation between the high level of the negative feelings toward the United States and the U.S. policies pointing out that the Western Europe as a bastion of anti-Americanism was stronger during the late 1950s / early 1960s during the Ban the Bomb movements, in the late 1960s / the early 1970s during the American military operations in Vietnam and Indochina and in the 1981-1983 period of protest against the deployment of Pershing intermediate range missiles in Europe<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup>Kurt Vonnegut Jr. “Strange Weather Lately”. *In these times*. 9 June 2003.

<sup>12</sup>Ziaudin Sardar and Meryll Wyn Davies. *Why Do People Hate America?* Cambridge: Icon Books. 2003; Noam Chomsky. *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for World Dominance*. London: Penguin Books. 2003, and William Blum. *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press. 2003

<sup>13</sup>Steven K. Smith is part of the U.S. Department of Justice and Douglas A. Wertman works for the United States Information Agency.

<sup>14</sup>Steven K. Smith and Douglas A. Wertman. “Redefining U.S.-West European Relations in the 1990s: West European Public Opinion in the Post-Cold War Era”. *Political Science and Politics*. Vol. 25, No. 2. (Jun. 1992). pp. 188-195

The easiest and daylight clear argument that can be brought against the political approach is that it fails to explain why anti-American feelings exist and persist even when there is no major incident that involves the United States. For example, in the months preceding the World Football Championship, Michel Platini made the following remark: “The World Cup in the United States was outstanding, but it was like Coca-Cola. Ours will be like sparkling champagne.”<sup>15</sup> Although this witty line did not come from an awarded scholar but from an indeed famous football player, the cultural dimension is clearly emphasized in this statement. America's actions are like Coca-Cola: cheap, vulgar and inauthentic, while the French events bear the panache and the refinement of sparkling champagne. If solely America's actions are at the core of anti-Americanism, what was Platini's reason for making such an assertion? At that point, George Bush was just an insignificant governor of Texas as the White House office was held by a democratic president pretty appreciated in Europe, US was not bombing any Serbia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and definitely not invading any Nicaragua or Grenada.

A valid and more nuanced response is brought by Sergio Fabbrini, professor at Trento University in Italy. In a cerebral argumentation, he combines the two theories by maintaining that although the sources of anti-Americanism in Europe are both external and internal, the latter are more important, since America's fundamental values are subject for disdain both from the left and the right sides of the European political spectrum but also in the eyes of the Catholic center. To this, Fabbrini adds that anti-American feelings are dormant, waiting to be awakened by unpopular actions undertaken by the US government<sup>16</sup>.

As Gregory Johnston shows, the fundamental problem with both of the previously

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<sup>15</sup>Quoted in Andrei S. Markovits. “Reflections on the World Cup '98”. *French Politics and Society*. 16:3 (Summer 1998). p. 1

<sup>16</sup>Sergio Fabbrini. “The Domestic Sources of European Anti-Americanism”. *Government and Opposition*. Vol. 37. Issue 1. January 2002. pp. 3-14

presented approaches is their clear-cut attitude<sup>17</sup>. They both entail a Manichean view: it is either the European madness based on fantasy-like, utterly irrational ideas, that cause an intrinsic, devouring, pathological anti-Americanism, either America, and above all the Bush dynasty, are to blame for all the evil in the world. Both views have gaps to be criticized for. If anti-Americanism is always rooted in a deep unfocused, irrational cultural hate, is there any critical stance against America's policies and actions that to be excluded from the label of anti-Americanism? Where does the irrational critique end and where do the assertions based on *bona fides* start? On the other hand, if the reflexive explanation for the existence of anti-Americanism in Europe is to be held as legitimate, another question arises: what stands before criticisms of American policies? Can it be the very irrational endemic anti-Americanism the factor that drives commentators to such sharp critical stances?

### **1.3. Anti-modernism**

I have mentioned above only the extreme margins of the continuum on which the explanations for the resurgence and persistence of European hostility for America are situated on. Between the two extremes, the more recent literature has contributed to the infiltration of a more balanced perspective on the sources and definitions of what is commonly called anti-Americanism. The third opinion on the definition and sources of anti-Americanism comes in an attempt to fill in the gap between the psychological and political approach. Such views are given contour on the base of objective differences between the American society and its Western European counterpart. Political culture and modernity represent the common tropes employed by scholars that fit their positions within this category. Richard Crockatt does not treat anti-

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<sup>17</sup>Gregory Johnston. *Anti-Americanism: An Exploration of a Contested Concept in Western Europe*. Louisiana State University. Unpublished paper, available at [http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-05102006-104506/unrestricted/Johnston\\_dis](http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-05102006-104506/unrestricted/Johnston_dis) (23/02/2008)

Americanism as a dichotomous concept: “[...] anti-Americanism assumes many forms and has many different roots. It is more useful to think of it as a family of related attitudes than a single entity.”<sup>18</sup> Crockatt stresses the ambivalent love and hate relation between Europe and the U.S. He argues that anti-Americanism is rejection of Americanism which, in his opinion has much to do with America's development into an economic, politic and cultural superpower. In one word: Americanization. This form of anti-Americanism, that is the one that can be traced in the works of the most salient critic of globalization and consumerism, the late Jean Baudrillard who equated Americanization with the end of civilization. Crockatt takes into account the possibility that this would be a form of reaction to modernity and not to the United States *per se*. He then discards this hypothesis by arguing that it is rather impossible to separate anti-Americanism from the anti-globalization movement because “of all nations, the US embodies modernity most completely”<sup>19</sup>. The thesis referring to the duality of feelings for America and its culture is also supported by Anthony Daniels in his article about France<sup>20</sup>, by Michael Freund who inquired into the sources of German resentment for America<sup>21</sup>, by Patrick Deer in his explanation of the sources of anti-Americanism in Great Britain<sup>22</sup> and by many other scholars.

#### **1.4. Nuances of Anti-Americanism**

All the perspectives presented so far have a major shortcoming: they fail to present the

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<sup>18</sup>Richard Crockatt. *America Embattled: September 11, Anti-Americanism and the Global Order*. London/New York: Routledge. 2003. p. 44

<sup>19</sup>*Ibidem*. p. 57

<sup>20</sup>Anthony Daniels. “Sense of Superiority and Inferiority in French Anti-Americanism” in Paul Hollander (ed.) *Understanding Anti-Americanism: its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee. 2004. pp. 65-81

<sup>21</sup>Michael Freund. “Affinity and Resentment: A Historical Sketch of German Attitudes” in Paul Hollander (ed.) *Understanding Anti-Americanism: its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee. 2004. pp. 105 -121

<sup>22</sup>Patrick Deer. “Myths of British Anti-Americanism” in Kristin Ross and Andrew Ross (eds.), *Anti-Americanism*. New York University Press. 2004. pp. 158-171

other side of the coin. What is not anti-Americanism? What kind of affirmations qualify to be regarded as just manifestations of the freedom of speech right and not as lunatic prejudiced accusations? One cannot possibly argue that any assertion lacking a positive appreciation of the United States should be thrown into the same pot with the ostentatious American flag burning sessions on the “Arab Street”. This is indeed a difficult task, because anti-Americanism is, as shown above, a multi-faceted concept. At the same time, the personal and group motivations of the persons manifesting anti-American feelings are also situated on a broad scale. It is generally hard to state what kind of critiques are to be included within the concept of anti-Americanism and which are not. The critiques towards the American fundamental values are less likely to be driven by objective reasons. An epitome for cultural anti-Americanism is the British writer Henry James who wrote that America has no culture whatsoever and this is because the United States has “no State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, no ivied ruins, no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities, nor public schools – no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class – no Epsom, nor Ascot”<sup>23</sup>. In lesser words, America has no culture because it is not Europe. This does not mean that any critique of American cinema is anti-American. Only the unjust, repeated assertions that put a sign of equality between America and bad Hollywood productions should be labeled as anti-American.

When talking about what America does, the debate allows sensitively more nuances. In order not to fall into the same trap that had made Hollander include virtually all the negative

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<sup>23</sup>Henry James. *Hawthorne*. London: Macmillan. 1883. p. 43

affirmations regarding America into the definition of anti-Americanism, one must notice the existence of a gray zone where critiques are not only justified but also welcomed. In 1967 Shlomo Avineri argued that anti-Zionism and criticisms of Israel junction resulting in anti-Semitism when their languages use double standards<sup>24</sup>. The same conditions transform criticism of American aspects into anti-Americanism. I would argue that the stigmata of anti-Americanism can be washed away only by utter objectivity. It is not enough to issue well-documented assertions but also to treat all the other actors in the same manner and not to show a disproportion between the way America and its enemies (i.e. Saddam Hussein) are depicted. Similarly, although there are several reasons for criticizing the American way of life, the benign aspects should also be taken into consideration. Such a bias-free attitude that cannot be included in the category of prejudice is what Jeffrey C. Goldfarb calls “intelligent anti-Americanism”<sup>25</sup>.

To sum it up, anti-Americanism, in Western Europe, although its significations and manifestations can substantially vary depending on several factors (i.e. country, political orientation etc) is basically a prejudice-like phenomenon. Just like anti-Semitism, anti-Americanism is embedded into the Western European cultural code<sup>26</sup> and its sources are historical, philosophical but also political. An important aspect is the fact that anti-Americanism is generally constructed by the European intellectuals and elites. Although all in all the anti-American discourse is mild and dormant, it turns radical in periods of time when the American government engages into controversial policies especially regarding international relations. Another factor that influences the level of anti-Americanism is the existence of internal European

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Paul Jacobs “Jews and the Left”. *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol. 4. no. 3 (Spring 1975). p.154

<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey C. Goldfarb. “How to be an Intelligent Anti-American”. *Logos*. Issue 1.1 (Winter 2002). pp. 14-27

<sup>26</sup> I borrowed this concept from Shulamit Volkov who talks about the existence of an anti-Jewish prejudice deeply rooted into the Western European cultural framework. Because of the similarities in the development of anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in Europe I considered this explanation to be at least partially applicable to anti-Americanism. Shulamit Volkov. “Anti-Semitism as Cultural Code”. *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*. XIII. 1978. pp. 25-45

crisis. For example a congruence between the attitude of the high class and the perspective of the masses was reached during the February 2003 huge protest rallies against the – at that point – imminence of an American intervention in Iraq. It was not only the preparations for war that caused this stream of discontent, but it was also the profiled perspective of the EU enlargement that was to bring 10 more states and at the same time, the threat of a more diluted union.

## Chapter 2 – Historic Projections of America in Western Europe

Arguably, in the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the context of the American pursuit of its war against terrorism, the relations between America and Europe have reached an all-time low point. Political opposition to “America’s war”, as well as public protests denying the necessity and legitimacy of an intervention in Iraq has thrown Americans and Europeans in a war of mutual invective declarations. A fashionable attitude in many European circles to accuse government the US government of imperialistic intentions and hegemonic behavior supported by overweening militarism is paired by the tendency of the American mass-media (especially the Murdoch press) and politicians to channel effort in describing Europeans, especially the French, as lacking in courage and initiative, anchored in retrograde anti-modernism, disregarding of American historical contribution to the security of Europe. However, European reluctance to American actions and lifestyle is not a novelty. Over the centuries, a strong critical stance has developed in the intellectual strata, as a result of philosophical thought. The greatest Western European theoretical minds are largely responsible for historical anti-American manifestations. Therefore, to understand the contemporary wave of European despise for America gaining in popularity among the intellectuals, it is imperious to go back in time and identify the bricks that have paved, throughout the history, the anti-American path.

European intellectuals have built-up a long standing negative image of America. It is rather difficult to meet a member of the highbrow European intelligentsia that does not nourish a form or other of scorn for America. On this matter, the renowned Romanian-French playwright Eugene Ionesco noted in 1985: "I am one of the rare European intellectuals who has never been

anti-American"<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, to consider the European distaste for America solely the product of the Bush era – or eras if the Senior Bush republican administration is to be taken into consideration – would be a gross understatement. It is indeed valid that the controversial and sometimes utterly disastrous policies of the American government solidify the negative projection of America. As Timothy Garton Ash observes, the current American president and his numerous public blunders is indeed a godsend for European caricaturists<sup>28</sup>. It is also true that for many Europeans, still affected by the complex of Old World superiority, Bush Jr. epitomizes the ignorance, arrogance and irresponsibility of American people, without bothering to reflect on the common sense demarcation between a people and a government. Such an opinion belongs, among others, to "l'enfant terrible" of the German theater sphere, Peter Zadek:

“I think that it is cowardly that many people distinguish between the American people and the current American administration. The Bush administration was more or less democratically elected, and it had the support of the majority of Americans in its Iraq war. One can therefore one can be against the Americans, just as the world was against the Germans in the Second World War. In this sense, I am an anti-American.”<sup>29</sup>

All in all, although Bush serves as a good victim of European bashing, anti-Americanism doesn't have a starting point in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was no golden age in history when the European intellectuals -with notable exceptions like Alexis de Tocqueville or Johann Wolfgang Goethe - genuinely liked America. The amalgam of contempt, disdain, resentment, rejection and fear, has deep historical and philosophical roots. I will be arguing that, although

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Paul Hollander. “Western Europe” in Paul Hollander. *Understanding anti-Americanism Its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004. p. 367

<sup>28</sup> Timothy Garton Ash. “The New Anti-Europeanism in America”. in Tod Lindberg. *Beyond Paradise and Power. Europe, America and the Future of a Troubled Partnership*. New York: Routledge. 2004. p. 125

<sup>29</sup> Peter Zadek. “Kulturkampf? Ich bin dabei: Spiegelgespräch”. *Der Spiegel*. July 14 2003. Translated and quoted in Russell A. Berman. *Anti-Americanism in Europe. A cultural problem*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press. 2004

hostility for America, in various forms was present in Europe from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, what lies at the core of the latest trends in criticizing the United States is the heritage of the leftist values that have imbued European thinking after the end of the war.

The historical development of European negative feelings for America led Russell Berman to identify three types of anti-Americanism. The Stanford University professor makes the distinction between pre-democratic anti-Americanism (largely referring to the period before World War II), communist anti-Americanism (pertaining to the Cold war period) and post-democratic (corresponding to the post-Soviet era)<sup>30</sup>. For structural reasons, I shall use Berman's chronological typology, although, especially when talking about the second type some clarifications are needed. It would be much too easy and shallow to label and dismiss all the Western European criticism of America as communist without taking into consideration at least the multiple internal cleavages of the European Left in that period. Because of this, for I will forgo from using the above classification in its original form, and, instead of labeling it "communist", I will call the anti-Americanism of 1945-1989 period Cold War anti-Americanism, as the developments and operations pursued in the Cold War were have influenced the attitude of Europeans more than the communist doctrine. This chapter is dedicated to the first two time frames. By looking at this two particular periods, I will show that the victory of the Allies over the Nazis and their supporters triggered a shift in the European perception of America and thus a consequential change in the anti-American discourse, influenced by the rise of the left. This historical account will serve as a starting point for the analysis of the recent developments of anti-American stances in Western Europe triggered by external factors (the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the refusal of the U.S. administration to adhere to several international agreements,

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<sup>30</sup> See Russell A. Berman. *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem*. pp. 29-30

the most important being the Kyoto Protocol) as well as internal ones (the crisis of the Left and the pursuit of European unity). Thus, the manifestations and sources and outcomes of “democratic” will be discussed at large in the following chapter.

### **1. *Pre-democratic anti-Americanism***

America was the target of European scrutiny from the first moment it affirmed itself as a country. The European aristocracy understood from the earliest time that America would represent a challenge that would undermine its entrenched hierarchies. If the first perspective of America and its people referred to their biological inferiority, in the thinkers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century condemned, on the one hand, the American anchorage in concrete and, on the other hand, the very political system that was to be applied in the newly independent America.

#### **1.1. Biological Inferiority**

The first European encounters with the New World brought the first wave of distaste. In the “prehistory of anti-Americanism”, the degeneracy thesis was the main perception of mid-eighteenth century Europeans. According to the sinister picture of America upheld by the work of leading biologists like Comte de Buffon and Cornelius de Pauw living creatures, human or animal, living in the all over the New World, not only in America, were strongly affected by climatic conditions and doomed to remain inferior. The degeneracy and monstrosity lurking on the new continent was thought to be contagious for anyone debarking on the American shores. Although refuted by Thomas Jefferson, the degeneracy thesis, together with the racialist theories developed in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the Nazi loath of America, for them a land of racial impurity, where, due to the democracy of blood that allowed unrestricted mixing of races, the

fund of Aryan genes of the Anglo-Saxons in America were bound to perish<sup>31</sup>.

## 1.2. Non-romantic America

In the Romantic period America was seen as a land of gross materialism, lacking any form of organic culture. The European intelligentsia, especially the German one saw a clear opposition between European *Kultur* and American *Zivilization*, noting the lack of a real *volk* in America, instead the American men were nothing more than money making machines, seeking only wealth while letting high thought and philosophy aside. American pragmatism stood in opposition to the European theoretical and intellectual aspirations. There were no nightingales in America, no time to feel and live heroic, into a land poor in history and legend, where people suffered from the gangrene of materialism. Practically, from Hegel on, most of the German intellectuals condemned America's political immaturity. Alexis de Tocqueville, while looking with admiration to the American democratic system, observed, in the first sentence of his memorable *Democracy in America* that "in no country in the civilized world is less attention paid to philosophy than in the United States"<sup>32</sup>. A few pages later, Tocqueville notes that not paying attention to philosophy represented a mode of thought in the United States of America in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Even if the French thinker ingeniously labeled the American mode of thinking as Cartesian – in practice but not in theory, as Tocqueville doubted that many Americans have ever read Descartes –, thus finding a European theoretical foundation for American individualism, his observation of the American indifference to theoretical and abstract thinking foresaw the later debates on the cultural distinctions between Europe and America, fueled by the idea that a culture

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<sup>31</sup> See James B. Ceaser. "A Genealogy of Anti-Americanism". *The Public Interest*. Summer 2003. <http://www.thepublicinterest.com/archives/2003summer/article1.html>

<sup>32</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. London: David Campbell. 1994. p. 3

with no intellectuals is no culture at all<sup>33</sup>. Interestingly enough, one hundred fifty years after Tocqueville published his study of the American system, such a view on the absence of American inclination for spiritual matters. Jean Baudrillard wrote his own chronic of American life. In resonance with his postmodern thinking, the French sociologist saw America as an “achieved utopia”, the epitome for his model of simulacrum, the creation of artificial symbols replacing reality with an “embalmed and pacified” alternative<sup>34</sup>.

In the context of the distinction between pragmatic America and intellectual Europe, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, another form of critique sprung in the European high spheres. The target was America’s political system based on individualism and egalitarianism that for many was not only inferior, but also utopist. Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre and other conservative thinkers while loathing the values of the French Revolution, located its source of inspiration in the ideas of the American Revolution. The European society based on the notion of nature propagated by the Enlightenment movement made American society a target due to its core of rationalistic underpinnings. The growth and prosperity of America shattered the romantic belief in the weak life expectancy of societies based on reason in stead of natural determination. This prompted Enlightenment thinkers to affirm that America’s survival was due to the intentional extinction of everything deep and profound, to the marginalization of spirit. Nikolaus Lenau summarized the romantic perspective of unhistorical and artificial America: “With the expression rootlessness I think I am able to indicate the general character of all American institutions; what we call fatherland is here only a property insurance scheme”.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Susan Weiner. “Terre à terre: Tocqueville, Aron, Baudrillard and the American Way of Life”. *Yale French Studies*. No. 100. France/USA: The Cultural Wars. 2001. p. 14

<sup>34</sup> Jean Baudrillard. *Simulation and Simulacra*. (Trans. Sheila Glaser). Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press. 1994. p. 86

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in James W. Ceaser. “A Genealogy of Anti-Americanism”. *The Public Interest*. Summer 2003. available at <http://www.thepublicinterest.com/archives/2003summer/article1.html>

The very origins of the American state made it prone to be disliked by the European conservatives. As Sergio Fabbrini points out, the cause of conservative dislike resides in the fact that it was born out of a revolution that was, at the same time anti-colonial and liberal-progressive combined with an egalitarian character<sup>36</sup>. Such ideas that defied constitutional conformism and preached individualism represented a real threat to the classical hierarchies that governed Europe. With the passing of time, as the American system proved to be not only stable but also prosperous, the European eyes turned to other elements of American life. America as a paragon of modernity was seen as a producer of low culture, a gigantic, spiritless monster that was money hungry by excellence. In the European reaction to modernity we can find important sources of the distaste of contemporary intellectuals for America.

### **1.3. Anti-industrialism**

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the development of industrialization brought a new *topos* in the European critical apparatus. Especially German philosophers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck envisioned America as an empire of uncontrolled and uncontrollable technologism that threatened to overcome Europe. Nietzsche perceived America as a dangerous gigantesque mechanical system that, through its production of mass culture was prone to spread “spiritual emptiness” and cautioned that, eventually, in the whole “the faith of America will become the faith of Europe”<sup>37</sup>. Moeller van den Bruck went even further fearing the great threat of the mentality of dominance, and exploitation propelled by the mentality of technologism. The divorce of quality from quantity, placed, in the eyes of Martin

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<sup>36</sup> Sergio Fabbrini. “The Domestic Sources of European Anti-Americanism”. *Government and Opposition*. Vol. 37. Issue 1. January 2002. p. 7

<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Gay Science*. (Trans. Walter Kaufmann). New York: Vintage.1974 p. 303

Heidegger, the United States and the Soviet Union in a relation of equality, constituting a pole of no-values restricting the liberty of man for the sake of production:

“Europe [...] lies today in a great pincer, squeezed between Russia on the one side and America on the other. From a metaphysical point of view, Russia and America are the same, with the same dreary technological frenzy and the same unrestricted organization of the free man”<sup>38</sup>.

The interwar period, with the United States emerging as a global power, after leading the winning alliance against the armies of the Kaiser, with the influx of American culture that penetrated the European sphere, the fear voiced out by Nietzsche seemed to prove right. In the 1920s, Germany was the most Americanized country in Europe<sup>39</sup>. The Taylorist and Fordist theories of rationalized production started to gain popularity across the ocean. But as the American *geist* was penetrating the European economic sphere, the distaste of European thinkers became even greater. The portrait of America drawn by Charlie Chaplin in his famous film *Modern Times* (1936) perfectly shows the perspective of Europeans of an industry furnishing throngs of flawed goods while reducing humans to mere functional pieces of mechanical gear. Not only the skimpy and rushing mass-production in resonance with Henry Ford’s ideas provoked the disdain of Europeans. America had become threatening not only for the European understanding of industrial production, but also for the idea of high culture, that, by definition was restrictive about the access of the masses. Along with mass production, mass-culture and the inherent increased consumption, facilitated by the achievements of technological breakthroughs, were also imported from the United States. The invasion of American style, trashy, low culture destined to workers, fueled even more the elite’s fear of the crowds, a period - the 1920s - when

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<sup>38</sup>Martin Heidegger. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. (Trans. Ralph Manheim). New Haven: Yale University Press. 1959. p 79

<sup>39</sup>See Dan Diner. *America in the Eyes of the Germans. An Essay on Anti-Americanism*. Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers. 1996. p. 40

the Bolshevik Revolution and less radical social movements were sweeping Europe<sup>40</sup>. Anti-industrialists, either conservatives or socialist utopians, continued in the interwar period to reject industrialism and the shameful American production system. On a Heideggerian tone, that will be slightly modified and embraced by the Left in the aftermath of WWII, the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery perceived industrial society as the womb of all spiritual emptiness. Moreover, Saint-Exupery perceived industrialism to be at the base of the system from which modernity and totalitarianism stemmed from. In this respect, Nazism, Communism and American capitalism were alike<sup>41</sup>.

In this context, it is also important to note the effect of the perception of “Jewified” America and the interwar Jew-hatred that tied Europe to the infamy pole. As paragons of modernity, America and its Jewry were largely hated by anti-Semites, all around Europe. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler, blaming the Jews for the decadence of the American society eroded by egoistic capitalism, wrote: “Jews are the regents to the stock market giants of the American union”<sup>42</sup>. Anti-Semitic and anti-American feelings seemed to reach convergence at least through metaphorical structures. As Dan Diner points out, Uncle Sam was most of the time equated with Uncle Shylock.

## **2. Cold War Visions of America**

The outcome of the World War II brought a noteworthy shift in the parameters defining the interaction between Western Europe and America, hence also in the perspective held by the cultural elites. In spite of the major role played by the United States in defeating fascism and in

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<sup>40</sup> Volker Berghahn. *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe : Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press. 2001. p 87

<sup>41</sup> Tony Judt. *Past Imperfect. French Intellectuals, 1944-1956*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California press. 1992. p. 192

<sup>42</sup> Dan Diner. *America in the Eyes of the Germans*. p. 84

spite of the silent contract binding America and Western Europe in a partnership against Eastern totalitarianism, Europeans, and especially the intellectuals did not divorce from their critical stance regarding America, although based on slightly modified motivations than in the pre-war period. The lesson served by National-Socialist and fascist dictatorships rendered anti-democratic and anti-Semitic tropes rather unacceptable in Western European discourse. Thus, the post-war criticism of America came especially from the Left. The 1950s witnessed a strong cultural resistance against American influences, but starting from the 1960s, the critique of America revolved primarily around anti-capitalism, pacifism and anti-militarism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism and it is strongly related to the European perception of the actions and operations undertaken by the United States in the Cold War.

The post-war historical developments and the unfolding of the cultural and political relations undoubtedly had a deep impact on the shaping of European attitudes. For sure, the long-lasting American military presence in West-Germany was bound to offend the sensitive nationalistic German spirit. In 1946, Herman Hesse in a letter to Thomas Mann expressed his bitter satisfaction that “the criminals and black marketers, the sadists and the gangsters in Germany are no longer Nazis and they no longer speak German; they are Americans”<sup>43</sup>. Besides underlining the misbehavior of the American troops of German land, Hesse foresaw a pattern that was bound to recur in the German sphere: the equivalence of Nazi crimes with American interventions, a lubricant for the process of coming in terms with the crimes of the fathers. In addition, the strategic position of Germany rendered it highly vulnerable in case of an armed confrontation involving the two military blocks: NATO and the Warsaw pact. Such a grievance is not limited solely to West Germany, but, to some extent, is valid for all Western European states in the context of the nuclear arming race. Geo-strategically situated between the hammer and the

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Diner. p. 119

anvil – just like Poland was clinched between Hitlerist Germany and Stalinist Russia at the outset of the Second World War, Western Europe was terrified at the thought of a nuclear war. Paul Theroux felt that in Europe there was a sense that Europeans are in the “front lines of a war that doesn’t have to be fought”<sup>44</sup>. The feeling that American overwhelming arsenal represent a threat to the safety of Western Europe and generally to world peace was, and still is, at the foundation of the leftist contempt for America and its seemingly relentless and hazardous use of military might in different spots around the Globe, from Nicaragua to Afghanistan and from Vietnam to Kosovo and, more recently, Iraq.

The criticism of America in post-war Europe has two main sources. On the one hand, the support of intellectuals for communist Soviet Union as an effect of the alleged “Americanization” of Europe and, on the other hand, the emergence and public salience of the New Left and its social activism in the 1960s and 1970s.

### **2.1. Orthodox Period: Support for the USSR**

In the first decade following the end of WWII, the European Left was characterized by a continuation of the political and ideological architecture of the Bolshevik Revolution, with communists, supported by the rise of the Soviet Union as a global power having the upper hand over the social-democrats. The European fling with communist doctrine and the subsequent sympathy for USSR, especially among the Western intellectuals, entailed an anti-Western and anti-capitalistic stance in the relation with America. European intellectuals, especially in the South (France, Italy), where communism was more prevalent, embarked onto a campaign against America and its liberalism, conservatorism, capitalism and cultural influence.

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Paul Hollander. “Western Europe” in Paul Hollander. *Understanding anti-Americanism Its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004. p. 309

One of the main reasons that stand behind the leftist intellectual support for the USSR over the United States are deeply rooted in the way the legacy of the world conflagration has shaped the apprehension of totalitarianism. After the defeat of Nazism and fascism, the communists tied the Jewish tragedy with German capitalism.<sup>45</sup> For example, the Frankfurt School researchers identified the seed of anti-Semitism and fascism only on the Right. Daniel Flynn aptly observes that “what they took as signs of fascism were merely indications of conservatorism”<sup>46</sup>. With modernity and capitalism seen as ladders to totalitarianism, for many, including Herbert Marcuse, “the Communist Parties are, and will remain, the sole anti-fascist power”<sup>47</sup>. Unlike the communists, social-democrat intellectuals refused to be Americanized or Sovietized. If during the war they supported USSR as an anti-fascist bastion, after the war, they turned away from Moscow, but kept their critical attitude about the cultural dimension of America<sup>48</sup>.

Under these circumstances, there is no wonder that European intellectuals preferred to side with the communist East in its critique of the Western life and values. Intellectuals had other reasons, more personal, to feel closer to USSR than to America, motives related, as Tony Judt observes, to the dichotomy in the perspective on the status and role of the intellectuals provided by the two systems. The American intellectuals had almost no impact on American culture because of their lack of influence on the public mind. On the other hand, the Soviet Union went to great efforts to present itself as a society placing great value on writers, artists, and scientists. “In this respect, USSR seemed European”<sup>49</sup> Judt considers. The Soviet disposition to put a great

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<sup>45</sup> Volker Berghahn. *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*. p. 89

<sup>46</sup> Daniel J. Flynn. *Intellectual Morons: How Ideology Makes Smart People Fall for Stupid Ideas*. New York: Crown Forum. 2004. p. 18

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in *Ibidem*. p. 17

<sup>48</sup> Volker Berghahn. p. 92

<sup>49</sup> Tony Judt. *Past Imperfect*. .... pp. 202-203

price on thinkers and academics results from Marx's perspective on the role of the intellectuals as catalysts and leaders of the West European movements for the liberation of the workers.<sup>50</sup> The English novelist Graham Greene charmed to some extent by the intellectual life under communism wrote: "If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union"<sup>51</sup>. The anti-American discourse of the period, largely based on communist persuasions, was part of the larger anti-Western attitude of the intellectuals combined with the anti-capitalistic tropes associated with the communist discourse. For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty realized that no matter what the pitfalls of communism might have been, such a system based on "man's appreciation of man and a classless society" would still be more likely to prove its feasibility on a global scale than the "vague...American prosperity"<sup>52</sup>. There are illustrious precedents of intellectuals that believed softening the scrutiny of USSR was commendable in the fight against fascism. Adorno considered, prior to the war that "in the current situation, which is truly desperate, one should really maintain discipline at any cost and not publish anything that might damage Russia"<sup>53</sup>. Herbert Marcuse proved to be even more deferential to the Soviets in his distaste of Nazism and fear of new fascist episodes in Europe. In 1947, convinced that the end of the war did not shatter the fascist threat, Marcuse established the proper ratio of ideological criticism: "the denunciation of neo-fascism and Social

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<sup>50</sup> In Marx's system, the intellectuals were not part of a class due to their possibility to choose the ideological system they felt closer to. Hence, in spite of his own ambivalence about intellectuals, he considered them to be indispensable in the process of making the proletarians aware of their existence as an exploited class. On the other hand, regarding the radical students in Russia, both Marx and Engels, regarded their efforts as futile in the absence of a working class. See Shlomo Avineri. "Marx and the Intellectuals" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 28. No. 2. (Apr. - Jun., 1967). pp. 269-278

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Hollander. p. 376

<sup>52</sup> Tony Judt. *Past Imperfect...* p. 197

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Daniel. J. Flynn. *Intellectual Morons...* p. 17. Theodore Adorno did not keep the same thinking line all of his life. In the post-war period, the scholar defended American individualism against communist collectivism as he tended to defend the individual against the state. For a "neoliberal" reading of Adorno see Russell Berman. pp. 134-145

Democracy must outweigh denunciation of Communist policy<sup>54</sup>”. Under these circumstances, it becomes clear why the critical stance of American interests in Europe received credence as a response to the United States pressure for the rearmament of West Germany in what was seen from Moscow as “fascist revanchism” and an imposition of capitalist interests on a West Germany denied its chance to voice out any preference for socialism.<sup>55</sup> There is thus no wonder that the Soviet invasion of South Korea in 1950 seemed less important in comparison to the dread of Germany regaining some of its military might.

The European Recovery Program (ERP) announced by General George C. Marshall in 1947 represented another cornerstone in the evolution of American relations with West European countries. Through the Marshall Plan, the government of the United States engaged into helping post-war Europe to reconstruct economy and self-confidence, while ensuring a transatlantic free trade; to put Europe back on its feet while safeguarding the both the American economic interests and security<sup>56</sup>. The Truman administration understood that Europe could play the role of a buffer against Soviet expansion. “The greatest danger to the security of the US is the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe and the consequent accession to power of Communist elements”, a 1947 CIA report said.<sup>57</sup> In exchange for the American support in goods and money, Paris, London, Berlin, Rome had to abandon the protectionism of the quotas imposed on imports, and thus facilitate the accession of foreign, especially American products. Although the plan was widely embraced with benign long-time effects in the reconstruction of Europe, the American involvement in Europe determined accusations of imperialism and fears for the decay of high

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Rolf Wiggerhaus. *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (translated by Michael Robertson). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1994. p. 391

<sup>55</sup> Tony Judt. *Postwar: A history of Europe Since 1945*. London: Pimlico Random House. 2007 p. 221

<sup>56</sup> Geoff Eley. *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe 1850-2000*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2002. p. 302

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Tony Judt. *Postwar: A history of Europe Since 1945*. p. 95

European culture, employed both on the Left and the Right. In the context of the opening of European markets, the entry of American cultural products was bound to accentuate the Americanization process already disdained by the interwar elites. For many, the Marshall Plan put the foundations of the economic and cultural Americanization of Europe.<sup>58</sup> The purported cultural void denounced by Stendhal or Henry James in the 19<sup>th</sup> century suddenly shifted into cultural imperialism.<sup>59</sup> It is noteworthy that the perspective of pollution of European high culture due to the penetration of American crass, low cultural products generally characteristic for the right-wing discourse was fully embraced in the 1950s by the Left. For *Le Monde*, Coca-Cola was the “Danzig of European culture” and for *Esprit Magazine*, the American culture challenged “the very roots of the mental and moral cohesion of the people of Europe”<sup>60</sup>.

Mistrust in America’s interests and the fear of a return of war combined with Stalin’s alleged pacifism, was enough to make West European intellectuals prone to see USSR with good eyes. It was the starting point of the cultural Cold War which America felt the need to win as a part of the confrontation with USSR. Setting up a Congress for Cultural Freedom was the American plan to counterweight the attraction communist attraction over the West-European intellectuals among whom Charlie Chaplin, Leonard Bernstein, Frederic Joliot-Curie or Pablo Picasso. The Congress held in Paris in 1950 was largely discarded by the French Leftist press that spoke about an attempt to recruit a “cultural army”, and important figures of the intellectual sphere (Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Richard Wright) refused to attend as they feared the meeting would be anti-communist.<sup>61</sup> The rejection of the American attempts to bring the intellectuals closer to its cause even more when CIA involvement in organizing the Congress was

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<sup>58</sup> Mary Nolan. “Anti-Americanization in Germany” in Kristin Ross and Andrew Ross. (eds.) *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press. 2004. pp. 131-132

<sup>59</sup> Jean-Francois Revel. *Anti-Americanism*. p. 146

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Tony Judt. *Postwar...* p. 220-221

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Volker Berghahn. p. 93

discovered.<sup>62</sup>

## **2.2. America and the New Left: From Cultural Disdain to Political Criticism**

The noteworthy result of the postwar years is the general dissipation of the European cultural superiority complex and its replacement with a feeling of ambivalence toward American culture while more concentrated criticism of American behavior pertaining to international relations emerged. Of course, this is not altogether valid for all the circumstances, as, for example, Gaullism nurtured an obvious cultural disdain for America, a feeling that is still perpetuated to some extent, in France. The reality of the Americanization of European culture and the inherent sense of cultural de-identification have always represented a capital grievance of the elites. This is why the French have constantly striven to reduce the flux of American cinematography, culminating with the imposition of a maximum quota of Hollywood movies with a broad support from the European Union in its attempt to protect European cultural identity<sup>63</sup>. Nonetheless, the dominating pattern in postwar European discourse regarding America is much poorer in essentialist despise of American culture, as low, coarse, and qualitatively inferior. Moreover, the rare instances of cultural critique loomed in the language of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism. Jack Lang, the French minister of culture in the early 1980s, cautioned that the dominance of American cultural products, from Hollywood movies to pop singers was caused by the interests of “an immense empire of profit” that “no longer grabs territory ... but grabs consciousness, ways of thinking”<sup>64</sup>. This shift from cultural rejection to a critique based more on ideology and circumstantial reactions appears in the context of the

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<sup>62</sup> Akira Iriye. “Review of America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy and Diplomacy by Volker R. Berghahn” in *The Journal of American History*. Vol. 89. No. 2. History and September 11: A Special Issue (September 2002). p. 708

<sup>63</sup>See Karen Rinaman. *French Films Quota and Cultural Protectionism*. available at <http://www.american.edu/ted/frenchtv.htm> (09.05.2008)

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Hollander. p. 385

emergence of radical liberals and left-wing supporters after the break away from USSR.

After the intervention of USSR in rebel Hungary and Khrushchev's repudiation of the Stalinist regime in 1956, leftist intellectuals started to depart from the official communist line. Other European minds continued to pose as fellow travelers of the communist regime in the East (it is the case of Jean-Paul Sartre whose communist utopias finally got shattered completely only after the publishing of the French version of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in 1974). Nonetheless, social-democrats that have divorced the Soviets kept their critical position regarding the United States<sup>65</sup>. Moral equivalence between Russia and the United States was a common trope for the intellectuals that fit this profile. Bertrand Russell started his long lasting critique of the United States in the early 1950s by rendering the two superpowers equally dangerous. Later in his life, the British philosopher migrated toward a more critical and one-sided vision of American misdeeds. To some extent, but much later, the equation of Soviet society with the Western one, largely embodied, in the eyes of Central and Eastern Europeans more by the United States than by the free European countries was voiced out even in intellectual circles outside Germany, France or Britain. For Vaclav Havel, "Soviet totalitarianism is an extreme manifestation [...] of a deep-seated problem that finds equal expression in advanced Western society; [...] a trend toward impersonal power and rule by mega-machines that escape human control"<sup>66</sup>

The break up with the Soviet Union led to the emergence of the New Left, less confident in the feasibility of the single party system and its line, and more oriented toward an individualistic approach to leftist politics and social activism. The emergence of the New Left took place in student and intellectual circles on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and it

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<sup>65</sup>Berghahn, Volker. *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe...* p. 95

<sup>66</sup>Quoted in Hollander. p. 368

represented a radical rupture from the old Left, represented by the anti-fascist fighters. Originating from the peace activism and civil rights movements in the United States, the New Left's salience exploded along with the anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism of the magical sixties. The criticism of the New Left aimed at two aspects of American foreign policy: the strategy of nuclear deterrence in the conflict with USSR and the pursuit of the Vietnam War.

### 2.2.1. United States, a nuclear threat

The militancy of the New Left in Europe was already predicted by Jean-Paul Sartre's preaching of a more socially responsible intellectual sphere. As it was proclaimed in the inaugural issue of *Les temps modernes* in 1945, the purpose of the new type of intellectual was to “produce certain changes in the society” was to modify both the “human social condition” and the “self-perception of the individual”<sup>67</sup>. The ample movements of 1968 have a departure point in the anti-nuclear campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament especially popular in Great Britain that was seen, by many, as an American nuclear damp<sup>68</sup>. In the early sixties, the dread of nuclear conflict penetrated even the artistic world. Movies like Stanley Kubrick's *Doctor Strangelove* (1964) and Peter Watkins' *The War Game* (1965) tackled in a very critical manner the putative effects of an eventual atomic confrontation between two equally irresponsible superpowers. Fueled by the Einstein-Russell manifesto against the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, the anti-nuclear movements in Western Europe proved to be very harsh on the United States. The image of the United States as a custodian of destructive nuclear arsenal combined with the conception of cultural immaturity and political irresponsibility were the main factors that excited the fear of Western Europeans

<sup>67</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre. *Les Temps modernes. Presentation*. October. 1945

<sup>68</sup>Geoff Eley. “Reviving the Socialist Tradition” in Christiane Lemke and Gary Marks (eds.) *The Crisis of Socialism in Europe*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 1992. p. 45

and made the United States seem a real threat.

If the moral equivalence between the two superpowers prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s, the NATO intention to deploy intermediate range ballistic missiles in Western Europe according to the deterrence policy against the Soviet Union, transmuted the United States in the role of the sole villain. For many, as the New York Times columnist John Vinocur observed, the Russians were perceived to be eventually reasonable, while the image of the United States was shattered by Watergate and Vietnam, and the moral responsibility of its administration was thus severely questioned<sup>69</sup>. Such an attitude was not found only among the anti-establishment groups, but also within the ruling party. SPD parliamentary Jurgen Busack was reported to have declared that “the war mongers and international arsonists do not govern in the Kremlin. They govern in Washington. The USA must lie, cheat and deceive in an effort to thwart resistance to its insane foreign policy adventures”.<sup>70</sup> Once again, the actions of the provocative actions of USSR are forgotten. It was the USSR who planted nuclear missiles in Cuba in the early 1960s; it was the same USSR that was behind the attack of South-Vietnam by North-Vietnamese forces; USSR was advancing in Afghanistan after changing its strategy by taking the side of Ethiopia in the Ogaden War. Nonetheless, the United States was always the peace-destabilizing factor.

The opposition to the NATO “double-track” decision taken in 1979, that was practically supported by all the leftist groups in West Germany ended in the rise of the German Green Party, Europe's most important environmentally-oriented political formation. The reaction of the extra-governmental Left in West Germany against NATO and America had internal and external sources. It was the rejection of the German society and its perceived subjection to the United States that gave the amplexness of the anti-American feeling in the 1980s. Ashamed by Germany's

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<sup>69</sup>Cf. John Vinocur. “Germany's Season of Discontent”. *New York Times Magazine*. 8 August 1982.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Hollander. p. 381

Nazi past, the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition was irritated with the position of the government on this issue, thus its discourse embraced an anti-fascist veneer. In combination with the restrictions on civil rights imposed by the government due to the waves of terrorism in the 1970s animated by the spirit of the 1968 protests, the fear inoculated by the perspective of the totalitarian past ravaged the minds of young leftists.<sup>71</sup> In these circumstances, the peace movement identified the United States, backed by an apathetic German socialist government led by Helmut Schmidt as a political evil; the shadow of the Nazis was easy to cast on the United States. It was the image of a trigger-happy, Reganesque, imperialist, war oriented America that stood at the core of the anti-Americanism of the 1980s. Stern magazine wrote about the American sense of mission that degenerated into “naked imperialism” and illustrated the idea with an American missile piercing the heart of a dove of peace<sup>72</sup> reaching congruence with the banners of the protesters that often read “NATO and peace are mutually exclusive”<sup>73</sup>.

In spite of the mass opposition, the influence of Germany's Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and France's Francois Mitterrand made the localization of the missiles a reality, as the Bundestag ratified the NATO decision in 1983, and the deployment of the nuclear arsenal proved to be a decisive step in the process of bringing the Soviet empire to an end.

### **2.2.2. European reactions to Vietnam war : Russell Tribunal**

The orientation of the European left towards the third world offered a new motive for the United States to be picked on in the context of the Vietnam War. As Dan Diner observes, the conflict in South-East Asia blatantly shattered the democratic and anti-colonial ethos of

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<sup>71</sup>See Geoff Eley. *The History of the Left in Europe 1850-2000*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 2002. pp. 418-419

<sup>72</sup>Hollander. p.381

<sup>73</sup>Cf. Dan Diner. *America in the eyes of the Germans. An essay on Anti-Americanism* p. 139

America<sup>74</sup>. The critique of American imperialist tendencies in Vietnam was informed by a third-worldism that combined anti-colonialism and a virulent anti-capitalism. It is the case of the International War Crimes Tribunal, also known as the Russell-Sartre Tribunal, named after its two most prominent members. The declared aim of the Tribunal was to continue the legacy of the Nuremberg trial and, according to Russell's statement during his speech in front of the first meeting of the Tribunal in 1966 in London to "investigate and asses the character of the United States in Vietnam".<sup>75</sup> Dismissed as a mock trial by the American public opinion due to its lack of legal jurisdiction, the Tribunal unanimously found the United States guilty of numerous charges among which the most important was genocide. The accusations of neo-colonialist practices were intertwined with a fervid anti-capitalism. In the logic of Jean-Paul Sartre genocide was a product of capitalism. The mechanism is simple and clear for the French existentialist: America committed genocide intentionally because only by destroying the civilian population that was supporting the Vietcong. To Sartre, Vietnam was an indirect colonial war, because, as America had no direct economic interest in that particular area, the massacre of civilian population was to serve as warning for countries, especially in Latin America, where American interests were direct and important<sup>76</sup>. In Sartre's logic, which meets a striking resemblance with the No Blood for Oil slogan of the anti-globalists of the 1990s, capitalism is to blame for America's endeavor. The need for new markets elicited American neo-colonialism, and the Vietnamese were poor collateral damage. Thus, the inexcusable actions of America are caused by what America really is: the paragon of capitalism.

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<sup>74</sup>*Ibidem*. p. 132

<sup>75</sup>Bertrand Russell. "Speech to the First Meeting of Members of the War Crimes Tribunal" in Ken Coates (ed.) *Prevent the Crime of Silence: Reports from the Sessions of the ICWT Founded by Bertrand Russell*. Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. 1971. p. 56

<sup>76</sup>See Jean-Paul Sartre. "On Genocide" in Ken Coates (ed.) *Prevent the Crime of Silence: Reports from the Sessions of the ICWT Founded by Bertrand Russell*. Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. 1971. pp. 350-365

There is no question that the armed force of the United States committed various crimes and atrocities in Vietnam. Thus, the demarche of Russell, Sartre and the other intellectuals was to some extent perfectly justifiable. The scope was noble in itself, and so was the idea to constitute a new Nurnberg Tribunal whose main flaws were its impermanence and lack of universality by indicting only the defeated side for their actions in WWII. In a war, crimes are committed not only by the losing side, but also by the winners. Leveling Dresden to the ground is incomparable with systematically planning the killing of the entire Jewish population, but it is, nonetheless a crime. But in 1967, beneath the noble idea standing at the core of the intellectual debate over Vietnam, anti-Americanism was manifest because it was itself one-sided and conducted much too zealously. Bertrand Russell declaimed that the independence of the Tribunal was guaranteed by its lack of power<sup>77</sup>. But there was no ideological independence. The North-Vietnamese invasion of the South was not seen as a break of peace, and the complexity of the war was reduced to the “global struggle between the poor and the powerful rich”<sup>78</sup>, in which the United States played the role of the aggressor, against which the people of Vietnam, noble savages, heroically resisted<sup>79</sup>. The members of the Tribunal made their work prone to dismissal, exactly because of this disproportionate, unbalanced perception of the guilt of America and the misdeeds of the Soviets and their protégées, the communist North-Vietnamese.

### 2.2.3. May 1968, Anti-Americanism and the Leftist Transatlantic Bridge

May 1968 is another important moment in the history of the European Left's perspective

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<sup>77</sup>Bertrand Russell. “Speech to the First Meeting of Members of the War Crimes Tribunal” in Ken Coates (ed.) *Prevent the Crime of Silence: Reports from the Sessions of the ICWT Founded by Bertrand Russell*. Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. 1971 p. 57

<sup>78</sup>Russell. “Closing Address to the Stockholm Session” in Ken Coates (ed.) *Prevent the Crime of Silence: Reports from the Sessions of the ICWT Founded by Bertrand Russell*. Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. 1971. p. 187

<sup>79</sup>In Russell's words, the war in Vietnam was nothing more but a form of “sustained aggression by a great power against a small, heroic people”. *Ibidem*. p. 186

of America in the context of the Vietnam War and of the French students and workers grievances with the Gaullist regime. As Kristen Ross observes, the social movements of May 1968 were in an equal measure against American imperialism, capitalism and Gaullism<sup>80</sup>. The French critique of American imperialism at that moment was informed by a very specific third worldism that had a prehistory shaped by France's own colonial past and by the radical anti-colonialism of French and Francophone thinkers like Albert Memmi or Jacques Verges. Similarly in Germany, Vietnam aroused the fury of leftist students which criticized, at the same time American imperialism and the Federal Republic, while rioting against the National-Socialist past and its perceived successor embodied in American politics<sup>81</sup>. In the American imperialist tendencies, the '68ers saw the sins of their fathers and thus the predisposition for a new form of totalitarianism.

It is also noteworthy that much of the ardent activism of the left in Europe is owed to the United States. For the first time in history the impetus for the development of the left came primarily from the United States, anchored in the civil rights movement and the anti-war stance. The New Left cannot be imagined without the hippie counterculture of the 1960s. Both American and European waves of leftist activism are in debt to the work of Herbert Marcuse. Unlike his peers from the Institute of Social Research, Marcuse refused to return to Germany after the end of the war. Instead, he remained in America where, through his work at University of California in San Diego laid the first bricks in the process that transformed Marxism into a pop-phenomenon, making Leftism chic among American students. His plea for the sexualization of culture and the extrapolation of Marxist fetishization of the workers to other disfavored categories like women and blacks still makes the link between the peace movement and the human rights activists and

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<sup>80</sup>Kristin Ross. "The French Declaration of Independence" in Kristin Ross and Andrew Ross (eds.) *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press. 2004. p. 148

<sup>81</sup>Mary Nolan. "Anti-Americanization in Germany" in Kristin Ross and Andrew Ross. (eds.) *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press. 2004. p. 127

Marxism<sup>82</sup>. The ideas that shook the foundation of America were later exported to Europe through radio waves along with the music of Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin<sup>83</sup>. The 1960s did not mean only the popularization of socialism, but also the moment when the link between the American and European left movement became a reality. At that point, a leftist transatlantic bridge, that still functions – for example, refused by American journals and magazines because of his vocal anti-Americanism, Noam Chomsky's positions on US policies are published frequently in European newspapers with leftist inclination like Britain's *The Guardian* or *The Independent* – was built.

By the 1970s, the fears of the corrosive effect of American culture dissipated. Jean-Luc Goddard aptly called the generation of the 1960s “the children of Karl Marx and Coca-Cola”.<sup>84</sup> The students consumed American movies, American beverages, and American fast-food, listened to rock-n-roll music and watched *Dallas*. Especially in France, the impact of the media interest in the reformed '68 *gauchistes* reunited as *Nouvelles Philosophes* under the wand of Francois Furet, made anti-Americanism the most shameful stigmata<sup>85</sup>.

#### 2.2.4. War memories and the left

I have shown so far that the most salient drive behind European scorn for America was embodied by the Left, in its various representations. Members of the Left, beneficiaries of a strong intellectual support criticized American capitalism, and the subsequent consumerism in a Heideggerian tone, opposed strongly almost every American aggression and argued for global

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<sup>82</sup> For a critical reading of Marcuse's apprehension of Marxist thought, see Daniel Flynn's *Intellectual Morons. How Ideology Makes Smart People Fall for Stupid Ideas*. New York: Crown Forum. 2004. pp. 19-24

<sup>83</sup> Andrei Markovits. “The European and American Left since 1945”. *Dissent Magazine*. Winter 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Detlev Claussen. “Is There a New Anti-Americanism?” in Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne (eds.) *With Us or Against Us: Studies in Global Anti-Americanism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2005. p.78

<sup>85</sup> Kristin Ross. “The French Declaration of Independence” in Kristin Ross and Andrew Ross (eds.) *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press. 2004. p. 150

disarming, referring especially to the United States, the greatest custodian of nuclear weaponry. Nonetheless, American production and rationalization rejected by the inter-war Right found comfortable couching in Europe and by the 1970s most of the Left sympathizers got used to American mass-culture and signed a truce with capitalism while continuing to scrutinize its systemic failures. What remained was and still is the will for peace and the disdain for American militarism in almost all of its forms. What gives endurance to the issue are the different ways European countries on the one hand and the United States perceive the meaning of war<sup>86</sup>. For Western Europeans, the abhorrence of WWII is still vivid. Long after the rubble was cleared away, the experience of war and the subsequent psychological and emotional scars have shattered any romantic side of war. For the United States, the WWII was a victorious moment that had to be re-enacted. From this different perception of war stems the European projection of totalitarianism on an interventionist America. Nevertheless, although American and European perceptions of war are slightly different, that must not excuse the blatant tendency of the Left to set the calendars back in the 1930s and anachronistic projection of fascism and Nazism on a Western World that is dominated by democracy. As Jean-Francois Revel points out, “the Left never stops imagining dangers culled from the museums of history”<sup>87</sup>. Leon Wieseltier made a similar statement when he urged the hysterics that see in any criticism of Israel a step towards a new final solution to recall that Hitler is, by all means, dead and buried.<sup>88</sup> Projecting the past over the future, limits the predisposition of the Left to cope with the changes and challenges of historical developments.

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<sup>86</sup>Mary Nolan. “Anti-Americanization in Germany”. p.136

<sup>87</sup> Jean-Francois Revel. *Anti-Americanism*. p. 158.

<sup>88</sup> See Leon Wieseltier. “Hitler is Dead: Against the Ethnic Panic of American Jews”. *New Republic*. 27.05.2002.

## Chapter 3 – Opposing the Superpower: Anti-Americanism in the Aftermath of the Cold War

The revolutions of 1989 marked the end of the communist bloc and subsequently the victory of the American-led West in the Cold War. The outcome of the Cold War prompted many to joyously cheer: *finita la comedia*, while others expressed their belief in the disappearance of ideologies once the long-awaited end of history was reached. Such optimistic view proved to be far from reality. The collapse of the Soviet system did not only bring communism to an end, but forced a reconfiguration of the political and geographical coordinates of the entire continent more or less throwing Europe into the havoc of all-level identity crisis. The break-up of USSR ignited simmering ethnic conflicts and the veil of nationalist wars disturbed once again the peace of Europe. Within the confused context of the 1990s, Europe's dreams of recovering its lost power and position on the world stage, in parallel with developing a post-national identity strong enough to overcome the tribal nationalisms arisen in the 1990s became a new priority<sup>89</sup>. The first step was a reassessment of the partnership that bounded the West through a US-European mutual economic and military interest. At the same time the European Left lost a partner and a foe, both embodied by USSR. The post-1989 crisis of socialism in Europe was deepened in the early 1990s by the failure of the Left-wing governments, a phenomenon that found its peak during the Bettino Craxi scandal that shook Italy.<sup>90</sup>

Owen Harries already predicted in 1993<sup>91</sup> that the West as a political entity clearly defined against another entity embodied by the East was on the brink of extinction in the absence of a

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<sup>89</sup> Anthony Smith. "A Europe of Nations. Or the Nation of Europe?". *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 30. No. 2. (May, 1993). p. 133

<sup>90</sup> Perry Anderson and Patrick Camiller. *Mapping the West European Left*. London, New York: Verso. 1994. p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Owen Harries. "The Collapse of the West" in *Foreign Affairs*. 72. no. 4. 1993

mutual enemy to link the United States and a very critical Europe, after 1989 less in need of military protection. The first move in this direction was already made in 1991 when the Socialist president of France, Francois Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl, the Christian-Democrat chancellor of now unified Germany persuaded the members of the European Community to initiate talks on “Political Union” a concept that had at its core the idea of a common Foreign and Defense Policy, talks materialized in the Maastricht treaty<sup>92</sup>. At the same time, the process of reaffirming a new Western European international strategy prompted politicians and intellectuals to more or less distance themselves from American policies.

This state of affairs, combining the crisis of Europe with the crisis of the Left paralleled by an unalterable American economic and military hegemony made a resurgence of anti-American feelings imminent even for the most optimistic Euro-Atlanticists. Even so, the agents, tropes and motivations of anti-Americanism in post Cold War Europe were less clear. Anti-capitalist ideas have declined as the moderate Left had learnt to live with the victorious economic system and to disentangle the criticisms of capitalism from rejection of democracy whose benefits have become obvious in comparison to the communist one-party monopoly<sup>93</sup>. At the same time, the fear of nuclear war had become rather obsolete. In spite of these developments, America continued to be the target of European criticisms. Two reasons are at the base of the new stream of anti-Americanism: America's position and its behavior as the single global superpower and the way Europe's Leftist heritage copes with the new relation. Several scholars among whom Tony Judt and Stanley Hoffmann consider that the new wave of resentment for America represents the European response to the altered post-communist world and the place the United

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<sup>92</sup> Perry Anderson and Patrick Camiller. *Mapping the West European Left*. p. 86

<sup>93</sup> Sergio Fabbrini. “The Domestic Sources of Anti-Americanism”. *Government and Opposition*. Vol. 37. issue 1. January 2002. p. 6.

States claim within it<sup>94</sup>. In lesser words, recent anti-Americanism is bolstered by the American power and deeds and the reverie of a post-national Europe claiming its own share of global importance.

### **1. The 1990s: The Anti-American Overture**

The role of the United States in the liberation of Europe from the Soviet threat and the futility of Leftist opposition calmed down the critical voice of Europe and deflected attention to internal European issues. Nevertheless, there were several occasions when Europeans felt the need to distance themselves from American actions. Furthermore, the end of the decade witnessed a weak resurgence of the discourse that characterized the hostility of the Left for America in the post-war period. It is noteworthy that if in the post-WWII era the anti-American diapason was formed of France and Germany, seconded to some extent by Great Britain, in the 1990s France became the leading voice. It was the case of the first Gulf War when Europeans took to the streets in opposition to the American bombing of Iraq after its attack on Kuwait.<sup>95</sup> The Yugoslav crisis stimulated another quarrel in the West and the cause was mostly Europe's impotence of solving the problems in its own backyard. At that point, the initial American refusal to send in troops fueled Western European discontent. It was the same in 1999 when American-led NATO forces dropped bombs on Serbian targets to pressure Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo. This time, it was not the American apathy that triggered European criticism. The campaign in Kosovo was one of the first moments after the fall of the Soviet bloc when, besides the attack on American policies, European anti-Americanism challenged the American control

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<sup>94</sup>See Tony Judt. "Its Own Worst Enemy". *New York Review of Books*. 15 August 2002; Also Stanley Hoffmann. "The High and the Mighty: Bush's National Strategy and the New American Hubris". *American Prospect*. 14:1 (January 13, 2003)

<sup>95</sup>Patrick Deer. "Myths of British Anti-Americanism" in Kristen Ross and Andrew Ross (eds.). *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press. 2004. p. 169

over Europe. Regis Debray a former comrade of Che Guevara uttered the belief that Europe's complacency was the result of American mode of thinking jamming and taking over European rationality.<sup>96</sup> Another old-time French Leftist equated the NATO intervention with the actions of the murderous Belgrade regime in a *Le Monde* column published in the same day with the text signed by Debray. For Daniel Bensaid, "the barbarism of ethnic cleansing is not a barbarism of another age, opposed by the unified force of the absolute good of civilization; Milosevic and NATO are twin contemporary forms of modern barbarism".<sup>97</sup> It can be seen that some of the old discursive elements of the Cold War epoch have been resurrected in the intellectual environment. America as a threat to peace, the moral equivalence of the United States with the most inhuman regimes of the moment, and the American influence over the European spirit are tropes that can easily be spotted in the two *Le Monde* articles previously referred to. Nonetheless, in spite of occasional vociferations mostly coming from the media and from intellectuals, until 2002, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic struggled to keep their policy differences in check and succeeded, more or less in doing so.<sup>98</sup>

### 1.1. Anti-Globalists' American Problem

The lukewarm diplomatic relation was paralleled in the 1990s by a much different rhetoric employed by the newly emerged anti-globalist militant group. The critique of market globalization has become the predominant form of anti-capitalism in the post-communist epoch. The anti-globalization movement has reunited young anarchists, peace activists, third-worldists and nostalgic communists in a mimetic attempt to reiterate the spirit of the social movements of

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<sup>96</sup> See Regis Debray. "L'Europe somnambule" [Sleepwalking Europe]. *Le Monde*. 1 April 1999.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Bensaid. "Leur logique et la notre" [Their logic and ours]. *Le Monde*. 1 April 1999. Quoted and translated in James Ceaser. "The Philosophical Origins of Anti-Americanism in Europe" in Paul Hollander (ed.) *Understanding Anti-Americanism: Its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee. 2004. p. 61

<sup>98</sup> Coit D. Blacker. *U.S.-European Relations after Iraq: An American Perspective*. p. 2. Paper presented at a conference at The Renner Institute in Vienna on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/evnts/4805/U.S.-European\\_Relations\\_After\\_Iraq.pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/evnts/4805/U.S.-European_Relations_After_Iraq.pdf) (07.04.2008)

the 1960s in rejecting the expanding market liberalism that, according to Marxist thought, will breed poverty while concentrating profit and wealth in the hands of an oligarchic minority. The restless hostility of the anti-globalization movement is mainly directed to the United States that is perceived as the locomotive of a fervid, extending capitalism that demands a cruel expansion of the market over the interests of the people. As Russell Berman points out, the anti-globalization movement and its overt anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism and opposition to free economic trade has grown in the 1990s filling in the position of resistance to the free market vacated by the collapse of communism<sup>99</sup>. It is interesting to see that the anti-globalization movement has a truly global reach. Under these circumstances it becomes rather clear that the new radical militants only oppose the globalization of the market, while advocating for globalization without the market in favor of an “ideologically correct world government”<sup>100</sup>. At every major protest against globalization and free trade, be it in Genoa or Gothenburg, anti-American iconography is employed as the US conveniently plays the role of a global scapegoat<sup>101</sup>. However, the confused, rebellious manifestations of anti-globalists are relegated to the radical leftist fringes and their materialization – burnings of MacDonald's restaurants and stoning the windows of banks – are rather insignificant and ephemeral. The real opposition to America comes not from the ardent crowds led by Jose Bove and his ilk but from liberals and social-democrats based on more realistic criticism, primarily linked with the new American politics.

## **2. September 11: From Sympathy to Schadenfraude**

The terrorist attacks that took place in September 2001 prompted an initial wave of compassion from Europe to America. Moved by the tragic death of thousands of American

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<sup>99</sup>Russell A. Berman. 119

<sup>100</sup> Jean-Francois Revel. “Anti-Globalism = Anti-Americanism”. *The American Enterprise*. June 2004. p. 37

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 36

citizens even one of the most fervent critiques of American deeds and misdeeds, Jean-Marie Colombani of *Le Monde* entitled his column in the prestigious French daily “We all Americans”<sup>102</sup>. A feeling of solidarity and sympathy with the American people was present in most of the reports following the 9/11 attacks. “Solidarity with America” was on the first page of *Svenska Dagbladet*, while *Corriere della Sera* proclaimed the volatilization of any distance from the United States. *El Pais* printed that “the first act of hyper-terrorism has affected us all”, thus, to some extent, it perceives the threat to be not directed only against the US but to the “West”.

Beyond the veneer of compassion, fear of American retaliation was the underlying leitmotiv, resembling the mistrust of the anti-nuclear movements in the political maturity of America. *Le Nouvel Observateur* feared that the attacks might lead to an isolated U.S. and a fragmented world. The issue of retaliation was also stressed in the European press. *El Pais* points out that “we must be prepared for a strong response” but, in the same time it calls for “calm” and trusts the capacity of America to respond with “methods that reflect the values of democracy”<sup>103</sup>. The *Independent* also recommended the US to refrain from violent, irrational retaliation. “Restrain has to be the watchword”, *The Independent* writes. The futility of a missile shield, a debate that is ongoing still, with the strong dissent of Europe, is also tackled by several European newspapers. “No missile defense would have safeguarded Bush” writes *Copenhagen's Information*, implying that Bush's politics in the Middle East are one of the causes of the ferocious attack on New York. Striking a similar note, *El Mundo* shows that “the threat to the USA and the western world doesn't come from intercontinental missiles” while *La Stampa* argues that “the nuclear bomb is of no use – and nor is the anti-missile shield”. *The Guardian's*

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<sup>102</sup> Jean-Marie Colombani. “Nous sommes tous Americains”. [We are all Americans]. *Le Monde*. 19 September 2001. Colombani's title is a paraphrase after a line in John Fitzgerald Kennedy's speech in front of the Berlin Wall in 1962: Ich bin ein Berliner[I am a Berliner].

<sup>103</sup>The source of the following quotes is the review of the European press coverage of 9/11 released by BBC News on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1539168.stm> (07.04.2008)

perspective is circumscribed to the same path: “national missile defense is no defense” against an attack on the “symbols of oppression”.

As it becomes obvious from the previous examples, the European press, besides the logical display of human compassion, had its attention on other issues as well. The ineffectiveness of any defense system against a force that strikes anonymously, as well as the fear for a violent reaction of the United States to the sneak attack held the agenda of the European leftist press even in the day following Al-Qaeda's use of civilian planes to topple Lower Manhattan.

The veneer of solidarity quickly dissolved in the weeks following the attacks. Even in the famous above mentioned article of, Jean-Marie Colombani considered the cynicism of the US as an explanation for the attacks. Another commentator of *Le Monde* sees the situation in the same tones: “Today I do not feel in the least American. On the contrary, I am confirmed in all my reasons for condemning a world which aligns itself with a catastrophic president”<sup>104</sup>. Interestingly enough *les extremes se touchent* on this topic. The opinion articulated mainly in the Leftist press found congruence with the opinion of extreme Right-wing French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen: “One cannot conduct a policy of power which is arrogant and sometimes criminal without incurring inexpiable hatred”<sup>105</sup>.

Although *Le Monde* was the engine of the device throwing the guilt on America, other publications are close to this line of thinking. The theme of provocative foreign policies also appears in *The Guardian*: “The reality is that America foreign policy and its military policy was bound to provoke the kinds of terrorism which we have just witnessed”<sup>106</sup>, and even in the *London Review of Books*: “However tactfully you dress it up, the United States had it

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<sup>104</sup>*Le Monde*. 19 September 2001

<sup>105</sup>*Le Monde*. 16-17 September 2001

<sup>106</sup>*The Guardian*. 18 September 2001.

coming”<sup>107</sup>. It had become clear that, for many Europeans, America did it to itself. It was full retribution for Dresden and Vietnam, for the massacre of native-Americans and for Korea, for globalization and the bombing of Serbia. Nonetheless, for many, the enormous number of victims was not enough for a full payback. It was the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk who dismissed the 9/11 tragedy as a “barely noticeable, minor accident” in comparison to the “catastrophe landscape” of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for what America bears its own guilt<sup>108</sup>.

Similar tropes were employed in the discourse of several intellectuals, especially French. Perhaps the most scathing opinion is the one of Jean Baudrillard, the most fervent critique of consumerism, and the author of a not-so-laudatory book on America<sup>109</sup> (to put it mildly). Baudrillard rejoices at violence against America. He considers that America is “committing suicide in a blaze of glory” because it was America which, by its “unbearable power, has fomented all this violence which is endemic throughout the world”. Baudrillard's resentment for America becomes manifest: “Everyone without exception has dreamt of this it – because no one can avoid dreaming of the destruction of any power that has become hegemonic to this degree [...] at a pinch, we can say that they did it, but we wished for it”.<sup>110</sup> The 9/11 attacks marked a burst of anti-American publications. The most revelatory example, also coming from the French sphere – labeled by many as an anti-American nest – is the bestselling book by Thierry Meyssan suggestively entitled *11 septembre: L'Effroyable Imposture [9/11 The Big Lie]*. In a rhetoric comparable with the argumentation of Holocaust deniers this book, gives the full measure of the reach of paranoid suspicion regarding America by advancing the hypothesis that 9/11 never took

<sup>107</sup>Mary Beard. “11 September”. *London Review of Books*. 4. October 2001

<sup>108</sup>Quoted in Russell Berman. p. 45

<sup>109</sup>Jean Baudrillard. *Amérique*. Paris: B. Gasset. 1986.

<sup>110</sup>Jean Baudrillard. “L'esprit du terrorisme”. *Le Monde*. November 2001. The article was translated and, along with the transcript of a talk given at New York University was published in English. Jean Baudrillard. *The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers*. London, New York: Verso. 2002.

place. It was just a masquerade, a hoax perpetrated by the American defense system to advance its own pettily interests, a scheme planned by the government to ensure a green card for future imperial actions.<sup>111</sup> Such proofs of anti-American paranoia have nonetheless appeared outside France. Although not in the same tone and degree of aberration as Meyssan's, British authors Ziauddin Sardar, and Meryll Davies argues that America and its actions all over the is to blame for its own fate<sup>112</sup>. Even in the United States, William Blum's<sup>113</sup> book preceded the arguments made famous by left-wing cinematographer Michael Moore by maintaining America's position as the true global terrorist.

Michigan University professor Andrei S. Markovits introduced the concept of Schadenfraude in order to explain the burst of anti-American feelings in the aftermath of the first truly grand blow received by Mr. Big on its own territory. Schadenfraude, the satisfaction felt at someone else's misfortune is according to Markovits especially fulfilling when the victim is the giant, in this case embodied by the *hyperpuissant* America. Thus, the crude manifestations of anti-Americanism in the wake of the biggest catastrophe America went through cannot be explained only through scarce references to foreign policy but through the way people perceive the powerful. As Soeren Kern observes, "it's about power, not policy".<sup>114</sup>

### **3. Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: Prejudice Reloaded?**

The rising level of European anti-Americanism combined with the declaration of the Al-Aqsa Intifada after the rejection of the Camp David agreement by Yasser Arafat and the subsequent Israeli incursion into the West Bank has led to the opening of a front of the war

<sup>111</sup> See Tony Judt. "Anti-Americanism Abroad" in *The New York Review of Books*. Volume 50. No. 7. 1 May 2003.

<sup>112</sup> Sardar, Ziauddin and Meryll Davies. *Why do People Hate America*. Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd.2004

<sup>113</sup> William Blum *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Monroe: Common Courage Press. 2003

<sup>114</sup> Soeren Kern. "Europe's Anti-Americanism: It's About Power, Not Policy". *The Brussels Journal*. 21 December 2007.

against Israel on European ground. In Great Britain, Germany or Belgium attacks on Jewish property and synagogues were increasingly reported from 2002 on<sup>115</sup>. Indeed, as reports showed, in most of the cases, perpetrators were young Arab immigrants. Although there are no reasons for us to doubt the *bona fides* of European governments, it is obvious that Europe has become less of a safe place for its Jews.

This state of affairs prompted many scholars to believe in the equivalence of anti-Americanism with anti-Semitism. Andrei Markovits backs up the thesis according to which anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are bonded together and it's practically impossible for them to be disentangled. To Andrei Markovits, the two ideologies are "inextricably intertwined" as anti-Semitism is a "constitutive companion" to anti-Americanism.<sup>116</sup> In another essay published more recently, the Ann Arbor professor sketches his ideas in harsher lines to conclude that anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are "twin brothers"<sup>117</sup>. On a similar position, Josef Joffe argues that the "new anti-Semitism" is basically the product of hostility towards both America and Israel<sup>118</sup>. Hence, in a very confusing manner, the German scholar throws several concepts into a crucible to mold a novel term that is neither anti-Americanism, nor anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism, but a hybrid "new anti-Semitism".<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, such vision benefits from a very important kernel of truth. To contest the fact that

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<sup>115</sup> See Alvin H. Rosenfeld. *Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: A New Frontier of Bigotry*. <http://hiram7.wordpress.com/2007/08/26/anti-americanism-and-anti-semitism-a-new-frontier-of-bigotry/>. (06.04.2008) p. 3

<sup>116</sup> Andrei S. Markovits. *European Anti-Americanism (and Anti-Semitism) Ever Present Though Always Denied*. Center for European Studies. Working Paper Series. #108. <http://www.ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/Markovits.pdf> (12.04.2008) p. 12.

<sup>117</sup> Andrei Markovits. "Twin Brothers: European Anti-Semitism and Anti-Americanism" in *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Post Holocaust and Anti-Semitism: Web Publications*. No. 8. January 2006. <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-markovits-06.htm> (09.04.2008)

<sup>118</sup> Josef Joffe. "The Demons of Europe". *Commentary*. 118. No. 1. (January 2004). p. 29

<sup>119</sup> "New anti-Semitism" is not a creation of Joffe. The term was used by several other writers, among them Robert Wistrich and Yehuda Bauer, to define the fade away of the post-Holocaust Schonzeit. Nonetheless, Joffe's explanation is an epitome for the lack of clarity it renders.

America, the Jews and Israel are constantly bracketed together - and often collectively subjected to scorn and vilification - would be a proof of blindness in front of vivid evidence. The perception that America was enslaved by Jewish domination, particularly popular in Bolshevik Russia and Nazi Germany is still present on the map of some peoples' mental projection even nowadays. For many people, like for Polly Toynbee, the granddaughter of the famous British historian Arnold Toynbee, "ugly Israel is the Middle East representative of ugly America"<sup>120</sup>. George Bush and Ariel Sharon were often portrayed, on the banners of anti-globalization protesters and in some of the European newspapers as epitomes of evil, icons of perfervid capitalism, savage warmongers oppressing the weak. The terminology used when referring to the two presidents is strikingly similar. "Warmonger", "arsonist", "political pyromaniac" are just a few of the epithets George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon especially are "blessed" with. When it comes to Western Europe – the criticisms of the Left collaterally get to Israel and the Jews when deflected from hostility toward Uncle Sam.

### **3.1. Is Anti-Zionism anti-Semitism?**

The most nominated nexus of hatred for America and for the Jews has Israel as a cohesive element. The logic employed for such a conclusion is very simple, and Brian Klug sketches it perfectly. Anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are inseparable because hostility to America is inseparable from hostility to Israel and Zionism and hostility to Israel and Zionism represents a new form of anti-Semitism.<sup>121</sup> The iconography used by anti-war protesters often equates Bush with Sharon – sometimes in the form "Busharon" - and both of them with Hitler. Allegations that American foreign policy is determined by Jewish interests are not new. The way the cooperation

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<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Alvin H. Rosenfeld. *Anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism: A New Frontier of Bigotry*. p.7

<sup>121</sup> Brian Klug. "A Plea for Distinctions – Disentangling Anti-Americanism from Anti-Semitism" in Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson (eds.). *The Anti-American Century*. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press. 2007. p. 140

of America and Israel is perceived by many minds is especially interesting. Either Israel is seen as an outpost in the Middle East for American imperialist interests, either a Jewish camarilla – a chimerical belief strengthened by the fact that Jewish-Americans like Alan Greenspan or Paul Wolfowitz hold high rank positions in the US administration - is supposed to hold in sway the American war machine to secure Israel's interests. Nonetheless, a clear link between dislike, even hatred for America and anti-Semitic feelings has not been fully established. As in the literature the relation between anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism is rendered via Israel and Zionism, the pivotal question is whether disliking Israel means hating the Jews as a group. Is anti-Zionism anti-Semitism?

First of all, a distinction between Israel and Jewry should be made here. Although there is definitely a strong emotional bond between Jewish people and the state of Israel, there also is a form of dichotomy between Israeli and Jewish identity. To perceive the two terms as synonyms, would entail despoiling the Jews that have no feelings of loyalty for Israel and from anti-Zionists of their Jewishness. Opposition to Zionism was not invented by Europeans or by the leftists. On the contrary, it was the rabbinical orthodox Jews who first rejected the return to Palestine and saw the political movement as a sacrilege. It is also true that after the establishment of the Jewish state, the denial of its right to exist was generally uttered by the Left. Does this make the whole socialist movement anti-Semitic? I strongly doubt that. You do not have to be an anti-Semite to reject the belief that Jews constitute a separate nation in the modern sense of the word or that Israel is the Jewish nation state. One can deny the right to exist of Kosovo, and such an attitude would hardly impose the label of anti-Kosovar, or Albanian hater. Neither would one be entitled to maintain that such an assertion would mean an existential denial of the Albanians to right to live as a collectivity. Other critiques can challenge the ethnic construction that is at the base of Israel. Other die-hard leftists might see the very establishment of an ethnic Jewish national state

on a land that was previously inhabited by another population as artificial, illegal or immoral and label it as modern colonialism, a favorite trope of the leftist discourse. Being pro-Palestinian does not *eo ipso* make one anti-Semitic, in the same way as supporting the cause of Tibet does not imply hate for China and the Chinese people. All the possible persuasions and beliefs mentioned above might have anti-Semitic underpinnings. Or not.

My general argument is in favor of a more prudent, balanced and complex perspective when dealing with such delicate issues. Timothy Garton Ash explained the danger of relentlessly distributing the anti-Semitic stigmata by imagining a vicious circle. Europeans get infuriated by the way criticisms of Israel and America are labeled anti-Semitic, and react by talking about the power of the Jewish lobby. This confirms the suspicions of European anti-Semitism, and the cycle starts again, often on a more radical tone<sup>122</sup>.

#### **4. American Hegemony in the European Context**

The peak of anti-American manifestations in Europe is linked with George W. Bush's mandate at the White House. However, the disdain for America precedes the man and the moment; it is as old as the United States itself, if not older. In a column published in 1998, thus preceding George W. Bush's accession to power, Jean-Marie Colombani defined some of the main elements of French and European resentment for America: America's claim to a monopoly in the new international order, the American foreign policy influenced by different groups of interests and the American unilateralism and use of force instead of negotiation and cooperation with the international community and institutions<sup>123</sup>.

The latter grievance, regarding American unilateralism and its reluctance to concede any

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<sup>122</sup> Timothy Garton. Ash. "The New Anti-Europeanism in America" in Tod Lindberg(ed.) *Beyond Paradise and Power. Europe, America and the Future of a Troubled Partnership*. New York: Routledge. 2004. p. 132

<sup>123</sup> Jean-Marie Colombani. "Arrogances américains" [American arrogances]. *Le Monde*. 26 February. 1998.

fraction of its sovereignty to organisms of international governance, has become the most salient feature of what Russell Berman calls post-democratic anti-Americanism<sup>124</sup>. The specificities of the French distaste for America as enounced by Colombani, have gained a European dimension because of the American rejection of multilateral efforts the European Union was supporting. The United States opposed the land mine treaty in 1977. It fortuitously withdrew from the Kyoto protocol on global warming, from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the test ban treaty and demands exemption for American nationals from indictment in front of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, it has repeatedly ignored the European pleas for a rapid movement towards a fair two-state solution regarding the Palestinian question<sup>125</sup>. Furthermore, the National Security Strategy of 2002 that reiterated commitment to unilateralism and the White House determination to secure American hegemony did nothing more than to reinforce the European anxieties: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling the power of the United States”<sup>126</sup>. In lesser words, Europe is postnational and it fears American nationalism; it is postimperialist and it is disturbed by the new American imperialist tendencies.

To sum up, the latest wave of European anti-Americanism mirrored by the correlative, less virulent American anti-Europeanism is less the result of prejudice and resentment. The Iraqi crisis that widened the transatlantic Atlantic rift must be regarded in the context of the cumulative build-up of grievances especially of the European side strongly related to the America’s claimed position as a global hegemony.

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<sup>124</sup> Russell Berman. p. 30

<sup>125</sup> Mary Nolan. *Anti-Americanization in Germany* p. 128

<sup>126</sup> National Security Strategy released by the White House on 17 September 2002

## Chapter 4 –Anti-Americanism in Post-History: Qui Bono?

Hannah Arendt, in her essay *The Threat of Conformism* published in 1954 cautioned about a possibility of a rise in anti-Americanism correlated with the unification of Europe and the pursuit for pan-Europeanism.<sup>127</sup> The issue that troubled Arendt is still valid. The predominance and growing resentment for America all over Europe led to the transmutation of the debate about anti-Americanism in a pan-European framework and anti-Americanism became a tool for inducing commitment for the political construction of Europe, or in the words of Jan Ross, the base for “Euro-Nationalism”<sup>128</sup>. Within the following pages, I will discuss the way left-wing European intellectuals led by German philosopher Jurgen Habermas attempted to exploit the wide spread discontent with the United States policy in the Middle East and its military action in Iraq in order to push for a stronger political and cultural cohesion of the European Union.

### **1. European Divergences over Iraq**

The Iraq crisis marked the peak of the soft diplomatic conflict between Western European countries and the United States. For the first time, European leaders decided to go on with an overt opposition to America's intentions regarding an invasion of Iraq. Germany's Gerhard Schroeder and France's Jacques Chirac led the coalition opposing the UN endorsement of American military operations in Iraq and threatened to use their veto for it. The same Gerhard Schroeder, driven by a combination of principle and opportunism, made use of the anti-American feeling in Germany<sup>129</sup> and, by overtly invoking his opposition to the “American conditions”, he

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<sup>127</sup>Cf. Volker Berghahn. p. 94

<sup>128</sup>Jan Ross. “The Ghosts of the Chocolate Summit”. in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. New York, London: Verso. 2005. p. 69

<sup>129</sup> According to a PEW survey, in the context of the war in Iraq, in Germany, American popularity dropped from

managed to secure his second mandate of chancellor. But the Iraq crisis has revealed not only a trans-Atlantic rift, wide cleavages inside Europe itself both within the European Union and between Western Europe and post-communist countries.

There are several contextual circumstances that need to be noted in order to understand the motives behind the intellectuals' debate about a non-American definition of Europe. First off all, on an external dimension, the United States pursued the campaign in Iraq in spite of the Franco-German opposition in front of the UN. For many European intellectuals, this highlighted both the futility of the UN and the powerlessness of Europe when facing American determination to act. On the other hand, there was the perceived betrayal of European countries that endorsed Bush's action against Saddam. The divergences over the war in Iraq have proven the weakness of the ties between European countries. The division was vivid not only between New and Old Europe, to use Donald Rumsfeld's terminology separating post-communist countries from the Western ones, but also within Old Europe itself, due to the treachery of the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Denmark, that, in Habermas' view, had sworn “an oath of loyalty to Bush”<sup>130</sup> behind the backs of their European allies. Under these circumstances, for many the future unity of the European Union was rather. Gianni Vattimo expressed his fear that the new wave of accession would lead to a wider EU, but “a more diluted Europe”, both culturally and institutionally<sup>131</sup>. Such a dilution of Europe could have been threatening to the enactment of the European constitution project that is, to Habermas, a mere formality: “The future constitution

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61% in 2002 to a mere 45% in 2003. The survey also shows that positive feelings and support for America decreased not only among the Germans but also in France, Great Britain and Spain. See: [www.pewglobal.org/commentary/images/1019-3](http://www.pewglobal.org/commentary/images/1019-3) (08.04.2008)

<sup>130</sup> Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida. “February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together: Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in Core Europe”. in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. New York, London: Verso. 2005. p. 4

<sup>131</sup> Gianni Vattimo. “The European Union Faces the Major Points of Its Development” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. New York, London: Verso. 2005. p. 28.

will grant us a foreign minister”. Taking into consideration the above mentioned circumstances, the Habermas/Derrida initiative can be seen as an act of retribution against the ill-behaving European countries and as an act of electoral “propaganda” for the adoption of the constitutional project.

## **2. Core Europe and Euro-Nationalism**

Besides the political opposition of France and Germany, the Iraq moment was welcomed in Europe by a wave of mass protests. It was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2003 when people all over Europe took to the streets to manifest against the imminent invasion of Iraq, in the largest mass demonstration after 1945. The moment indeed represented a novelty, an awesome moment because, as Andrei Markovits noticed, the war in Iraq has tied the knots between the European elites and the masses, and it was for the first time when the two visions of America reached congruence<sup>132</sup>. For some, the day of the largest anti-war manifestation had more profound meanings. The Socialist politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn considered the day a symbolic birth, the public birth of a Europe that rejects war and longs instead for unity.<sup>133</sup> In May 2003, under the “supervision” of Jurgen Habermas, several intellectuals<sup>134</sup> joined the debate on Europe's position pertaining to the United States, and subscribed to the same stream of consciousness.

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<sup>132</sup> Andrei Markovits. Andrei S. Markovits. *European Anti-Americanism (and Anti-Semitism) Ever Present Though Always Denied*. Harvard Center for European Studies. Working Paper Series. #108. p. 5  
<http://www.ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/Markovits.pdf> (12.04.2008)

<sup>133</sup> Dominique Strauss-Kahn. “Une nation est née” [A nation is born]. *Le Monde*, Paris, 26.02.2003. The message the Socialist politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn read on the lips of the anti-war protesters was “make union, not war”, a perspective sternly affected by wishful thinking. Strauss-Kahn failed to take into consideration that the anti-globalization movement, which originated the global (sic!) protests against Iraq have a pretty strong position against both United States and Europe.

<sup>134</sup> The intellectuals that joined originally joined the debate were: Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida in *La Liberation* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Umberto Eco in *La Repubblica*, Gianni Vattimo in *La Stampa*, Fernando Savater in *El Pais*, Adolf Muschg in *Neue Züricher Zeitung* and Richard Rorty in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. All the articles published by the Habermas initiative, and the most important responses were translated and published in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005. The following references come from this collection of sources.

Again, the pretext was found in the epiphany of the simultaneous February anti-war protests that, for Jurgen Habermas, meant the emergence of the European public sphere.<sup>135</sup> The debate was set in a large European field as it involved intellectuals from both Western European and Eastern European sphere and it was hosted in the feuilleton sections of several leading European newspapers.

In their cosigned article published in Germany and France, Habermas and Jacques Derrida<sup>136</sup> suggest that a “core Europe” formed from France, Germany, Benelux countries and Italy should act as a “locomotive for a common foreign policy, common security policy and defense policies”. Unsurprisingly, the United Kingdom, a traditional ally of the United States is subjected to exclusion from the avant-garde coalition destined to open the way for the federalization of Europe. To the Habermas/Derrida couple, one main scope of the solidified Europe they envisage would be to “throw its weight on the scales to counterbalance the hegemonic unilateralism of the US” in the framework of the United Nations.

The Habermas/Derrida manifesto can easily be translated into the language of nationalism and nation-building. The building of the trans-national federal Europe imagined by Habermas consists of three stages that represent a transmutation of nation-building into supra-national building. Habermas employs in his idea on the construction of the supra-national entity the mechanisms of a two-speed Europe: first, the coagulation of the “core”; later the integration of the backward countries.

The first phase consists in the selection of the countries that can play the role of a European capital defined through historical, cultural and bureaucratic criteria that would play the role of a

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<sup>135</sup> Drawing on the previous work of Jurgen Habermas, the “public sphere” should be understood as “the sphere of private people come together as a public”. See Jurgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 1989. p.27.

<sup>136</sup> Ironically enough, America indeed seems to be a putative uniting factor if its approach on international relations led to an unprecedented cooperation between “the last philosopher of the Enlightenment” and the “father of deconstructivism”, who spent most of their time bickering about philosophical matters.

“core ethnies”. Anthony D. Smith defines the concept of “core ethnies” as the cultural and institutional minority on the myths and memories, symbols and values of which the modern Western nations were built.<sup>137</sup> Habermas argues that France, Germany, Italy and Benelux are the only ones able to endorse Europe and to provide “certain qualities of a state”. In addition to Habermas’ institutional criteria, German left-wing historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler draws the boundaries of Europe more or less on the borders of the former Soviet Union, thus providing the cultural criteria on which the members of the core Europe should be elected. The reasons behind Wehler's rejection of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Turkey are related to their historical and cultural background:

“They do not live off the legacy of the Judaic, Greek or Roman antiquity that is present in Europe to this day. They have not fought their way through the far-reaching separation of state and church, and have even returned, as they did after the Bolshevist or Kemalist intermezzo, to a symbiotic relationship between the two. They have not experienced any reformation and more importantly, hardly any <<Enlightenment>>. They have produced no European bourgeoisie, no autonomous European bourgeois cities<sup>138</sup>, no European nobility and no European peasantry. They have not participated in the greatest achievement of European political culture since the later 19<sup>th</sup> century: the construction of the social welfare state”<sup>139</sup>

Secondly, for “core Europe” to become the catalyst of Europe-the-nation, the members must first seek their commonalities and overcome the differences that separate them. The role of the United States becomes clear within this context. The intra-core awareness and cohesion must be increased by contrasting “core Europe” with the United States. In this sense, Habermas clearly designates six criteria that designate the United States as the negative “other”. First of all there is a difference regarding religiosity and secularism, because “for us, a president who opens his daily business with public prayer and associates his significant political decisions with a divine mission

<sup>137</sup> See Anthony D. Smith. “A Europe of Nations. Or the Nation of Europe?” in *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 30. No. 2. (May, 1993). p.130

<sup>138</sup> It is rather interesting to observe the price Ulrich places on the European bourgeoisie, a bit peculiar for a scholar that was mainly influenced in his thinking by Karl Marx. See Roderick Mclean. *Royalty and Diplomacy in Europe, 1890-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. p.6

<sup>139</sup> Hans Ulrich Wehler. “Let the United States be Strong! Europe Remains a Mid-size Power: A Response to Jurgen Habermas” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005 p. 121

is hard to imagine”. Secondly, there is the European belief in capitalism with a human face, which is sustained by the formative role of state intervention in order to correct the failures of the market. Then there is a political equilibrium emerged from a party system encompassing conservatives, socialists and liberals which confronts the “sociopathological result of capitalist modernization”. Fourthly, the moral sensibility of a Europe where there is no capital punishment and a strict gun control. In addition, Europe has an ethos of solidarity that demands more social justice originating from the legacy of its labor movements and Christian-social tradition, against the American individualism that “accepts crass social inequalities” and Europe's ability to overcome its warlike past and engage into supra-national cooperation now carrying “the Kantian hope of a world domestic policy”. In this context, America plays the role of the negative other against whom core Europe must stand.

The differentiation pattern advocated by Habermas was adopted by other highbrow intellectuals that have joined the debate: Umberto Eco, Adolf Muschg, Fernando Savater. For Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo it is essential that “Europe's DNA contains a gene of socialism” unlike the United States' and “this difference will become the inspiring principle for a political system able to bestow on Europe the dignity and significance it deserves in world politics”.<sup>140</sup> Vattimo expresses the thorniest issue: at the end of the day, if Europe is better than the US due to its socialist legacy. A close look at the text composed by Habermas, the impression becomes clear. The advocated differences between the US and Europe are primarily a result of the Leftist alteration of capitalism and the social systems primarily enforced in Germany and France.

In the third stage the skeptical members of the EU and for Central and Eastern European

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<sup>140</sup>Gianni Vattimo. “The European Union Faces the Major Points of Its Development” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005. p. 33

states once they come to their senses and fully embrace the values and principles of the core Europe can join the federation.

### **3. Dissenting Europe: The Left against the Rest**

The Habermas/Derrida statement was by no means completely accepted in intellectual circles, and the dissent came from practically everywhere. Criticisms challenged both the form and the content of the idea, against the anti-American dressing of the plea as well as against the cultural limitation imposed on the non-core European countries. As a matter of fact, what was imagined to be a plea for a coagulated Europe ended up creating greater cleavages: between the Right and the Left, between North and South, between the countries in the West and Central and Eastern countries, between *philo-* and *anti-*Americans and between Euro-enthusiasts and Euro-skeptics. In lesser words, the outcome of the initiative was to side a crop of Leftist intellectuals against everybody else.

For example, Scandinavian expert Aldo Keel promptly uttered the Scandinavian skepticism regarding the European Union, as well as the fact that “America lies closer to the heart for many Scandinavians than Europe”<sup>141</sup>. The conservatives expressed their own stern opinion on core Europe and the non-American definition imagined by the initial group of leftist thinkers. Gianni Riotta, editor of Italy's Right-oriented daily, *Corriere della Sera*, contested not only the cultural differentiation but also the purported European superiority, affirming the exact contrary<sup>142</sup>. The harshest criticism came from Jan Ross who ironically labeled the core European coalition as a “chocolate summit: a cranky post-war alliance between France, Germany, Belgium

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<sup>141</sup>Aldo Keel. “The View From Up Top: Core Europe from the Scandinavian Perspective” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005 p.80-81

<sup>142</sup>Gianni Riotta. “Europeans, Americans, and the Exception of France” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005 “Europeans, Americans and the Exception of France”. pp. 65-66

and Luxembourg”. Jan Ross went even further and – not without reason as I have shown in the previous section- accused Habermas of “Euro-nationalism” while labeling the debates about the construction of Europe against US as parts of “the developmental dynamic of [Euro] nationalism.”<sup>143</sup> In a similar tone, in his response to Habermas and Wehler, Johannes Willms rejects the proposed historical criteria that would decide who's in and who's not.<sup>144</sup>

### 3.1. The New Dissidence in the East

Offended by their exclusion, intellectuals from “New Europe” reacted at their own turn against the leftist-nationalist prescription for Europe. In a forever insulted Eastern-European way, Hungarian writer Peter Eszterhazy read into the concept of “core Europe” a distinction between first and second class EU members<sup>145</sup>. Ironically, Andrzej Stasiuk talks about the fear traditionalist Old Europe that “might be shaken by the hordes of people coming from Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe and by their habits”<sup>146</sup>. But the most important issue is drawn by Polish journalist Adam Krzeminski who explains why Europe is not trusted very much in Poland by raising the question of defense<sup>147</sup>. Making a parallel with the mentor of the cosmopolitan valences of Habermas' Europe who did not take any position against the third partition of Poland in 1795 he implicitly asks: why should Poland put its trust in a Europe always

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<sup>143</sup>Jan Ross. “The Ghosts of the Chocolate Summit” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. New York, London: Verso. 2005. p. 69

<sup>144</sup>Johannes Willms. “At the Flea Market: Europe's Refusal to be Defined by its Antiquities” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. New York, London: Verso. 2005. p. 133-136

<sup>145</sup>Peter Eszterhazy. “How Big is the European Dwarf?” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005. p. 74

<sup>146</sup>Andrzej Stasiuk. “Wild, Cunning, Exotic: The East Will Completely Shake Up Europe” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005 p. 103

<sup>147</sup>Adam Krzeminski. “First Kant, Now Habermas: A Polish Perspective on <<Core Europe>>” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005. p. 149-150

reticent in acting against Russia?

If the refutation of the arguments held up at unison by Habermas, Derrida, Vattimo or Wehler coming from the right wing can be easily explained in terms of Euro-skepticism and national pride and the Scandinavian opposition to core Europe and the rejection of negative parallelism pertaining to America stems from the different type of social-democracy that has developed in the Northern countries, the reluctance of Central and Eastern European intellectuals to join the anti-American game is more problematic. Although deference towards the EU might have been expected, due to the economic attraction it exerts, the dissidence proved to be very strong. The roots should be searched for in the historical developments of the relation of Central and Eastern countries with the US and Western Europe.

The separation between New and Old Europe, a new division between the West and the East is caused by the obvious divergence of views when it comes to criticizing America. While the Western European intellectuals had fallen for the seductive charm of anti-Americanism, their counterparts in Eastern Europe maintained a more reserved position on this matter. In 1992, Paul Hollander took into consideration the possibility of emerging anti-American attitudes following the sweeping political changes that have occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The cause invoked by the American sociologist was the impossibility of American cultural and economic penetration to solve the grave problems of the economies deeply marked by communist policies.<sup>148</sup> The unfolding of post Cold War history has proven Hollander wrong. The Americanization of Poland, Hungary, Romania other countries liberated from the Iron Curtain yoke did not boomerang in anti-American attitudes. The above mentioned cases of anti-anti-Americanism among intellectuals of Poland and Hungary testify to this. The reluctance of Central

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<sup>148</sup> Paul Hollander. "Western Europe" in Paul Hollander (ed.). *Understanding Anti-Americanism: its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee. 2004. p. 368.

and Eastern Europe to the political opposition and systemic differentiation of “core Europe” from America is rooted in the role of the United States as a liberator. America was admired and awaited to heroically banish the communists. For the Poles and Hungarians, it was Ronald Reagan’s confrontational stance than the West European concentration on détente and Ostpolitik that led to the demise of communist USSR. For the Franco-German condominium, the American presence in Europe was perceived as a threat. In the East, the American presence in Western Europe was seen as a preparatory step towards the liberation from the USSR influence. The East Europeans were indeed often critical of America, but the reasons were different. It was the insufficiency of American will to confront the Soviet Union and the hesitation in taking a clear stance in global politics that brought discontent. Nonetheless, the liberators ardently awaited were always “the Americans”, while the United States was constantly associated with “the West” and NATO.<sup>149</sup>

On the other hand, Western Europe lacks credibility in front of the East. In the claws of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe looked at the civilized West for support. The lack of Western European reaction when Soviet tanks invaded Hungary in 1956 corroborated twelve years later with the apathy neighboring cynical approval of the 1968 actions conducted by Kremlin in Czechoslovakia had as result the Eastern disillusion in Western Europe’s willingness and even capacity to act as savior of Europe.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, the impotence of the big Western European countries to ensure security contributed to the general mistrust in Europe’s capabilities. It was not France or Germany, but the American-led NATO forces that intervened and stopped the

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<sup>149</sup> Ivan Krastev. “The Anti-American Century?” in Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson. *The Anti-American Century*. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press. 2007. p. 18

<sup>150</sup> Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller. *Eastern Left, Western Left: Totalitarianism, Freedom and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1987. p. 179-180

bloodshed in Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>151</sup>

It is obvious that a definition of Europe against America is not very popular outside a Left leaning Franco-Italo-German condominium. The idea of Habermas, endorsed by other thinkers committed to socialism was refuted by most of the intellectuals that have written on this topic. Besides the clear arguments against what is correctly perceived as an attempt to “other” America for the sake of European construction, Habermas’ plea suffers from another major shortcoming. The United States is the greatest global actor, and it will keep this position for some time. Under these circumstances a Europe constructed on constant opposition to America can have negative effects on Europe itself. On the other hand, a convenience alliance with totalitarian China and recovering Russia to oppose American global policies would betray the very Europeanness based on peace and democracy Habermas envisions. First of all, many of the values employed by Habermas are not strictly European. On the contrary, as Jurgen Kaube notes, “to catalogue social justice as an exclusively European idea would be a case of continental self-righteousness”<sup>152</sup>. Furthermore, the very elements that allegedly perform the separation from America are flawed. Indeed, Americans, as an aggregate are more religious than Europeans. Nevertheless, the church and religion still play a salient role in European countries like Ireland, Spain or Poland. And yes, it is true that the United States still practice the inhumane capital punishment. But the existence of the death penalty in some states does not make America less of a democracy. Given the circumstances, it is rather hard to state whether Europe or America is better. The common sense conclusion is drawn by Timothy Garton Ash: “America and most of the diverse countries of

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<sup>151</sup> Jacques Rupnik. “America’s Best Friends in Europe: East-Central European Perceptions and Policies toward the United States”. in Tony Judd and Denis Lacorne (eds.) *With Us or Against Us: Studies in Global Anti-Americanism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2005. p. 98

<sup>152</sup> Jurgen Kaube. “Are We Reasonable?” in Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds.) *Old Europe. New Europe. Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*. Verso: London. New York. 2005. p. 57

Europe belong to a wider family of developed liberal democracies. America is better in some ways, Europe in others”.

## Conclusions

The relation between Europe and the United States is and it will always be problematic. Albeit as constitutive parts of the civilized West, America and Europe share values and principles, the course of history unveils a European predisposition to criticize various aspects of American life. The hostile position of Europe was almost always seconded by a stance of admiration and attraction. Thus, the most accurate general description of the nature of European perception of America is in terms of ambivalence. Lenau despised America, Goethe admired it. Stendhal considered the United States a land of spiritual dryness, but Alexis de Tocqueville appreciated the pragmatic American spirit. Sartre's communist leaning made him resent America; Raymond Aron found a balance between criticism and appreciation. There are many factors that can lean the balance toward anti-Americanism or pro-Americanism.

The research I have conducted for the limited purpose of the herewith thesis, had made it somewhat clear that ideology has an important role in shaping one's position pertaining to the United States. America always found itself in front of the Leftist firing squad, ever since Karl Marx proclaimed capitalism to be the supreme evil and America its perfect embodiment. In the second chapter I have shown how the Left – as an aggregate – has become the driving force behind anti-Americanism in the aftermath of WWII by replacing the conservative and extreme Right that was traditionally prepared to underscore the American cultural and political inferiority. The European Right-wing has learnt much easier to cope with American style capitalism and mass-production. In the post-war epoch, no matter how complex the transatlantic interaction has proven to be, there is one constant element: that is the restless anti-Americanism of the European Left. Actually, over the years, it was the negative perception of America that legitimated the

existence of the Western European Left as a block. It was disapproval of US foreign policy and contempt for American values that united communists and anti-communist socialists in the 1950s. Rejection of American imperialism and capitalism coagulated the Trotskyite, Maoist, communist, anti and post-colonialist radical youth of the 1960s as well as the old anti-fascistic Left on both sides of the Atlantic. The perception as the greatest threat to humankind brings the anti-globalization movement and the pacifists into the picture. Thus, as András Kovács observes, too ideological, much too heterogeneous, and always seeking a motive to militate the Left and its factions always found an available boogeyman rally against personified by Uncle Sam.<sup>153</sup> I would say that to be anti-American does not necessarily mean to be on the Left, but not vice-versa. To some extent, the adherence to Leftist values and rhetoric implies opposition to the United States.

America was opposed either on a political front or on the cultural dimension, or on both, depending on the historical circumstances. The adoption of Heideggerian thought influenced the Left in rejecting coarse, trashy culture massively exported to Europe through the facilities granted by the transatlantic cooperation in the virtue of the Marshall Plan. Slowly, the superiority complex over American culture has dissipated and it was replaced by a more focused and circumstantial critique of the US appraisal on foreign policy. The memories of the destructive effects of the war have strongly influenced the leftist perception of America and its military might. Not once, ideology and blindness to evidence have made the Left perceive America as the greatest threat to world peace and security. The historical graph of anti-American manifestations displays important oscillations, and the high points correspond to moments when the United States actions become more visible. Such was the case when the United States was involved in a 19 years long war in Indochina or when it used its military might against the Serb forces or in the

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<sup>153</sup> András Kovács. “A szerződés elévültA zsidók és a mai Európa” . [The Lost contract: Europe and Its Jews (or vice-versa)]. *Nepszabadsag*. 15 May 2004.

multiple campaigns in Iraq. It is easy to understand why someone would resent any violent actions. But why always the American actions are stigmatized as peace threatening? This is where ideology comes into play most vividly. It is rather clear that the Vietnam War was a disaster and that the American strikes against the civilian population were condemnable. But this doesn't make the United States the archenemy of humankind. It is anti-Americanism and the surrender to ideology what makes people to accuse American violence but appreciate the "philanthropy" of Stalin and the "humanitarian" invasion of South -Vietnam by the communist North with Soviet backup.

The 1990s brought a significant change in the Leftist discourse against the United States, as the latter, confident in its position of singular global superpower, lost some its moral shining. The United States of the 1990s divorced the previous ideals of internationalism and humanitarianism and engaged into actions primarily driven by national interests. Accordingly to the unilateralist line it has adopted, the US returned to the attention of the Left, now for its refusal to cooperate with international organizations. In the 1990s, the source of anti-American standpoints in Western Europe is America's claimed place in the end of history and its actions more than a mere European prejudice. Europe has its own share of blame in the emergence of American unilateralism. Jean-Francois Revel considers that the constant, often uninformed and disproportionate opposition the United States faces has made it deaf to outside vociferations.<sup>154</sup> Thus, to some extent, the reluctance of American governments to join the International Criminal Court is understandable, taking into consideration the amount of global hostility.

American unilateralism and the position of the US as a globally dominant entity have brought the Leftist grievances into a European framework. The United States repeatedly rejected multilateral projects Europe was keen on. America's apparent lack for respect for international

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<sup>154</sup> Jean-Francois Revel. *Anti-Americanism*. San Francisco: Encounter Books. 2003. p. 171

law provisions and the determination of the Bush administration to pursue a shakily justified war in the Middle East breed growing discontent in Europe, this time not only of intellectuals, but among the masses too. Within this context several European intellectuals with liberal-left persuasions moved on a Euro-Gaullist position and suggested that Europe should define itself as non-America. The idea uttered by Jurgen Habermas and others was strongly opposed by intellectuals coming from different countries and representing various political persuasions. The sides in the debate were the French and German leftist intellectuals against everybody else. The all-around opposition to the Euro-nationalist plan designed by Habermas and endorsed by several other leftist intellectuals, as well as the internal European divergences over Iraq proves wrong the myth of Europe as a bastion of anti-Americanism and refutes the idea that anti-Americanism is the ideology of Europe.

To return to the main views on the origin and definition of West European anti-Americanism, I would say that to label anti-Americanism as a prejudice, would be too much; to see it only as a result of American policies would be too little. Similarly, the anti-modernist explanation, perfectly valid in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, simply does not work in the framework of a modern Europe. Anti-Americanism in Europe is not a monolithic bloc. It is characterized by different nuances and the endeavor of America sometimes legitimates fervent criticisms. In Western Europe, Anti-Americanism is a product of history and ideology, a result of the combination of the European Leftist heritage and the America's status of global superpower.

Under these circumstances, it is hard to imagine that the hostility of the Western European Left for the United States will easily vanish. Nonetheless, America should take into consideration that on many occasions, its actions have elicited stern disapproval. Thus, the anti-American hostility might be mitigated through some degree of American moderation. Francis Fukuyama argues that America should take some responsibility for public global problems like

the carbon emissions or arm limitation.<sup>155</sup> In a similar resonance, Josef Joffe insists to remind America that the school bully is never elected class president<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>155</sup> Francis Fukuyama. "Does the West Still Exist?" in Tod Lindberg (ed.) *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America, and the future of a troubled partnership*. New York: Routledge. 2005. p. 160

<sup>156</sup> Josef Joffe. *On Anti-Americanism in Europe*. [http://stanford.edu/~weiler/Josef\\_Joffe\\_on\\_Anti\\_Americanism.pdf](http://stanford.edu/~weiler/Josef_Joffe_on_Anti_Americanism.pdf) (08.03.2008)

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