

Jews In Europe

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The political establishment of the European Commonwealth serves first and foremost to answer the cultural needs of the educated and political elite. It exists as a response to the wars, which for hundreds of years tore the continent apart. The re-construction of Europe is proving to be slow, cautious, and awkward all the way. Clearly no one possesses the know-how to unify countries with cultural and political heritages rooted in a sharply defined national ethos, with governmental institutions steeped in ancient traditions, and an encompassing a wide range of independent, competitive if not opposing ethnic images and symbols. Europe seems to be being patched together, piece by piece, with each conference, each agreement, and with the establishment of institution after institution, as if she were playing a part within a fantasy dream which no one is willing to give up on, in spite of all the problems involved in attaining it. There have always been zealous Europeans, particularly among the Jews, who believed in the unification of Europe even prior to World War One. One of them, the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig, went so far as to take upon himself the moral and political commitment to work towards the structuring of Europe according to the Swiss model, for it to become a multi-national federation embracing various different nationalities. He speaks enthusiastically of "cette maxime très sage de hausser jusqu'à la fraternité les différences des langues et des populations, par l'estime réciproque et la démocratie honnêtement vécue. (1)" However, nowadays the abundance of worn, repetitive expressions and clichés given lip service by European leaders hides the fact that they are unprepared to cope with the various challenges related to the realization of the European vision: "The idea of "unity in diversity", proclaimed with stereotypical banality, is an intellectual crutch at best, a substitute concept for thinking in more complex terms at worst." (2)

Many questions weigh down the process of restructuring Europe; the most problematic relating to the autonomy and independence of each individual country, and particularly the large countries which are leading the way in various processes: How can one accomplish unification, while still preserving the national and cultural diversity of each nation? What is the position of the governmental framework, in particular for countries such as Germany, Spain and Belgium which are themselves federations within the European political-institutional structure? Why would different states in Germany, regions in Spain or provinces of Belgium continue to accept the authority of governmental institutions if they were under the jurisdiction of European institutions?

How does one encourage a European spirit in those national cultures which zealously protect their own uniqueness and originality? How does one construct a multi-national framework which aspires to preserve the state structure, in particular when one considers nation states such as Italy, Hungary and Poland? How does one involve the masses in the European experience, whatever that turns out to be, when they experience Europe as a cultural-political toy in the hands of the intellectuals and statesman, serving to complicate rather than ease the regulations and restrictions they have to deal with on a day to day basis?

With considerable political wisdom, the architects of Europe have decided to proceed gradually, to advance step by step. They avoid adopting legislation and relate to the different treaties and agreements as landmarks for future lawmaking. (3) Debates amongst statesman focus more on institutions and implementation rather than on purposes and goals. Today, Europe is, at best, "A democratic parliamentary system of multi-level governance", lacking sufficient clarification of the connections between the European institutions, within each institution, and among the political bodies of the regions and areas within each country, not to mention the lack of clarity concerning the authority of each particular institution. Most of these institutions are powerless and lack means of enforcement in spite of the ongoing legislation, the establishment of The European Court, and a European police force. The truth is that a unified Europe does not at present meet the requirements of the day. It has been shaped within the constrictions of the past while still aspiring to ease the anxieties of the future. The nations of Europe – particularly France, and, to a lesser extent, England -, realize that they cannot claim a leading role in the international sphere without organizing themselves into entities which possess a specific solidarity. They are interested in becoming an influential focus within a multi-focal world, to take their place alongside the focal points of North and South America, China, India, the Arab countries and Africa. However, with the exception of the American and Chinese focal points, the other areas have yet to crystallize. Europe

itself is still undergoing the process of emerging from its previous state into a single entity. It will take a generation or two before the process is complete, guaranteeing that there is no regression along the way. The process cannot only be economic and legislative; it must be also be diplomatic-military, and even more importantly educational-cultural. Until the various nations start to educate themselves in the newly emerging European spirit i.e. learning about a global European cultural heritage, its glories together with its darker hours, Europe will continue to be nothing more than a beautiful dream in a beautiful land. The structuring of institutions, such as a European Parliament, a European Council and a European Court is proving to be simpler than creating an ideological-cultural accord. And, truth be told, if Europe possesses a European heritage, it has not yet been revealed, not by legislators nor by writers. What one can focus on are the European visions of Goethe and Nietzsche, of Hegel and Marx, of Zweig and Benjamin. It will soon become clear that Europe was essentially designed in Germany, of all places. At this point in time, Europe has managed to forget its geographical positioning, which places it on the western tip of Asia and detracts from its status as a continent. [\(4\)](#)

THE AMERICAN PRECEDENT

Europe does not enjoy following in the footsteps of the United States, even less so learning lessons from the experiences of the Americans. If we are searching for the characteristics of Europe, we have the most prominent. [\(5\)](#) It will not freely admit that most of its goals have already been achieved, whether in American society, or in the multi-national, multi-racial and multi-denominational countries of South America. Stefan Zweig was forced in 1938 to flee to the United States and to Latin America to escape Nazi persecution, and it was only there that he was able to realize his dreams for Europe. He was surprised by the team-work he saw there, and the lack of tension and hatred which abounded in Europe: "Les yeux comblés de bonheur par les mille beautés de cette nouvelle nature, j'avais jeté un regard dans l'avenir." [\(6\)](#)

When Europe does agree to learn from the United States, Europe will, however, discover significant differences between the two areas that will definitely require an original strategy for establishing spiritual and cultural unity:

1. The United States was established in the aftermath of a Civil War which saw the victory of those who supported the emancipation of the slaves and awarded equal rights to all citizens within the American Federation. Europe, on the other hand was established in the aftermath of two bloody world wars which ended with millions of lives having been lost and included the extermination of European Jewry and the Gypsies, two trans-European peoples. Moreover, Europe shares the view once held by the United States, that human rights make up an essential axis; and one which it is cultivating both for itself and for the rest of the world to see. It has committed itself to every word of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949, and the European Treaty for Human Rights of 1969. This explains the embarrassment of European leaders when having to deal with the issue of the immigrants which has been casting a dark cloud over the Establishment, functioning and expansion of Europe, in spite of the gradual standardization of rules and regulations concerning immigration, absorption and the granting of citizenship.
2. The United States was built up primarily by immigrants and their children, who saw themselves as necessary components within the American melting pot. This required each immigrant to shed his or her previous national identity or, at the very least, to subordinate his or herself to a new identity, more civic than national, while disregarding intermittent cries for help from the native American Indians. Immigration to the United States implied a willingness to comply with the demand for an exchange of nationality. This did not require the negation of a former nationality but rather, on the contrary, saw it being cast into the melting pot and then emerging as a national citizenship which was, from the very start, formed from a blend of all sorts of nationalities. (While in Europe it was nationality which was responsible for establishing citizenship, at least until the Second World War, in the United States the opposite was the case and citizenship was that which established nationality.) In contrast, Europe is built up, primarily, from nation states or national federations, virtually all of which stress that Europeanism does not offer an alternative to nationality, nor even civilian identity, but rather serves to supplement historical nationality. European traits should be added to the individual traits of each nation and should replace them only if they do not undermine the national individuality of the various nations. Nevertheless, the establishment of a common currency, which has replaced national coinage, is certainly the most significant landmark in the establishment of Europe. It has implications which reach far beyond its economic relevance; it proves that the most precious national institutions of each and every country can be accessed and changed, with consequences which then institute themselves within the patterns of day to day life.
3. The United States was to some extent built up within a cultural void, since the culture of the Indians was invalidated by the European immigrants right from the start. The newcomers had no particular difficulty in adopting the dominant language of English or in allowing it to take over as the language of communication between the immigrants and as the language of culture for their children. Europe is lacking, for now at least, a common language. Even though English is becoming widespread as the common language of communication, this is due more to the international situation than to Europe's own position. Europe's

common language cannot be French, Spanish or German because one cannot possibly expect China or India to speak any international language other than English.

THE EUROPEAN CHALLENGE

Europe is being forged in an atmosphere of much deep concern about the future, which may impede its development or cast a shadow over it.

- Europe has yet to delineate its borders and finds itself in a process of expansion that may drain Europe as a whole of all substance and all significance. Expansion only increases the differences that must be bridged. Very soon Europe will be required to consider the candidacy of Turkey, which will break the Christian hegemony, along with the tentative interest being shown by the Russian Federation and also perhaps by Arab nations such as Lebanon and the countries of North Africa.
- Europe has not yet terminated its obligations to the nations it exploited during its wave of colonialism. It has not yet analyzed its role in events that were definitely European, such as the Jewish Holocaust and the persecution of those who opposed Communist regimes. Placing all blame for the Holocaust on Germany alone has given other nations an excuse for avoiding facing up to their role in the annihilation of the Jewish People; the role played by France in embracing the Vichy Regime, Italy's role in co-operating with the Germans, the role played by the Austrians who did not object to being included within the Third Reich, which presented itself as the very epitome of a united and Jew-free Europe. The task of rebuilding the countries of Western Europe after the Second World War gave the Europeans an excuse to avoid confronting issues such as the roots, the motivations and the cultural rationale surrounding the Holocaust, while the freeing of Europe from the yoke of communism and its threat gave them an excuse to desist from dealing with the destructive forces which proliferated within the utopian ideological movement that claimed to conquer the world. Even though Europe is the cradle of western culture, it is also the largest cemetery of human culture. In the absence of comprehensive debate on this polarity, there is a danger of perpetuating hypocritical human expression behind which Europe has been hiding ever since the beginning of the period of Enlightenment. As for the undoing of colonial injustices, Europe does admit its guilt and sympathizes with the unstable condition of half the Southern hemisphere, bestowing aid here and there while still expelling immigrants from those very countries it once exploited.
- Europe has yet to recognize its indebtedness to the United States for the military assistance it received during the two world wars, for its assistance in the re-building of Europe following the Second World War or and for bringing a halt to the expansion of the communist-totalitarian regimes. Europe, and France in particular, is not willing to recognize the bastard child she brought into the New World. She does not acknowledge his successes or his failures, does not even hide her contempt and scorn for it. She will never acknowledge that she is a creation of the multi-national, multi-denominational, and multi-cultural United States - the biggest success story on the face of the earth. She simply cannot look America straight in the eye and acknowledge its legitimacy. She tends to emphasize its shortcomings and ignore its positive characteristics. It is hard to find fans of the United States amongst fervent Europeans.
- The hostility which is prevalent within intellectual circles discredits Europe for her arrogance and ingratitude. No one contests the fact that American culture has less depth than the cultures of France, Spain, Italy, Germany... and even England. No-one contests the fact that America as observed from European shores appears somewhat flat, somewhat technical and even, in the words of Umberto Eco, somewhat Philistine. However, Europe must ask herself to what extent this depth of hers, whether real or imaginary, is making it easier for her or more difficult to match the achievements of the United States in the fields of research, science and arts. Europe is not as creative as she once was, neither in literature nor in painting. She is repeating doctrines of the past, for better or for worse, interpreting them, pulling them apart and then putting them back together again. The truth of the matter is that Europe's hostility is nurtured more by the denial of her debt to the United States than by any cultural preference on her part, however well-grounded that may be. Europe is inclined to pour scorn upon America's political heritage, to poke fun at the milieu in which her political games are played out and to see her leaders as tireless adventurers, drunk on their own power and even as modern-day messiahs, For various reasons, Europe has stumbled into an era of post-nationalism rather than having chosen it consciously and now finds relief from her complexes concerning the United States in anti-American sport. Granted, The United States is not doing much to contribute to easing her acceptance by the Europeans. She dismisses their cinema, their food and their languages as she gallops on, free from any complexes, in her unrestrained democratic conquest of...the world. She does not realize that she understands wax and plastic better than stone and marble, decoration better than art, scripts better than stories, strategy better than philosophy and outer space better than dry land. She is deaf to European romanticism, essentially ecological, which froths at the mouth in protest against the process of economic and cultural globalization. She chooses to ignore Europe's fears, weaknesses and complexes. She relates to it as to a healthy continent, not more than two hundred years old...
- Europe has yet to consolidate a uniform policy on immigration and has no idea how to cope with the waves of

unwanted immigrants converging from all sides; from Buddhist and Muslim Asia, from Black Africa and the from the Arab countries. Its borders are increasingly open to penetration by individuals who are usually in a desperate state, seeking work and sustenance for themselves and the families they have left behind. Keeping them in their countries of origin is not the answer, since income generated from the immigrants is gradually coming to make up a substantial part of the national product in the weaker, undeveloped countries. The increased migration is also gradually disrupting the demographic stability in all countries and posing a threat to national and cultural character. Even though in enlightened circles there is a tendency to speak of democratic pluralism, there is a definite distaste for any change in the color, religion and culture of Europe. The Muslim minority – nearly 20 million in Western Europe, which makes up approximately 4% of the total population, is certainly shaking the foundations of a Christian Europe, and is all the more relevant in a period during which an underground, invisible religious war could break out between Christianity and Islam. In addition, the countries of Europe which considered immigrants as guest workers who would at some point return to their countries of origin did not manage to develop policies for their absorption and are now facing serious problems with the second generation born in Europe, who protest against discrimination and make cultural, social and political demands.

- Europe has yet to consolidate a political ethos, in spite of the considerable legislation that has produced effective rules and regulations throughout the European community. On the one hand, a united Europe detracts from the importance of political nationalism; on the other, it encourages ethnic and civil nationalism, such as we see among the Corsicans of France and the Basques in Spain. Europe, built upon the foundations of individual nations is very likely to be confronted with regional and national claims for independence or autonomy, which would undermine the nations from which it is constructed. In addition, religious minorities such as Jews or Muslims – or ethnic peoples, such as Gypsies or Kurds - can see themselves doing better as trans-national European entities than as tiny particles of an entity within assorted countries.

IN CONCLUSION

It will be difficult to change mass cultural traditions that encompass several components of sinister fundamentalism, a near-ethnic national pride and tendencies toward cultural isolationism. Europeanism is depicted by some theorists as the result of a concoction of European cultures which invalidate one another, and by others as a type of inbreeding. At this stage, many slogans are on people's lips, whether Christian or humanist, which point a finger at Europe's intellectual stuttering about itself and its future: "One must call to memory the idea of individuality in creation which is based on the Christian doctrine that man is created after God's image, Aristotle's aim of eudemonia, the blissfulness which points beyond a life of pleasure (...) and an existence directed only towards earning money (...). One must also call to memory the ethic, that in the Christian form is called "faith, hope, love", and in secular pathos "freedom, equality, fraternity"”. (7)

It is likely that Europe is waiting for another Renaissance, for without it, Europe will surely remain a prisoner of empty slogans. It must re-evaluate its classical sources in light of scientific achievement and following its technological advancements; underscore the common elements rather than the separating forces; bring back 'Great Conversation' and spread it throughout Europe. It cannot reduce humanism to the preservation of human rights that are, in any case, universal, and then expect it to revive a European spirit. Europeans must recognize that European humanism, based upon diverse cultural heritages is still in its fledgling state. It seems as if the Europeans lack the courage to ask the basic questions – moral, religious and political – for fear of challenging their achievements in these arenas. Without a revival to produce renewed humanistic growth, Europe risks being shown up as another example of the string of political, ideological and moral pretenses which half the continent has got us used to. It is difficult to forgive Europe for the crimes of the past, and easy to fall a victim, once again, to its intellectual illusions. In the worst instance, if we are to believe Nietzsche, a field of universal nihilism is waiting to pounce upon uncontrolled hedonism; at best, a federation of suspicious and quarrelling nations are setting ambushes for one another, with no hope of a common cultural-spiritual destiny. A Swiss diplomat expresses his own particular view-point: "The federation of states, merely secured by agreement, i.e. terminable, can never do justice to the seriousness of the matter. It is opportunity that it has in mind, not a community of fate." (8)

EUROPE OF THE FUTURE

If Europe manages to avoid the stumbling blocks which lie in its path, including those related to its foreign and security policies, and continues to develop as an economic-political entity, it is likely that:

1. Europe will become multi-cultural, i.e. it will show tolerance for cultural diversity within national-traditional cultures with historical roots in Europe, and also within immigrant cultures. It will even encourage the spread of ethnic cultures, in order to contribute to a solution for the social and political problems associated with the absorption of waves of assorted immigrants, and so as to take a leading position in the international, inter-cultural debate. It will be a type of cultural laboratory – along with the United States according to some; replacing the United States according to others - a cultural workshop of humanity par excellence, alongside the

workshops of China and perhaps also India. The United States itself continues to search for its roots in Europe and to turn to it in pursuit of inspiration. Every time it has its fingers burnt it is amazed afresh at the depth of hostility it attracts which is recycled in every generation. In any case, Europe will speak in English, regardless of the heated opposition of the French who will quickly have to come to terms with this issue.

2. Europe will most probably concern itself more with other religious minorities, primarily the Muslims and the Buddhists, than with the Jews. It will be busy limiting immigration from third world countries, from Morocco to South Africa, from Kurdistan to China. The influence of the Jews will correspondingly be reduced because of their smaller number, and this will relate to all walks of life: cultural, public and political - in England, France and Germany. In a multi-national sphere, in which the Jewish minority is one of the smallest and most integrated, its presence and activity, does not in spite of its symbolic importance, arouse rejection or discrimination or even nervous responses as it did in the past. In other words, anti-Semitism will change its face, and not because of Europe's sense of responsibility for the Jewish Holocaust. Anti-Semitism is simply becoming more refined in comparison with the hatred directed towards the Arabs or the Blacks, and is now related more to the level of hostility felt towards Israel in the Middle Eastern dispute than to the presence or absence of the Jews in the media or in political and economic circuits of power.
3. Europe will follow the lead of the United States in nurturing a closer relationship between Judaism and Christianity that will take its inspiration from Biblical sources common to both religions. The closer relationship will result to a large degree from the undermining of Christian dogma – the deification of Jesus, the Holy Trinity, the curse of the Jews – and from Christian interest in interpretation of its sources. This phenomenon is already apparent in Protestant countries which are undergoing a renewed preoccupation with Jewish-Christian crossroads, such as the period of Christian revelation, the Lutheran period, or the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. More and more Protestant theologians and scholars are immersing themselves in Old Testament studies and referring to Jewish thinkers such as Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Emmanuel Levinas. We will witness a process of the Judaization of Christianity on the one hand, while on the other, a process of Jewish reconciliation with Christianity. In any case, the hostility – free interest shown within Christian liberal circles towards Jewish sources will serve the advance of Judaism within the ranks of estranged Jews. Judaism has the potential, as long as it overcomes its distaste for recognizing Christianity as one of its by-products, to play a significant role in the resurgence of Christianity as in the face of the threat of Islam.
4. Europe will probably adopt a most significant role in world economics – it will constitute one of the focuses of economic globalization, and no less important, one of the focuses of objection to it. In addition, it will achieve stability, with or without England, as an alternative focal point of political strength to that of America which complains about “this world propagandist power” both in discussions with China, and in its dealings with the Muslim world.

EUROPE – ISRAEL

For near enough 1,000 years, from the Spanish period to the Holocaust, Europe provided the central stage for Jewish history. Most of the great poets, commentators and scholars were Europeans. In addition, Europe was the cradle of Jewish nationality, a source of Zionist inspiration and, for better or for worse, the melting pot for the State of Israel. However, during the last few decades, Israel has enjoyed a close relationship with the United States for political, cultural and Jewish reasons. The United States has given Israel unequivocal support. It has provided extremely generous grants and loans, and has sold Israel enormous quantities of armaments. Military men and academics have spent extended periods of time in the United States, completing their professional or academic training there. Researchers and those in the creative arts have turned their attention and energies towards this great world power which has seemed the Promised Land for politics, culture and industry. The political leaders of recent times, most of whom rose from the ranks of the Israel Defense Forces, and who range from Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon to Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu, have very little knowledge of Europe. Academics spend their sabbatical year in American universities, benefiting in the most part from American studies, methods and doctrines. They return with specialization in areas as diverse as political and government studies, a plethora of organizational theories and a refined pragmatism appropriate to Israeli drive and determination. Europe, in contrast, is seen, at best, as a popular tourist destination, not too far from home, and to many as a disappointing focus of nostalgia.

Nevertheless, a renewed interest in Europe seems to have appeared recently, at least among the academic elite. They are discovering that Germany and France provide intellectual and artistic laboratories for... the United States. In the 20th century alone, they contributed outstanding philosophers such as Heidegger, Gadamer and Sartre, sociologists of the status of Habermas and Bourdieu and even highly acclaimed Jewish thinkers such as Buber, Rosenzweig, Soloveitchik and Levinas. The irony is that Israel is becoming aware of its geographic and cultural proximity to Europe through translations into American English. She will half-heartedly admit that she is more similar to the countries of Central Europe; and privately is willing to concede that she would like to emulate the Mediterranean countries of Europe such as Spain, Italy, Portugal and even Western Turkey. At the very least she sees her cultural and social playing field in the Euro-Mediterranean, without having come to terms with her proximity to Europe, nor to her location

on the shores of the Mediterranean. The truth is that Israel could become a cultural crossroads for eastern European and Western European culture, for eastern and western cultures, Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures and more. It could surely be a crossroads and meeting point for all Jews from the world over, including the Jews of Europe and the United States. In any event, she is connected at the navel to Europe despite the barbs she has to counter from that direction. The European people, with their courteous ways and polite manners are difficult for most Israelis to deal with. They have much to learn from the methods of public management used by the civil service throughout France and England, from the welfare state and aid policies of Denmark and Sweden and from the exciting architectural and environmental ideas of Spain and Hungary to name but a few. In order to carve out its own individual niche within Europe, Israel must lay down the groundwork in order to ensure that it will not become.... a piece of the United States. America is too far away, too pragmatic, too polished, and too technological. In spite of all this, it is entirely possible that Israel may join Europe one day. Its candidacy would surely present the European community with one of its most delicate moments of truth to date...

JEWISH EUROPE

Jewish communities throughout Europe are searching for their place in the European scene, having not yet organized a pan-European set-up for themselves. Most of the western communities, both large and small, have not completed the fine-tuning of their relationship with the political authorities, with the exception, perhaps, of England. Even the Jews in central and Eastern Europe have yet to re-structure themselves in communities. It appears that the Jews are beginning the struggle to find answers to old-new questions from a European perspective; answers which will give them their place in Europe.

- One has to recognize the basic fact that the Jewish people is struggling with the issue of essential particularism, necessary for ensuring Jewish survival and/or renaissance without denying universal values. One has to ask how much attention should be given to the reduction of the particular so that it will not imprison Judaism as a fossilized cult, and will allow for a fertile dialogue with the non-Jews all around. In light of this, and in spite of the voluntary nature of becoming part of the Jewish community, the question of a voluntary or even advisable ghetto arises once again – the issue of self-ghettoization. To what extent can one safely live a full Jewish life outside a spiritual-intellectual ghetto, if not a ghetto with real walls, outside a psychological ghetto if not a ghetto with four doors built according to Jewish religious laws? As a rule, does the ghetto of the past and that of the present not provide a suitable solution to the problem of preserving minority religions or cultures within a hostile environment in a period of globalization threatening minority cultures, religions and languages? What form should a re-vamped ghetto take, so as to allow for vital community life, to refrain from oppressing its residents, and to avoid antagonizing its neighbors? What kind of institutions would it have? And if the community ghetto does not provide a solution, what alternative form could Jewish life in the Diaspora take?
- The phenomenon of the isolated Jew who is aware of his Jewish identity, and cultivates it without being a member of the Israeli community or joining a communal institution, whether through personal choice or because he is too far away from any type of institution, will grow and continue to flourish. The void will be filled with virtual communities, whether in the form of virtual centers of religious study (Batei Midrash), or virtual charitable institutions. Imagine the isolated Jew who lives alone with his family in a small town in southern Italy or northern Spain, who sends his contribution to the United Jewish Appeal once a year, comes to visit Israel, spends Passover in a hotel in the Alps that has been hired out and koshered by the followers of some Rabbi or other, sends his children to Jewish summer camps, prepares his son and daughter for bar and bat mitzvahs in Rome or Madrid by means of a preparatory course provided by the Jewish Agency and has registered for a masters degree in Judaism by means of studying long-distance with Yeshiva University or the Hebrew University. Diana Pinto addresses this phenomenon in her own particular way: "What is emerging before us are new personae: Jews with multiple loyalties who are rather like free electrons inside newly defined state and cultural perimeters." [\(9\)](#)
- Assimilation no longer represents a betrayal, but rather one of the options facing the isolated Jew as he sets about making decisions concerning his future and that of his family, whether in the professional, cultural, religious or national spheres. To be more precise, people do not choose to assimilate or become religious; rather, they slide into assimilation through apathy, or get interested in Judaism and thus return to the fold. From their point of view, inter-marriages are not considered shameful. Granted, they expose the Jewish husband or wife within the mixed marriage to an even more assimilating environment, increase their estrangement from Judaism and influence the choices their children make, but rhetoric and action against inter-marriage are responsible more for arousing antagonism than for achieving success. This is especially true during a period in which inter-racial, bi-cultural and inter-religious hybridization are seen to represent a positive challenge if not an ideal situation. For the most part, they betray weakness rather than strength, and closed minds rather than open ones. They do not cause people who have weak ties to Judaism to bat an eyelid, while those whose ties with Judaism are strong, do not consider inter-marriage in the first place. We must face the fact that assimilation is a universal sociological reality which is spreading through the Jewish community just as it does

amongst other religious and ethnic minorities. Neither Rabbinic nor educational preaching will halt it, but rather pro-active policies that explain Judaism to the gentiles, as Emmanuel Levinas suggests, with the purpose of bringing the assimilating Jews back into the fold. After two or three generations of inter-marriage, the issue is more one of converting hearts and minds than a return to orthodoxy. A static Judaism, which recoils from inter-marriage, apports blame upon those who are guilty of nothing and turns its back on both eastern and western creativity will not be able to prevent the process of assimilation.

- Whether they like it or not, the Jewish communities throughout Europe, represent links in the chain of the Diaspora which surrounds Israel and, in some way, political and cultural embassies for the Jewish state or nation in the eyes of the non-Jews, if not the Jews as well; in the eyes of those who hate Israel as well as those who love it. In the countries of the West, waves of immigration and the demographic changes that followed muddied the waters concerning split loyalties and dual membership, and this phenomenon was only exacerbated by the gradual establishment of the European community. One can have a committee make a declaration of support for Israel without getting too nervous about being accused of split loyalties. The State of Israel has become the most meaningful component of European Jewish identity, whether it limits itself to declaring unequivocal support of Israel, or whether it resorts to pathological condemnation of it. Israel either shores up Jewish identity or confuses it. Jews far away, like those in the United States can allow themselves to ignore the existence of Israel; European Jews cannot permit themselves to ignore a state which is constantly in the news. They are too close to Israel both geographically and in family terms to estrange themselves from it.
- The revitalization of communities in central and Eastern Europe poses a most significant challenge. The people behind the revitalizing of these communities are not restricted by any institutions, and most of them are members of intellectual circles whose members are undergoing a process of rediscovering their Judaism. A future revival of Judaism in Europe will be more likely to begin in Budapest and St. Petersburg than in London or Berlin. Those involved have been re-born as Jews of Europe rather than Hungarian or Russian Jews as such. They integrate general education with Jewish education, their interpretative skills with their creative ones. They are more connected to Israel than their French or British counterparts, and, most importantly, they do not endorse anti-American attitudes. They are more enthusiastic, more independent and more curious, though they do have the task of freeing themselves from the patronage of Israeli and American institutions and making their own voices heard with clarity and resolve.

There are some who see the establishment of a European entity as the stepping stone for Jewish renaissance in western, central and eastern European communities. They aim to create a pan-European cultural - religious - community. Reality dictates that this will present a spiritual and cultural challenge; it takes into account the fact that the communal institutions in well-established communities will be affected. In France and England these institutions are so outdated that in some cases, they represent stumbling blocks in the path of continuity, rather than guarantees thereof. They have not managed to keep in touch with the political, cultural and social realities of the Jews in the various countries; they were not designed for integration into the European scene, and they are most probably neither interested in nor capable of adapting themselves accordingly. The French and British communities are imprisoned, each more than the other, by their own complexities and institutions. Both are jealous of their imagined independence and their antiquated heritage. On the one side we see institutions left over from the Napoleonic period, such as the Consistoires, packed with North African rabbis; on the other we have Victorian institutions, intent on preserving their honor and splendor. The French community would like to rule European Jewry. It is not, however, capable of doing so. It is too French, too Sephardi, and too arrogant. And even if the British community was able to lead European Jewry, it is not interested in doing so. It is too British, too ironic, a prisoner in its own island, not really regarding itself as a European community at all, and looking out on the other communities from the distance of its lofty perch. (10) Elazar writes: "The Jews have notably lagged behind the rest of Europe in this regard, divided as they are by the language and the habits imposed upon them by their respective governments at the time of Emancipation and subsequent eras which the Jews, seeking to be emancipated and accepted, avidly embraced. As those self-same states became the leaders in the movement toward European integration, their Jews clung conservatively to their state-based, not Jewish-based separateness." (11)

At the present time, pan-European Jewish revival is all bound up with a type of Jewish emancipation within the current political emancipation. The Jews are not by any means the only minority in Europe, and it seems likely that their symbolic and cultural influence will continue to diminish. They must change their way of thinking, their assemblies and their attitude both towards Israel, and towards the Jewish community living outside Europe. They must emancipate themselves from institutions that fail to meet their needs and to build healthy European institutions. In other words, they must renew the debate on emancipation in light of the events that have occurred in the world, and particularly in Europe, during the twentieth century.

- The Jewish Holocaust was a European tragedy which exposed the limitations of human culture, of education and of progress in countering the basest instincts of human beings. All over Europe the Jews were the ones to pay the highest price for national zealotry, anti-Semitic hatred and pseudo-pagan totalitarianism; they paid with their lives.
- Zionism flourished in Europe during the era of the blossoming of nationalism. It declared that anti-Semitism

constitutes one of the basic components of national cultures and proposed a Jewish national homeland in the Land of Israel as the solution for the problems facing the Jews in Europe.

- The State of Israel is first and foremost a European creation, and the majority of its Jewish population is of European origin. Its aim was to be a state of refuge for the Jews, and it claims to embody the realization of statehood for the Jewish people. In any event, it is the only state that the Jewish People have.
- The only Jewish creation of the past thousand years is essentially a European one and it continually nourishes Jewish thinking and creativity in Israel, the United States and other communities throughout the world.

Jewish Europeanism or European Judaism requires clarification in the cultural, political and social spheres. We do not always know what their adherents intend. What constitutes the “Jewish European pillar” that Diana Pinto discusses? What does it involve and what does it not? What are its opinions on political and cultural negotiations between Jews? What are its opinions regarding non-Jews throughout Europe? Is there a common denominator for all Jews in Europe apart from their physical existence within European borders? What are its tenets, over and above the vague declaration: “We view ourselves as European Jews”? It seems that the attempts of intellectuals such as Diana Pinto and Barry Cosmin and the activity of local organizations which have set themselves exclusively European goals, such as the Alliance israélite universelle” in France, and the JPR in England have been infiltrated by the obsolete yearnings of thinkers and authors such as S. Zweig. If the slogan “from ghetto to state power” has been prevalent for a long time amongst the Jews of the United States, in Europe, many are giving lip-service to the slogan: “from ghetto institutions to cultural and symbolic power.” Supporters of a Jewish Europe are, for now at least, seeking recognition, both from their non-Jewish colleagues and from Jewish institutions in Israel and the United States. They view cultural creativity as the main field in which they will be able to obtain that recognition. Elazar summarizes his article with the following ambiguous claim: “Suddenly European Jewry has a source of energy of the kind that it has not had for generations. But like all contemporary Jewish sources, it is a flawed source, whose energy consists of a will, but whose bearers do not possess the tools to exercise that will effectively. It is under such circumstances that historic revolutions are made.”

A PROFESSIONAL EUROPEAN INSTITUTE

The unification of Europe enables or forces one to consider Jewish life and local Jewish communities in terms of Europe rather than in terms of individual countries. Unfortunately, we lack a pan-European Jewish framework that would be acceptable to all the various institutions and would provide address both to individuals and to communities. The European Jewish Congress is not managing to gain momentum and is struggling under the heavy burden of the American Jewish Congress. The Council of European Rabbis is remote, and with exception of its bi-annual assembly, does not accomplish very much, neither in training Rabbis nor in the training hearts and minds. When the European Council of Jewish Communities was established, it was one of the wisest and most promising ventures of the time. It was a clear model of European organization for all Jewish communities throughout Europe. It offered a wide range of activities that enjoyed considerable success. Unfortunately, the council lost its authority because of the political interference of international bodies, in particular the Joint, which turned it into a stooge for implementing its own European policies.

Of late, a number of communities have received or are about to receive payments or compensation from various sources. Thanks to a donation from the Swedish government, an institute named Paedea was established, which undertakes the training of young leadership for Jewish communities throughout Europe. The French government decided to a huge amount of money to commemorate the Holocaust and help fund cultural, educational and social activities which are aimed at contributing to the thriving of the community. In Italy the situation is similar. Even in Spain, some leaders are toying with the idea of approaching the authorities with a request for remuneration for the exile of the Jews in 1492. At the same time, the various communities are becoming increasingly wealthy thanks to the growth of a new generation of businesspeople, children of immigrants, who contribute their own money to communal activities. These resources may set in motion the rusty wheels of obsolete national communal institutions which have become outmoded and do not meet today's needs of individuals and communities searching for their identity and looking to belong to something which does not involve a cumbersome institutional membership. The communities will manage to find common ground once more only in the presence of a charismatic institution, free from political machinations, working for the good of the individual communities without promoting its own people or, even more importantly, the interest of any particular international organization. The institution must be professional and provide services without becoming involved in community politics or global Jewish politics. It will enjoy support and raise enthusiasm only on condition that it supplies trans-community services from a European perspective in the following areas:

- Research, planning and organizational consultation for small local communities, in their dealings with the European Union and in other matters.
- Professional support within the various fabrics of authority throughout Europe (principals of Jewish schools, community workers, Rabbis and others.)

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- Encouraging meetings of professionals from all over Europe (doctors, scientists, intellectuals and others).
- Encouraging activities which bring together young Jewish people from all over Europe (Youth camps, study trips throughout Europe, Jewish studies for students, advanced training for young artists and others).
- Putting together projects for at least three communities in the spirit of the rules that guide the projects run by the European Union.
- Projects for individuals who do not feel the need to belong to any type of community (long distance learning from religious schools for parents and children, University of Judaism long distance learning, European Summer University and others).

In order for the proposed institute to gain the trust of the Jewish public and Jewish organizations throughout Europe it will need to keep to the following rules:

- To avoid any direct activity which may compete with an activity already underway, whatever its achievements may be. For example: it must avoid training young people for leadership while Paidea handles this task, and authorizing school principals as long as the European organization of school principals is active. During the first stage, it must give as much support as possible to the European organizations which have developed within the different communities and to offer them optimal assistance as far as possible. For example, it must provide assistance to the JPR for research projects and help faculties of Judaism at the various universities to plan their long-distance computerized courses.
- Aside from the professionalism demonstrated by its directors and consultants, the legitimacy of the institute will result from the ability to bring the various Jewish European players together on the same stage. In addition, it must enjoy the public support of financial bodies, (be they international organizations such as the Jewish Agency, the Joint, the Claims Conference or European or international Funds), or private contributors.

Part of the financing can and must come from the donations of Jews interested in European Jewish activity. The Jewish National Appeal for its part must prepare itself to receive donations which will be divided up, according to a contributor's wishes, between Israel, the community of his or her particular country and activities in Europe, including the revival of the communities in Eastern Europe and the preservation of the pan-European Jewish cultural heritage. Withholding from Jews the possibility of making financial donations to Israel indicates lack of sensitivity to the contributors' wishes. Usually, their donations constitute expressions of their love for Israel that stems from true, if indistinct Jewish roots. They fear for the strength of the Jewish State or the Jewish nation. They are interested in giving charity, in bridging the gaps that divide the people, in fixing the world. The action of giving expresses a spiritual need to define one's place in relation to one's fellow man, in particular that fellow man who is disadvantaged and in need of one's charitable contributions. People are not keen on giving to established communities or to well-off individuals. They are interested first and foremost in righting wrongs, whether or not they are personal "wrongs" or those affecting a group of people who have a place in their own hearts. They are also aware that Israel, for better or for worse, constitutes the most significant creation of the Jewish People. They know, too, that that the majority of Jewish children who live under the poverty line are not living within their own communities, but rather in the State of Israel, in South American communities in crisis and in Jewish communities undergoing revival in central and eastern Europe. Problems of violence in Jewish schools occur in Israeli society more than in the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. Acute social problems afflict Israeli society in particular. The needy are mainly to be found within the borders of the State of Israel or else are dependent, directly or indirectly, on the services of the State of Israel, whether they are governmental services such as those provided by the Prime Minister's office, or para-governmental ones such as those given by the Jewish Agency or the Joint. Allocation of some part of a donation – according to the donor's wishes – to a European institution which would stand as a corner stone for European Jewry could breathe new air into Jewish voluntary activity

It is always possible that there is no need to establish a new institute, but rather revive one already in existence and obtain political and professional consent for the initiative....

Notes

1. S. Zweig, *Le Monde d'hier*, Belfond, 1993, p. 310
2. L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe 2007*, p. 20
3. The Treaties of Rome, 1957; The Single European Act, 1968; The Treaty of European union (Maastricht Treaty), 1991; The Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997; The Treaty of Nice, 2000; the Basic Treaty of Human Rights of the EU.
4. Arnold Toynbee put it this way: "There is an unquestioned geographic reality which we call Eurasia." *The Course of World History*, Vol. 2, in L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe*, 2007, p. 19.
5. If part of the criticism aimed at the United States is justified, part is an expression of fundamental narrow thinking. In Europe, particularly among the intellectual circles, there is an attempt to hide slow scientific, artistic and professional progress in a very blatant anti-American attitude.
6. S. Zweig, *Le Monde d'hier*, Belfond, 1993, p. 465.
7. L. Kuhnhardt, *Towards Europe*, 2007, p. 22

8. D. Chenoux-Repond, in *ibid.* p. 26
9. D. Pinto. "Towards an European Jewish Identity" in *Golem*.
10. The Consistoire centrale de France was leading a few years ago, under the joint leadership of the President of the institution and the Chief Rabbi of France, steps in the process of establishing an European institution for rabbinical training. The sensitivity of the various communities was not taken into account, neither were the changes that had occurred in rabbinical training in the world which emphasize more and more the place of Israel. The initiative failed because it was the result of a Jewish political action in France and not the result of a process including inter-European discussion and planning.
11. D. J. Elazar, "Israel, the fall of Communism, and the re-emergence of European Jewry in Judaism,"