

## THE TWO EUROPEES

Răzvan THEODORESCU\*

### Abstract.

#### The Two Europes - Synopsis

Defining Europe has never been easy and without a certain amount of confusion. We consider that we can talk of two Europes ever since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when Imperium Romanorum was divided into Pars Orientis and Pars Occidentis. This was the beginning of an 'intellectual divorce', and thus we have the European West, attached to 'res', the pragmatic, looking for Jesus the Man, and the European East, attached to 'logos', believing in Jesus' divinity.

Eastern Europe can be divided into two great subregions: the Ukrainian Russian and the South Eastern Europe. The East has always had a well-defined place in Europe. Orthodox, in part Muslim, built on the tradition of Byzantine Commonwealth, a world with agrarian traditions, marked by Caesaro-Papism at one time, is totally different from Central Europe.

In the early 90's, some complicated terminology was used to refer to this space, as an outcome of a simplistic American opinion which saw Eastern as Western Europe as the reflex of a situation created by the Cold War.

We disagree with the opinion that the division between east and West is not geographical, but geopolitical, reflecting the political division of the post-Yalta Europe. The unity of the continent is given by the traditional Christianity, which constitutes the binding agent, whereas the difference is made up by the confessional divide.

The spiritual history of South-Eastern Europe has been dominated by a few constants originated from Balkan and Carpathian-Danubian multiculturalism. South-Eastern Europe participates to continental values via common values and aspirations that make up a cultural model of a spiritual life. In South-Eastern Europe, people are living with the feeling of belonging to an Europe which meets another Europe, preserving its heritage.

**Key words:** Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Pars Occidentis, Pars orientis, 'res', 'logos', intellectual divorce, orthodoxy, Christianity, unity, 'kin-country' syndrome, spiritual history, multiculturalism, utopia

The question of defining Europe is, to my mind, a central issue in which we find a great deal of confusion.

Since as early as 1980, in the main report delivered at the international congress of history in Bucharest, I have attempted to voice my opinion with respect to the way in which we are to look at Europe. I resumed it in a second report at another congress which took place in Oslo in 2000, where I talked about

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\* Member of Romanian Academy. Full member of Academy of Romanian Scientists.

the origins of the two Europes: *the Eastern and the Western ones*. I must add that Western Europe has an active periphery, which is extremely interesting, the so called “Mitteleuropa”, or else, Central Europe.

From my own point of view, ever since the 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, the moment in which “Imperium Romanorum” is turn in two – “Pars Orientis” and “Pars Occidentis” – we already have *two worlds*.

It was not the 1054 Schism, not even the iconoclastic moment in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but the very genesis of European Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that separated the two parts of the Roman Empire. So, we have the *European West*, attached to “res”, to things, pragmatic, with little sophistication and for this very reason Arian, looking, from the religious perspective, for Jesus the man, loving his stigmata and his Passion, *faced with an East*, attached to the “logos”, believing in Jesus’ divinity, and therefore Monophysite. This is the beginning of an *intellectual divorce* – let us not be afraid of words –, a divorce within Europe at the dawn of the Middle Ages.

On the one hand, the Western world of Aristotle and of Thomas Aquinas; on the other, Plato’s world, Plotinus’ world, the Eastern world. Pay attention please: these are the worlds of the two Balkan people, Plato and Aristotle, who have been creating our continent to these days.

I shall not speak now of neither West nor Centre, the “Mitteleuropa”, more a creation of the Austrocracy of the first modern epoch than anything else.

I shall speak of our Europe, the eastern one. Eastern Europe has, in my opinion, two great subregions or subareas: the Ukrainian-Russian and the South-Eastern European ones. In its turn, the European South-East is a meeting between two worlds: the Balkan world, which contains Greece, Albania, the space of the former Yugoslavian Federation, Bulgaria and the space to the north of the Danube, which is no longer Balkan, the space circumscribed by the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, enclosed for its most essential part within the territory of today’s Romania, yet containing also some Southern regions of Hungary plus some Eastern regions, such as those comprised in the present day Moldova Republic., the ancient Bessarabia. Here comes a comment about Balkan subarea, precisely the problem of the European Turkey, part of the Balkans anyway.

Being more specific, I must say that today, the concept of South-Eastern civilization begins to be more dynamic.

Years ago, I have sketched the idea of a South-Eastern-Pontic European civilization, which proves that Caucasus itself, with the whole area of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, inserting Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia are the borders of Europe (according, officially, to the Council of Europe too). This vision concerning South-Eastern Europe divides the Mediterranean area in terms of vicinities with the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea and we recall the definition given, years and years ago, to this South-East by one of the founders of

geopolitics, the German scholar Rupert von Schumacher: it's the region comprised between the most northern point of the Adriatic Sea, Trieste, and the most northern point of the Black Sea, Odessa. In such a way we have in Southern Europe, from Portugal to Turkey, the Euromediterranean dimension of the European Union (considering the future acceptance of the secular, kemalist world of republican Turkey in our community).

We must see things as they are. I sometimes am bothered by the fact that people speak – without the property of terms – of integrating this world of ours in the Euro-Atlantic system. Let us be very well understood: Euroatlantism – different from the Catholic, Orthodox and, maybe, in the next future, Islamic Euromediterranism – is a historical phenomenon that begins in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a phenomenon whose hard core is given by Calvinist countries, England and the Netherlands, and by Lutheran countries, from the area of Scandinavia and Germany. They are the strong nucleus of Euroatlanticism and they are also the richest countries in today's European Union. This tradition, however, let me repeat, was created in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. To this Euroatlantic world were attached the English colonies in America, the future United States. So it was created an important group of Calvinist, Lutheran, Unitarian or Puritan Protestants which – the way Max Weber taught us, with his sociology of religion – created the Euroatlantic capitalism and the climax of economic development.

Coming back to our Eastern Europe I must say that it is of little importance how we are “reading” the European map. In the last instance, its East has always had a well-determined place in the construct called Europe; a place which has not been “forged” – despite what is very often believed – by the very recent times of Moscow vassalage. Even when Europe was conceived in a tripartite division, with an Atlantic, a Mediterranean and an Eastern zone, in the manner Immanuel Wallenstein did in his famous analysis “The Modern World System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World” (1974) or when at the heart of the European Union distinctions were made between the very advanced ones – France, Germany – and the others, less evolved – Spain, Greece, Portugal –, the Southeast European area was never let out the division. In front of the Atlantic Europe, Protestant and Catholic, corresponding to the oceanfront towards the New World, there was an Eastern Europe, Orthodox and, in part, Muslim, built on the tradition of which the Oxford Professor Dimitri Obolensky called the “Byzantine Commonwealth”, followed and replicated by the Ottoman one. Eastern Europe, situated across the centuries in the sphere of Russocracy and of Turcocracy, as a world with agrarian traditions, with a church marked by Caesaro-Papism at a given moment, a world with absolutist tendencies –hence, probably, the prevalence of Presidential republics, in which modern Parliamentarism is far from having a major tradition – is something totally different from Central Europe.

A Central Europe – active and creative periphery of Western Europe, forever dominated by Protestantism and by Catholicism – with spiritual democratic priorities, constituting a world of its own whose roots lied in the Jagiellonian empire and in the Austrocracy that left a decisive imprint on Hungary as well as on the Czech Republic, on Slovakia as well as on Poland, on Croatia as well as on Slovenia, oscillating between East and West.

It has been said that his Central Europe – a very fluid concept – was initially a “state of mind”, the world of Franz Kafka and Robert Musil, of Stefan Zweig and Milan Kundera, which was born together with the Double Monarchy and which remain today an area whose inhabitants choose to reject their own geography.

In magazines printed in ever larger editions, one finds maps containing aberrant geographies, inspired by obscure political criteria: in the Mitteleuropa there is the Czech Republic and Croatia, yet not Austria, while it goes as far as Albania, Macedonia and up to the borders of Greece!

Such things happen after various chancelleries on both sides of the Atlantic have begun to imagine new denominations that tell us absolutely nothing: “North Central Europe” refers to the area where the Baltic countries and Poland are situated, while “South Central Europe” is supposed to span the area beginning with Bucharest and ends with Cape Mattapan....

They may remind us of certain organizations and organisms that came out in the early 1990s, with titles like: “Central European Initiative”, made out as a “Danubian Adriatic” group, later to become a “Pentagonal” and still later “Hexagonal”. All this complicated terminology, in my opinion useless, was the outcome of an extremely simplistic American opinion, according to which Eastern Europe and Western Europe, these venerable entities shaped by history, were nothing but the recent reflex of a situation created by Cold war, dividing our continent between Washington’s allies and Moscow’s satellites.

Likewise, an important annalist, Zbigniew Brzezinski said without hesitation the following in 1990: “It is a fact that the terms Eastern and Western Europe, as used in the past few decades, have not been geographical, but geopolitical denominations. They reflected the political division of the post-Yalta Europe”. Obviously he was wrong, the two parts of our continent are the result of a long, a very long history. Let me add one more reflection. The unity of this continent is connected to one single point which is a unique binding agent: its traditional Christianity. The circumstance that Europe is, in actual fact, an encounter between two complementary worlds, sometimes in conflict; the convictions that being Europeans means to share in values that were known on our continent at the time when it was born into spirit, 2000 years ago, equally in the West and in the East, must be recognized by whoever deals with history.

“The Making of Europe”, a book written 80 years ago by the British historian Christopher Dawson, emphasizes that the Christian idea played a major role. And here I must underline another fundamental difference between its two parts: the confessional divide. Any debate regarding European construction must start from this crucial point.

Although the majority of scholars make the difference between civilizations via their own history, their own languages and religion, there are not a few politicians that go lightly over the religions criterion when it comes to continental and transcontinental developments. And this happens despite the recent warning of former Yugoslavia where, is very well known, was manifested what political science and the Harvard school call the “kin-country syndrome” – concerning countries related, first of all, from a spiritual, religious point of view -, Germany, Austria, Vatican supporting the Catholic republics in Slovenia and Croatia; Shiite Iran, Sunni Turkey and Saudi Arabia offering consistent help to the Muslims from Bosnia, while Eltsin’s orthodox Russia had been an ally of Miloshević’s orthodox Serbia.

Now, concerning this orthodox culture which, I would say, defines Eastern Europe, we should provide an urgent answer to an issue that will come up whenever large intellectual encounters take place: that is, what does the civilization of Orthodoxy stand for in today’s Europe? Don’t forget, 18% of the countries in EU are orthodox. The question is, therefore, that of the present place of this civilization, forged over what, in the opinion of the vast majority of politicians, used to represent from Renaissance onwards, “universitas christiana”, which, according to them, ended at the eastern borders of the Catholic and Protestant worlds: that is, somewhere between the Baltic countries and Russia, or between the Croatian - Slovenian and the Serbian area.

I must add that the values of the orthodoxy have been evoked as a paradigm by the highest spiritual instances of the West (my thought goes to one of the most important Apostolic letters of late Pope John Paul II, “*Oriente lumen*”, which emphasized the importance of what Orthodoxy has to offer at present).

Here we must recall the spiritual history of South-Eastern Europe, dominated by a few constants, originated from the very nature of the Balkan and Carpathian-Danubian multiculturalism. Let us try to enumerate them: the option between East and West; the powerful ascendancy of Orthodoxy, receiving distinctive features, first territorial, and then national; religious tolerance as a result of a spiritual openness; a democratic spirit manifest in the synodal structure of the Ecclesia.

Between the Euroatlantic and the Euromediterranean areas of the European Union and NATO, and the Eurasia area of the Community of Independent States, South-Eastern Europe participates to continental growth via common values and aspirations that make up a cultural model, that of a spiritual life, together with the Orthodox – Islamic area at the Black Sea and the Caucasus, and the Catholic-Protestant area in Danubian Europe, both part and parcel of great Europe; this

great Europe which must remain a simple geographic denomination, spanning several historical realities, just as Asia or America.

In South-Eastern Europe, at this intercardinal point in the geohistory of the continent, in this area of perpetual political transaction and of permanent waiting, of the totalitarian and dominating gesture, of superb or useless sacrifices, of mysterious and shining Orthodoxy, people have lived and still are living with the feeling of belonging to an Europe which meets another Europe, preserving its rich natural heritage, its intellectual pride and its deep wounds.

Also in search of Europe, let us remember, from time to time, that this continent was born under the Athenian Acropolis, descending from Plato and Aristotle, at the heart of the Balkans, position which, of course, confers neither advantages, nor merits. In the case of South-Eastern Europe, durable part of Eastern Europe, there is the vocation of uniting the Black Sea with the Rhine, the Mediterranean and the Germanic world.

Otherwise, a danger might be lurking around for us, to be led by political fantasies towards utopia. This would, in an ancient tongue and of a very noble breed, always of Balkan origin, means the “place that is no place”. At the same time, we hope that the dreams of a unique model, for a unique party, for a unique religion, for a unique race, are on the way of becoming forever extinct.

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