

## The Search for Europe's Identity

*Decline and Rise of Europe* by John Lukacs. Doubleday. \$4.95.

by Edward T. Gargan

The search for Europe's identity has been a long one and that inquiry is not yet exhausted. The first great prophetic description of the European character was that of Aristotle in his *Politics*. "Those who live," he wrote "in a cold climate and in Europe are lull of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organization and are incapable of ruling over others." He thought Asians intelligent and inventive, but lacking spirit and therefore easily enslaved. While the Hellenic race, according to Aristotle, forming an intermediary position between Asia and Europe, a third world, was uniquely gifted with a sense of measure. Here men were "high spirited and intelligent," free and the best governed, destined to rule the world. Aristotle's great pupil Alexander turned to Asia and made no effort to bring Europe within his empire. Rome succeeded in incorporating much of Europe within her orbit, but this action was not designed to stress the special qualities of the European peoples. The Christian faith brought to Europe a consensus of belief and habit that men recognized as shared by those within Christendom. But it was only during the Renaissance and Reformation that map makers and thinkers alike became conscious of Europe as both a geographic and spiritual reality.

In the eighteenth century Edward Gibbon best expressed the developing sense of what it was to be a European. In his *Decline*

and Fall Gibbon agreed that the patriot must promote the "... exclusive interest and glory of his native country; but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic. . . ." Europe has perhaps never been more promisingly presented than it was when he wrote of Europe, "... as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation." And where "the balance of power will continue to fluctuate and the prosperity of our own or the neighboring kingdoms may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies."

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A century and a half after Gibbon's celebration of Europe's civilization, Paul Valéry, looking at the broken and shattered image of Europe in 1919, suggested with heartbreaking clarity, "We later civilizations . . . we too now know that we are mortal." In further explanation of this somber thought Valéry asked:

Will Europe become *what it is in reality*—that is, a little promontory on the continent of Asia?

Or will it remain *what it seems*—that is, the elect portion of the terrestrial globe, the pearl of the sphere, the brain of a vast body?

Valéry described Europe's precious qualities as those of curiosity, imagination, rigorous logic, a skeptical but not pessimistic posture, and an "unresigned mysticism."

John Lukacs answers in re-

sponse to Valéry that Europe does exist as a reality, and that it may still be considered the center of the world's history. He effectively establishes both the scope of Europe's material recovery following the second world war and the high spirit and energy common to all the European nations. Lukacs joins Gibbon and Valéry in his love of Europe and trust in her possibilities. He believes that from the most profound levels of Europe's historical consciousness there will evolve a great Europe united in body and soul, magnificent in its ideals; a land destined to redress the wrongs of Asia and the failings of the New World. With a superb command of the facts he traces out the reconstruction, industrialization and prosperity of Europe.

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Stanley Hoffmann wisely proposed last year that "cursing de Gaulle was no substitute for a policy" towards France and Europe. Lukacs believes that there can be no substitute for praising de Gaulle and his understanding of Europe. He considers de Gaulle's genius evident in his early recognition that Europe must remain independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union. The interpretation of de Gaulle as nationalist and reactionary is characterized as superficial and false. De Gaulle is seen as brilliantly correct in recognizing that the inner development, confidence, and success of the individual nations of Europe is indispensable to the harmony and cooperation of the nations of Europe.

In his most original and creative proposal Lukacs notes that while the old nation-state system of Europe is happily no more, the individuality and homogeneity of the separate states must deepen

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and continue to be supported. This kind of nationality is a strength and source of hope. "For the first time in modern history," Lukacs observes, "the states of Europe are more national and more homogeneous than ever before. For the first time in the history of Europe ethnic and political, national and state frontiers largely coincide not only in western but also in the eastern part of the continent—and I believe this to be one of the most important developments of recent history." It is this "internalization" of the European nations that makes possible a more perfect European confederation of the future, he contends.

After considering the problems raised for Europe by the presence of Russia, the future of Eastern Europe, Germany's central place in the continent, the relations of America and England to Europe, Lukacs finds that Europe will be able to maintain its own character despite the pressures of these relationships. A particularly stimulating illustration of this European genius at work is the contemporary European contribution to democratic theory and practice. Tocqueville's prediction that democracy was the great force shaping the destiny of Europe has proven true. Lukacs argues, however, that Europe's success means that the American example is no longer the "model and paradigm of the future to come." This development now calls for a book that will be the reverse of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*; a book on *American Democracy* appropriate to the limits of this

nation's historical experience.

The title of Lukacs' book might well be *Democracy in Europe*. Tocqueville proposed in a famous sentence that "a new science of politics is needed for a whole new world." Lukacs has taken a step towards a "new science" for a whole new world emerging in Europe. This world is distinguished by the quality of its historical consciousness. This consciousness, according to Lukacs, has enabled Europe to make the transition to a post-scientific, post-ideological age. This new age is not anti-scientific, but determinedly open to the sources of wisdom and understanding that surpass scientific investigation. He further believes that the continued internalization of the nations of Europe will result in the development of new symbols and forms of political life to fulfill the promises of the European consciousness.



There can be little criticism of Lukacs' concept of Europe. It compels one's admiration and attracts one to the hope that sustains his dreams for Europe. He has, however, been less critical of the society that he sees emerging than was Tocqueville of the world he studied. Hans Kohn recently reminded us that there still exists the possibility of the continued "depoliticization of the average Frenchman," and "a slow adapta-

tion to the dictatorial—though dictatorial in a civilized way—regime." This unhappy prospect is not fully disposed of in this exciting book of John Lukacs. Nor is it completely clear why Lukacs is so severe in his treatment of the scientific contribution to the study of economic policy. In praise of de Gaulle he writes, ". . . like Bismarck, who knew then that Germany would not be united by the twaddle of professors and abstract democrats, de Gaulle knew that Western Europe would not be united by the twaddle of bureaucrats and economists shuffling deadening statistics, dealing with the international tariff on frozen chickens." This is witty and wicked, but it is not true. In reality it may be that the experts of the European Economic Community are the heroes in the effort to bring Europe peace, harmony, prosperity. These experts are making a contribution to a whole new world similar to that of the members of the legal profession to the development of political liberty in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

And it must be suggested that in stressing the intellectual and spiritual profundity of the European understanding Lukacs invites the retribution that is visited upon the overly proud. He is certainly a scholar of restraint and proportion. He presents his Europeans, however, as less than modest. Narcissus, conscious of the blemishes and wounds inflicted by past battles, is still in danger of drowning in the pool into which he gazes.

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*The modern idea of Europe is more recent than we have been accustomed to think; and even more recent than the modern idea of Europe is the development of a European consciousness. . . . What we must recognize is that the collapse of the European state system did not mean the end of European his-*

*tory: that, indeed, we are facing two countervailing historical developments: decline—definite decline—of the European system on the one hand, rise—vague rise—of a European consciousness on the other.*

— from *Decline and Rise of Europe*  
by John Lukacs

**Counterinsurgency Warfare**

John S. Pustay. Free Press. 236 pp. \$6.95.

Major Pustay analyzes the nature of Communist insurgency operations in underdeveloped areas and proposes methods of preventing and combatting actions of this type. He has given a "heavy emphasis" to the military aspects of these operations, placing in this category programs of a "constructive" as well as a "destructive" nature.

**The Works of Peace**

Eileen Egan. Sheed & Ward. 212 pp. \$4.50.

Highlights of the voluntary international relief programs conducted by American Catholic women are presented here by a leader of those efforts. In an afterword, economist Barbara Ward discusses areas where "vigorous action" is needed to promote other "works of peace."

**Vatican Diary 1964**

Douglas Horton. United Church Press. 205 pp. \$3.00/\$4.00.

Dr. Horton, according to a recent newspaper account, has probably heard every one of the 2,000 speeches at the Vatican Council which he is attending as a delegate-observer representing the

International Congregational Church. His diaries of the 1962 and 1963 sessions were published last year.

**A Critique of Pure Tolerance**

Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., Herbert Marcuse. Beacon. 117 pp. \$2.45.

Each of the essayists—two are philosophers and one is a sociologist—arrives, by a different path, at the conclusion that "the prevailing theory and practice of tolerance" are "in varying degrees hypocritical masks to cover appalling political realities."

**Gandhi on Non-Violence**

Thomas Merton, ed. New Directions (paper). 82 pp. \$1.50.

In an introductory essay, Father Merton attempts to show that the teachings of the Indian leader are not limited by considerations of geography and culture but are "precepts fundamentally necessary if man is to recover his right mind." The statements he has selected from Gandhi's "Non-Violence in Peace and War" deal with the principles, political scope, spiritual dimensions and perfect practice of this philosophy.

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