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Настоящий номер Тетрадей Русской экспертной школы представляет собой сборник избранных экспертных позиций и докладов, обсуждавшихся на семинарах и конференциях Школы в 2017 году. В этом номере рассматриваются следующие вопросы: какого человека формирует современное образование, как осуществляются революции в современном мире, как события 1917 года влияют на современный политический дискурс, как формируется образ Русской Православной Церкви за рубежом, что такое интеллектуальная дипломатия и каковы истоки культурного кризиса современной Европы.

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REFLECTIONS ON EUROPE: IDENTITY AND FIDELITY

These reflections on Europe are written from the point of view of a conservative writer who was born in Eastern Europe (Romania) but has lived in the West (Denmark) for almost forty years.

Conservatism, deriving from the Latin «*conservare*» («to preserve, keep, guard»), is characterized by a will to protect. In a broad but not superficial sense conservatism can be defined as a concern to *defend human life*. By saying that, we have already touched the heart of the matter. For how is life that is essentially human to be defined?

The best way to answer this question is by beginning at the beginning, that is to say beginning with the objective, given, unalterable facts of human existence – and the beginning of man is, as the German philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote, his *birth*, the fact of being born. To be born is a bond: Man does not owe his existence to himself, nor is he born into a void but into «a pre-existing world, constructed by the living and the dead»¹. This world has an *objective* existence: a land; parents, ancestors; the vast expanse of history and historical experience; a common language; common assumptions and values. It is an «old» world, marked by that *legacy of the past* we call culture.

The human world is a world of «memory», that is to say of «tradition». To quote Arendt once more: «Without tradition — which selects and names, which hands down and preserves, which

¹ *Hannah Arendt, Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961, pp. 61, 174, 196, 177.

indicates where the treasures are and what their worth is — there seems to be no willed continuity in time and hence <...> neither past nor future, only sempiternal change of the world and the biological cycle of living creatures in it»².

That is indeed the difference between the animal and the human world. Whereas the animal world is the world of generations coming to life and disappearing without a trace, a mere repetition of the same individual being born over and over again, the human world has a history and is constituted by a permanent flow of memories being handed down to new generations. Humans have a future because they have a past. If there is no past, then the future is simply the biological reproduction of individuals. If there is no past to be remembered, then humans, contrary to their nature, are caught in a blind continuous present.

Part of that «pre-existing world, constructed by the living and the dead», that part which is *ours* is Europe, to begin with the country in which we were born. It is its air we first breathed, and together with it we breathed our first language and the *Weltanschauung* of the language (for every language is an understanding of the world), the first tales and historical memories that have come down to us from times past. From his very birth man is plunged into an inherited world, a world in which everything (language, tales, memories; paths in the landscape and cities) is heritage. That's what constitutes a human being in his living concreteness. The individual is constituted by his community — the individual is already a bond — just as the community is constituted of its individuals.

² Ibid., p. 5.

If we now turn to the main question in hand — namely Europe — the first answer, which is nothing more than a simple statement of fact, is that Europe means the communities that constitute it. In principle, national communities held together by the bonds of language, historical trials, tradition and custom. Europe is: English and French and Danish and Italian and Russian cultures. That is the European reality and at the same time Europe's lasting richness.

What enables us to say «Europe» in the singular is that which unites all these different and yet related communities, and that is *Christianity*: Europe is a gift of «the child in the manger»³. Christianity is what created Europe.

Now, what is the connection between Europe and the European Union? The European Union is a semantic forgery. It is neither a «union», nor is it «European». It all depends on whether one understands Europe as a mere *territory* on a map or as a *spiritual* personality. If all there is to it is a territory, then one is right in talking about a European Union. But if one's understanding is spiritual and cultural, then there is hardly anything European in the European Union.

It cannot be purely accidental that the one word that has been avoided in the (provisional or ratified) constitutions of the European Union⁴ has been Christianity. It is precisely that which *characterizes* and *unites* Europe that has been omitted.

Instead of what is specifically European the European Union is committed to «human rights». The opposite of «human rights» is not a contrasting theory advocating for lawlessness and inhuman behaviour, quite on the contrary, it is a demand that human beings should be perceived and treated as *human*, and not as faceless num-

³ *Constantin Noica*, *Despre demnitatea Europei* (On the Dignity of Europe), Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993, 2012, pp. 71-80.

⁴ For example, Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (2004), Treaty of Lisbon (2007).

bers. The problem with human rights is that they strip the individuals of that which constitutes their living identity — their culture (which is always an inherited culture), their traditions, their personal and collective history. They establish an intellectually false barrier between the individual and the community. At present, human rights (which under certain circumstances can have beneficial effects) are *a mechanism for the destruction of the existing communities* — by bringing not only Europe but the whole world down to a common denominator.

This can be illustrated by numerous examples, ranging from the difficulty of the Western European countries to defend their borders against the migration flow and thus protect their rights as a community, to upholding small (even insignificant) minorities' rights against the rights of the majority (one remembers the debates concerning the homosexuals' right to a religious wedding and to the adoption of children). In both examples continuity is broken — a continuity of tradition, of moral perception, basic institutions (such as the family) and social forms — and replaced by upheaval and uprootedness and consequently *homelessness*.

The European Union is simply a technical project (institutions and regulations) imposed from above, which deprives the participant countries of their sovereignty, that is to say of the authority to fashion the community in accordance with its own traditions, to lay down laws that bear the stamp of its historical understanding of the law, and to defend itself. In other words, it breaks up the continuity that lies at the foundation of a community as — to put it in Edmund Burke's well-known words — «a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born»⁵.

⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (ed. J. C. D. Clark), Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 261.

The European Union is a project with utopian features, and as all utopias do, it treats human beings as passive human material without any identity. It is a project in movement, as stated in the preambles of the treaties. The goal is «an ever closer union among the European peoples»⁶. Using Aristotle's terms one could say that instead of seeking «harmony» (harmony presupposes diversity), the European Union seeks to turn «harmony into unison»⁷.

This point can be illustrated by a document of the European Union — an old document that is not very well known, maybe because it was thought somehow embarrassing in its candour. It is the Report of the Belgian politician Willy De Clercq, former European Commissioner for External Relations and Trade (1985-1989), a report that dates back to 1993: *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Community*⁸.

In its opening paragraph the report states that: «The European Community is in a critical situation in terms of confidence, credibility, desirability, economic performance, peace-keeping capability, public approval and public support» (1.1).

This is an open avowal of the gap between the European Union and its inhabitants. There is no «union»; perfect unison has not been achieved («Europe does not speak with one voice», 2.2). The remedy suggested by the report is the use of pure propaganda in order to create the New European Man: «Stimuli» must be created in order

⁶ As stated since 1957 in The Treaty establishing a European Economic Community (EEC).

⁷ Aristotle, *Politics* (trans. B. Jowett), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885; II,5; 1263b14-15.

⁸ *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Community: Report by the Group of Experts chaired by Mr. Willy De Clercq, Member of the European Parliament, March 1993* (EU European Parliament Document) (http://aei.pitt.edu/29870/1/DE_CLERCQ_REPORT_INFO_COMM_POLICY.pdf).

to «change» people's «attitudes» and «obtain (the) desired reactions» (3.7; 2.2). The word «stimuli» is obviously taken from the field of biology. A plant reacts to a light stimulus; the well-known Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) experimented with dogs and discovered the mechanism of «conditioned reflexes». What is important here is the fact that the population of Europe is treated not as conscious and responsible human beings with a moral and spiritual identity but reduced to animals in a testing laboratory.

The report does admit that this automatic sameness and «togetherness» is hard to achieve, because «[t]he need to close ranks in the face of a common enemy has been largely dissipated by the collapse of the Soviet Union» (1.1;4.1).

A quarter of a century later, in our present day, the ideas in the report have been finally carried out. The European Union has set up a propaganda apparatus, called East StratCom Task Force, with the aim of promoting a positive image of the European Union and re-creating that enemy-image which disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union, that is to say casting Russia in the role of the «common enemy». (This activity is euphemistically called «forecasting, addressing and responding to disinformation»⁹.)

So now I am going to ask the question: *What is the menace against Europe?* And I mean that Europe which is constituted by its peoples and cultures — Europe in depth.

⁹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/2116/%20Questions%20and%20Answers%20about%20the%20East%20StratCom%20Task%20Force.

There is first a threat from outside. This threat is so concrete and visible that one can talk of «population replacement» and, as for example in France, of the country's «lost territories»¹⁰.

What is at issue is the fact that the large mass of immigrants are not that abstract tabula rasa-individual which the ideology of human rights operates with, but flesh and blood, human beings who carry their community of origin with them, who maintain their faith and their ancient loyalties, which in itself is worthy of respect, but which also makes them largely impervious to their new environment.

The danger that Europe is facing — the danger from without — is Islam. Islam is a religion of war [here and further the author probably conflates the concepts «Islam» and «Islamism» — *by editor*] dividing the world into two: the *Dar al-Islam* or «house of Islam, abode of Submission and Peace» (territories ruled by a Muslim government) and the *Dar al-Harb* or «house of war», where Islam is not yet reigning. However, the theological opposition between Islam and Christianity runs even deeper.

Islam is not opposed to Christianity in the same way the other religions which do not know Christ are opposed to — or simply different from — Christianity as God's revelation through Jesus Christ. All non-Christian religions with the exception of Islam can, in a large and generous sense, be interpreted as «myths» or «symbolic images» that God sends to the heathens in order to guide them and call them unto him¹¹. What makes Islam different is that it is the only religion that consciously rejects salvation through Christ.

¹⁰ *Renaud Camus*, *Le Grand Remplacement*, Neuilly sur Seine: Éditions David Reinhard, 2011; Alain Finkielkraut, *L'identité malheureuse*, Paris: Gallimard, Folio, 2015, p. 177.

¹¹ *Chesterton G.K.*, *The Everlasting Man*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925; *C.S. Lewis*, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1933.

For Islam, Jesus is not «the Christ, the Son of the living God», he is not Immanuel («God with us»), he is not the Saviour (Mt 16,15-18; 1,23; Lk 2,11). At the same time, Islam appropriates Jesus as a Muslim prophet and creates a distorted image of him.

The other characteristics of Islam are consequences of this original rejection. As transcendence and immanence do not meet in the paradox of the Incarnation, the Muslim God is a distant God, wrapped in his frozen eternity. His Quran is not an inspired book, written down by people who listened to God and with their limited capacities and the force of their faith scribbled down what they had heard, seen and understood, but an uncreated book, eternal not only in its spirit and significance but in its very letter. As Islam is also a social and political project, a pattern of society that defines all human behaviours and relationships, a code of law established from all eternity, the tendency of Islam is to arrest movement, to stop history. This unconditional submission to laws and decrees that are deemed eternal, this world encapsulated in itself, crossing history like a caravan travelling through the vast expanses of the desert, is Islam's strength.

It goes without saying that to talk about «Christianity versus Islam» is to talk about the main features of the two religions and civilizations, leaving aside the question of individual Muslims perfectly capable of becoming integrated into a hosting European society and thus of abandoning a purely Islamic way of life. It also leaves aside the question of the coexistence of the two religious groups under precise historical circumstances. Coexistence is possible, has been possible but can be fragile, as testified by the wars that accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The point here is not the Islamic threat as such but the reason why Europe is not defending itself, and what's more, is quite

willing, even with the most brutal means, to side with Islam against Christianity — I am thinking, of course, of the Yugoslavian tragedy and the loss of Kosovo and Metohija. The very fact that the attitude of Western Europe (and the United States) can, in this case, only be explained in terms of geopolitical interests shows the official West's indifference towards its own religion and civilization.

The paradox is that Europe could have been prepared for a confrontation with Islam because Islam, since its very beginning, has followed the Christendom like a shadow. It is not accidental that the first Christian theologian to write about Islam was the Father of the Church John of Damascus¹², born some 30 years after the Muslim conquest of Syria in the 630's. Afterwards, Europe itself was brought face-to-face with Islam for more than one thousand years. There have been victories: Charles the Hammer, the battle of Poitiers, 732; John Sobieski, the battle of Vienna, 1683; and there have been the two «reconquests»: the Catholic *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula (spanning some 770 years between 711 and 1492), and the Orthodox «reconquest», the liberation of the Orthodox lands south and north of the Danube at the end of the 19th century. If Europe had preserved its historical sense, then it could have said as the French writer Jean Raspail does in his well-known book *Le Camp des Saints*: «The fall of Constantinople is a personal misfortune that happened to all of us only last week»¹³.

But that is not what Europe is saying today. Such words find no echo. History is indeed something that has taken place, but history in itself is silent. Here, the opposite of silence is *remembrance*.

¹² *St. John of Damascus*, Fount of Knowledge, part two Heresies in Epitome: How They Began and Whence They Drew Their Origin (De haeresibus); Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani.

¹³ *Jean Raspail*, *Le Camp des Saints* (Camp of Saints), Paris: Robert Laffont, 1973, 2011, p. 389.

The problem of Europe is not Islam, it is the loss of memory. It is not the kind of forgetfulness that comes with time, but a form of *organized oblivion*. In order for history to be fruitful, to be something else than decaying graves, the dearly paid-for experiences of the previous generations have to be passed down. This is what ensures the continuity of a cultural community.

The rejection of continuity, as well as the «denial of everything given», is the hallmark of the «radical nihilism» of modernity¹⁴, and present-day post-modernity is only the prolongation and the completion of this process.

What characterized the «Enlightened» modernity — notably in its influential, revolutionary French variant — was the struggle against the so-called «prejudices» and «superstitions», words that designate Christianity, tradition, customs and covenants, that is to say *the a priori foundations of culture*. With the French Revolution France was split into two¹⁵, and the division has, in the course of time, become the division of the whole Europe. Rejected and devaluated, the past ceases to be a source of knowledge and to provide orientation points for the present. Moreover, *the bad conscience of the West* — which is a perverse form of repentance without Christ and therefore without hope — has transformed the past into a bottomless pit of iniquity. If all the past of one's country (or one's civilization) is nothing more than an inferno of bloodshed and injustice, if one has nothing to love, to cherish, to look up to and to be proud of, then one has nothing to protect, nothing to defend. A *homeless* person cannot defend the home that he does not have. The break with the past involves the breaking down of the bond among gen-

¹⁴ Cf. Hannah Arendt, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁵ *Jean de Viguerie*, *Les deux patries: Essai historique sur l'idée de patrie en France*, Poitiers: Dominique Martin Morin (DMM), 2004.

erations, which leaves the individual solitary, defenceless and easy to manipulate.

The cultural crisis in the West is also connected with the recent past, with the ideology that has dominated a significant part the Western intelligentsia, namely Marxism. Marxism threw a veil over man's spiritual existence. Religion, metaphysical questions, morality, family, culture belonged to the «superstructure» (as opposed to the material, work-defined «base») and, in their older forms, were deemed as transitory forms of «false consciousness». Marxism brought to the fore an illusory concept of «universal man», the universalism of the class struggle, in which the universal working class — working men «without a country»¹⁶ — is united against its exploiters, and the abstract universalism of a utopian future. Marxism was further used to instil a guilty conscience in the West, and to delegitimize the idea of the dignity of the European civilization.

The point here is that the ideological presuppositions of the European Union, the background belief it is built upon, the presuppositions of the dominant ideology with its loosely defined but all-pervading «political correctness», is exactly this kind of universalism, a sort of *universalism gone mad, the tyranny of abstract thinking over the reality of life*. That is the deep reason why the European Union cannot define itself as European (European is specific and not universal) and is rejecting Europe's collective memory. In consequence, it shirks the duty of protecting the European peoples.

Pockets of resistance are to be found in almost every European country. They are delegitimized by being labelled «populist»

¹⁶ *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto, 1848, chap. II.*

(which is used as an invective) and by being accused of «lagging behind the times»¹⁷. Nevertheless, they exist and they lend a voice to that part of the society which has safeguarded its sense of historical, cultural and social continuity.

What about Russia? Is Russia totally different from the rest of Europe, or can it best be understood in connection with Europe?

The short answer to this question is that Russia is not «the window» to Europe, but the *mirror* of Europe. It is a magnifying glass through which Europe can be seen, and it is also an enchanted mirror: the mirror one can go through and find not only that one's shattering nightmares have come true (I am thinking of the communism of the Gulag) but also that the most cherished things one thought lost forever still exist.

Russia is Europe. First of all, because Russia means Christianity. Russia is still that «Holy Russia» («Святая Русь») one can see on Mikhail Nesterov's touching painting of the same title: the people, each with his burden of sin and suffering, coming to Christ, the Saviour of the world; people from all walks of life drawn to the Light of the World¹⁸.

The paths of Russia and the West have often crossed each other — in different ways and with different outcomes. Western Europe has had an enormous influence on Russian literature, arts in general, music (even Church music, as testified by Alexander Kastal-

¹⁷ *Chantal Delsol*, *Populisme: Les demeures de l'histoire*, Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 2015.

¹⁸ Mikhail Nesterov's painting dates back to 1901-1906.

sky's¹⁹ and Sergei Rachmaninoff's efforts to come back to the roots of Russian Church music — the so-called «New Direction», «новое направление»), as well as on philosophy and even theology (which later received the answer of an Aleksey Khomyakov²⁰). At first, influence meant imitation but influence turned finally out to be a source of inspiration that set Russia's own creative powers free.

This is only part of the story. The West also brought its rootlessness, the split between inherited culture and destructive utopias with it, which led to the Bolshevik revolution. Such tragic upheavals as the Bolshevik revolution can never be explained by just one cause — there are always imbrications of causes and effects and a fortuitous set of circumstances with fatal and irreversible results. Nevertheless, the intellectual roots of the Bolshevik revolution were Western. Communism was a Western ideology that was experimented on Russia. It is enough to re-read Dostoevsky's great novels in order to grasp the intensity of the new destructive way of thinking, imported from the West, and now laying waste the Russian soul.

The Bolshevik revolution, in its essence, was not at all new. It was the grand performance of a relatively old show, the French Revolution which, compared with what would happen in Russia, was a kind of «costume rehearsal».

Contrary to the common perception, communism was not that which divided Europe into two, but that which in a tragic fashion unites it. In religious terms, one could say that Russia — as well as

¹⁹ The renaissance of Church music in Russia can be traced back to Tchaikovsky. The composer Alexander Kastalsky (1856-1926), director of the Moscow Synodal School and of the Moscow Synodal Choir, played a crucial role in the rediscovery of the authentic riches of the Russian sacred music.

²⁰ Aleksey Khomyakov (1804-1860), the main representative of the Slavophile movement.

Eastern Europe in general — was chosen to bear the sins of Europe.

As a person who has grown up under communism it has always been my profound conviction that the long-hoped-for fall of communism would necessarily bring about not only our own liberation but also the liberation and the healing of Europe. However, this did not happen. The West kept on staring at the Iron Curtain without understanding that the Curtain was woven of the threads of its own *denial of reality* and *misconceptions about man*. And when the Curtain did disappear the West continued to instill its own delusions into Eastern Europe and spread its rootlessness into societies that had actually withstood communism.

The only country that — in my opinion — has escaped this fate is Russia. For Russia, as I have witnessed from a distance, is making an effort to find the sense of community, to retrieve the lost memory of the country, to bind the past and the present together, to come back to the faith of our Fathers. That is exactly what Russia is called to tell the world, so that *the harvest of suffering* (the suffering of communism) should enlighten the mind and the soul of Europe. Actually, Russia is trying to say that, but it is not being properly heard.

At the beginning of this paper I emphasized the fact of being born — the bonds with parents, ancestors, a sky, a piece of land, a language, a culture. These are *given* realities, and they are to be received as a *gift* and made one's own.

The process of receiving is a creative process leading finally to the formation of identity. Just as the individual receives

a «world» — his own «pre-existing world» that becomes part of him — and thus acquires an identity, so the community receives itself anew by recollecting its past and thus safeguards its collective identity and becomes capable of meeting its future.

Identity — the condition of being oneself and not another — always involves something other than the individual encased in itself, and who is a prey to his varying emotions and drives. Identity involves *fidelity*, *faithfulness*, remaining true to something that is broader and higher than one's limited self and life.

That is why today, Europe is experiencing an identity crisis. It is, at bottom, *a crisis of fidelity*.

I would like to close these reflections with a quotation from a Russian author who wrote all his works in French. His name is Vladimir Volkoff. By choosing him I am also bringing an illustration of the connection between Russia and the West that I mentioned before. Volkoff writes: «We are not Nobody's Sons <...>, nor are we Travellers without luggage <...>. No, we have a legacy to pass down. What must we be faithful to? I think that we have to be faithful to the future of our past»²¹.

²¹ Vladimir Volkoff (1932-2005), a descendant of the composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky and grandson of the White general Vladimir Volkoff under the command of Admiral Alexander Kolchak, received French literary awards (among others, Prix Chateaubriand and Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie française). Quotation from: Vladimir Volkoff: Les Dossiers H, Dossier conçu et dirigé par Lydwine Helly, Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 2006, p. 272. – Volkoff is referring here to two symptomatic plays: Henry de Montherlant, Fils de personne (1943) and Jean Anouilh, Le voyageur sans bagage (1937).