

30 years after 9/11 How many Germanies should Europe have?

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Vision & Global Trends. International Institute for Global Analyses
Piazza dei Navigatori 22, 00147 – Rome (Italy)
Analytical Dossier – N. 26/2019 – October 2019

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First Edition: October 2019

Analytical Dossier – N. 25/2019

www.vision-gt.eu

2019 sees the 30th anniversary of the European 9/11 – the fall of the Berlin Wall. Dislike the 9/11 that came 12 years later, which many now associate with the demise of the Anglo-American dominant capitalism, for the most – this European 9/11 marks the final end of the Cold War. Downing the Wall brought about the subsequent collapse of communism – narrative goes. Hence, it should be a date to celebrate annually as a final, everlasting opening of the road to universal freedom prosperity, globally shared rosy future – in word: a self-realisation of humankind.

The counter narrative claims something else. All the major socio-political movements, since the Enlightenment until the end of XX century, offered a vision for the entire human race: Universally conceived (or to say ideologized) for a universal appeal. Each of them had a coherent theory and strong intellectual appeal on fundamental issues (i) redistribution and (ii) access. E.g. the redistribution of knowledge and access of illiterate masses of burgeoning societies to it; redistribution of means of production and access of proletariat in critical decision-making; redistribution of production locations and access for all through unconstrained trade over the free oceans and seas, open to all. So, the claim goes that the collapse of the Berlin Wall was not an end of Communism (marked by the unilateral takeover of the Eastern German society). That meant far more. It marked an end of the planetary visions. Two competing ideologies heavily contested each other all over the globe, particularly in Berlin. And there, on 9/11, they lost both – beyond recovery. Ever since the 9/11 (of 1989), nobody is able or willing to offer any universally conductive vision for all.

Finally, it is wrong to conclude that it is the end of coherent universalism – it might be rather an (irreversible) end of the redistribution and access.

9/11 as a De-evolution?! Let us take a closer look.

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Ever since the Peace of Westphalia, Europe maintained the inner balance of powers by keeping its core section soft. Peripheral powers like England, France, Denmark, (Sweden and Poland being later replaced by) Prussia, the Ottomans, Habsburgs and Russia have pressed and preserved the center of continental Europe as their own playground. At the same time, they kept extending their possessions overseas or, like Russia and the Ottomans, over the land corridors deeper into Asian and MENA proper. Once Royal Italy and Imperial Germany had appeared, the geographic core ‘hardened’ and for the first time started to politico-militarily press onto peripheries, including the two European mega destructions, known as the two World Wars. Therefore, this new geopolitical reality caused a big security dilemma lasting from the 1814 Vienna congress up to Potsdam conference of 1945, being re-actualized again with the Berlin Wall destruction: How many Germanies and Italies should Europe have to preserve its inner balance and peace?

At the time of Vienna Congress (1814-15), there were nearly a dozen of Italophone states and over three dozen of Germanophone entities – 34 western German states + 4 free cities (*Kleinstaaterei*), Austria and Prussia. But, then after the self-defeating entrapment of Napoleon III and its lost war (Franco-Prussian war 1870-71), Bismarck achieved the illiberal unification. That marked a beginning of vertigo for the Germanophones, their neighbors and rest of the world. The Country went from a failed liberal revolution, hereditary monarchy, authoritarianism, frail democracy and finally it cradled the worst planetary fascism before paying for the second time a huge prize for its imperialism in hurry. All that in the first 7 decades of its existence.

The post-WWII Potsdam conference concludes with only three Germanophone (+ Lichtenstein + Switzerland) and two Italophone states (+ Vatican). Then, 30 years ago, we concluded that one of Germanies was far too much to carry to the future. Thus, it disappeared from the map overnight, and joined the NATO and EU – without any accession talks – instantly.

Today west of Berlin, the usual line of narrative claims that the European 9/11 (11 November 1989, fall of the Berlin Wall) was an event of the bad socio-economic model being taken over by the superior one – just an epilogue of pure ideological reckoning. Consequently – the narrative goes on – the west (German) taxpayers have taken the burden. East of Berlin, people will remind you clearly that the German reunification was actually a unilateral takeover, an *Anschluss*, which has been paid by the bloody dissolutions affecting in several waves two of the three demolished multinational Slavic state communities. A process of brutal erosions that still goes on, as we see it in Ukraine today.

SACRIFICING THE ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY?

What are Berliners thinking about it?

The country lost overnight naturally triggers mixed feelings. In the case of DDR, the nostalgia turns into *ostalgie* (longing for the East). Prof. Brigitte Rauschenbach describes: "Ostalgia is more like unfocused melancholy." Of the defeated one?! It is a "flight from reality for lack of an alternative, a combination of disappointment with the present and longing for the past". The first German ever in the outer space, a DDR cosmonaut, Sigmund Jähn is very forthcoming: "People in the East threw everything away without thinking... All they wanted was to join West Germany, though they knew nothing about it beyond its ads on television. It was easier to escape the pressures of bureaucracy than it is now to avoid the pressures of money." Indeed, at the time of Anschluss, DDR had 9.7 million jobs. 30 years later, they are still considerably below that number. Nowadays, it is a de-industrialized, demoralized and depopulated underworld of elderly.

If the *equality of outcome* (income) was a communist egalitarian dogma, is the belief in *equality of opportunity* a tangible reality offered the day after to Eastern Europe or just a deceiving utopia sold to the conquered, plundered, ridiculed and cannibalized *countries in transition*?

Wolfgang Herr, a journalist, claims: "The more you get to know capitalism the less inclined you are to wonder what was wrong with socialism." This of course reinforces the old theme – happiness. Why Eastern Germans were less discontent in their own country than ever since the "unification"? Simply, happiness is not an insight into the conditions; it is rather a match with expectations.

Famously comparing the two systems 15 years later, one former East Berliner blue-collar has said: "Telling jokes about Honecker (the long-serving DDR leader) could lead to problems, but calling your foreman at work a fool was OK. Nowadays anyone can call (Chancellor) Schröder names, but not their company' supervisor, it brings your life into a serious trouble."

The western leftists involved in the student uprisings of the late 1960s were idealistically counting on the DDR. When the wall fell, they thought it marked the start of the revolution. After sudden and confusing 'reunification', they complained: 'But why did you sacrifice the alternative society?'

They were not the only one caught by surprise. In the March 1990 elections, the eastern branch of Kohl's Christian Democrat party, passionately for 'reunification', won an easy majority, defeating the disorganized and dispersed civil rights activists who – in the absence of any other organized political form, since the Communist party was demonized and dismantled – advocated a separate, but democratic state on their own.

The first post-‘reunification’, pan-German elections were held after 13 months of limbo, only in December 1990. "Our country no longer existed and nor did we," Maxim Leo diagnosed. “The other peoples of Eastern Europe were able to keep their nation states, but not the East Germans. The DDR disappeared and advocates of Anschluss did their best to remove all trace of its existence”. Vincent Von Wroblewski, a philosopher, concludes on *Anschluss*: "By denying our past, they stole our dignity."

DEFEATED GREECE CONQUERING ROME

30 years after abandoning and ridiculing socialism, its (German-born Marx-Engels) ideas seem regaining the ground. That is so especially among the US Democrats and Greens, and the millennials all over the planet, including a global follower base to the Swedish ‘baby revolutionary’ Greta Thunberg.

In his 2019 International Labor Day speech, the Prime Minister of the turbo-liberal Singapore’ delivers a clear message of socialism: “A strong labour movement (from confrontation 50 years ago to cooperation today) remains crucial to us. In many developed countries, union membership is falling, and organised labour is becoming marginalised. Workers’ concerns are not addressed, and they feel bewildered, leaderless and helpless. Not surprisingly, they turn to extreme, nativist political movements that pander to their fears and insecurity, but offer no realistic solutions or inspiring leadership to improve their lives. In Singapore, constructive and cooperative unions, together with enlightened employers and a supportive government, have delivered better incomes for workers and steady progress for the country. We must stay on this path, and strengthen trust and cooperation among the tripartite partners, so that despite the uncertainties and challenges in the global economy, we can continue to thrive and prosper together as a nation.”

Back in Berlin, a 29-year-old Kevin Kühnert openly calls for socialism arguing that it ‘means democratic control over the economy’... over a tiger that in the meantime became too big and too wild to be controlled. He doesn’t shy away that his aim is ‘to replace capitalism as such not just to recalibrate it’. Kühnert’s socialism puts needs before skills and collective well-being before individual reward. Companies like BMW would be collectivized, meaning ownership by the workers. “Without collectivization of one form or the another, it is unthinkable to overcome capitalism” – this native of western Berlin claims.

Ideas might sound radical, but this raising star of the eldest and the second largest German political party – SPD, and its current Youth Chair (JUSOS), Kühnert enjoys huge support and popularity among millennials. It is a generation surprised by the social fairness, cultural broadness and overall achievements of the ‘defeated’ DDR.

The same principle would be applied to real estate: “I don’t think it is a legitimate business model, to earn a living from the living space of other people. Everybody should at most own the living space he himself inhabits – everything else would be owned collectively” – he explained in the mesmerizing interview for the leading German daily ‘Die Zeit’.

The triumphant neoliberalism of the German post-1989 dizzy years brought about fast and often opaque financial gains upwards, while the growing list of social risks were shifted downward. Today, the wealthiest are mostly those with the resources and skills to avoid taxes and ship jobs to China. Very often they are not even German; Warren Buffett is a major investor in Berlin real estate. Thirty years ago nobody from either side of the Berlin Wall imagined such scenarios. “Russians were here, but the culture and the restaurants were still German. Look at this now; what is German in this city – neither sports, food, outfits, property nor culture” – laments a baby-boomer Berliner at the Alexander Platz.

Unrestrained capitalism was clearly not what the founders of Western Germany had in mind. “The capitalist economic system did not serve the interest of the German people” – even the center-right Christian Democrats declared already in 1947. That is why – leaning on its own parallel society, that of the DDR – the Western German republic was built on the idea of the social market economy (soziale Marktwirtschaft) in which individual initiative was prized, but so was the obligation of the wealthy to help those socio-economically behind.

Alarming figures of the Gini index (including the income share held by lowest as well as by highest 10%) in Germany display a high child and youth poverty rates which significantly perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Declared dream of the western German founders increasingly becomes a German illusion. The equality of opportunity – so much prized in theory – in practice is just a myth, especially for eastern portions of Germany, minorities, women, but also for an ever larger echelons of the middle-class.

“Socialism is not defeated, it is only hijacked. Nowadays, it is held by the ‘One Percent’ – they enjoy subsidies, tax breaks, deregulations and executive bonuses. The rest of population lives unfair system of inequality and segregation, struggling to meet its ends under severe austerity, confusing migration policies, and never-ending erosion of labour rights” – explains the Leipzig’s professor of political economy. “Even when Al Qaeda or ISIL strikes Germany, it is not an upper end elite restaurant, but the Munich working class suburban location, in front of inn that belongs to the chain of cheap fast food” – concludes his assistant.

DDR was abruptly eliminated as a territorial reality. 30 years later, for many Germans, it comes back – between utopian dream and only remaining hope. No wonder that the elections, just 10 days before the 30th anniversary of Berlin Wall downing, in a focally important German federal province (*Bundeslander*) of

Thuringia ended up with a total triumph of the *Linke*. This successor party to the former DDR's Communists repeated their winning results yet again by late October 2019. This time it was with a stunning 31% of total votes – nearly equalling the combined vote won by the three most established German political parties, that of the Christian-democrats, Social-democrats and Liberals (8% +21%+5%).

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Feared and admired, overindustrialised overmigrated and überperforming, Germany of today is increasingly isolated. The (AfD and other) *schuldkult* abolitionists are getting ready for a new version of the past that is already 'sold' all over Eastern Europe. All the while France – as Robert Kagan says: “is only one election away from a nationalist electorate victory that will hit Europe like an earthquake” and will end “Franco-German partnership around which European peace was built 70 years ago”.

The Wall was downed 30 years ago, but the silent fences of solitude are erecting all within and around the Überland.

YET ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY, BUTCHERED

The collapse of the Soviet Union – which started in Berlin on 09th November 1989 – marked a loss of the historical empire for Russia, but also a loss of geopolitical importance of nonaligned, worldwide respected Yugoslavia, which shortly after burned itself in series of brutal genocidal, civil war-like ethnical cleansings. The idea of different nations living together and communicating in different languages in a (con-)federal structure was (though imperfect) a reality in Yugoslavia, but also a declared dream of the Maastricht Europe. In fact, federalism of Yugoslavia was one of the most original, advanced and sophisticated models as such worldwide. Moreover, this country was the only truly emancipated and independent political entity of Eastern Europe and one of the very few in a whole of the Old Continent.

Yugoslavia was by many facets a unique European country: No history of aggression towards its neighbors, with the high toleration of otherness, at home and abroad. Yugoslav peoples were one of the rare Europeans who resolutely stood up against fascism, fighting it in a full-scale combat and finally paying it with 12% of its population in the 4-years war – a heavy burden shouldered by the tiny nation to return irresponsible Europe to its balances.

Besides the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was the single European country that solely liberated itself from Nazism and fascism. (Relative to the 1939 size of state territory and incumbent population within, the top WWII fatalities were suffered by Poland – 18%, the Soviet Union – 15%, Yugoslavia 12%, III

Reich/Germany – 10%. For the sake of comparison, the Atlantic rim suffered as follows: France – 1,3%, UK –0,9%, the US – 0,3%.)

Yugoslavs also firmly opposed Stalinism right after the WWII. Bismarck of southern Slavs – Tito imposed the so-called active peaceful coexistence after the 1955 Bandung south-south conference, and assembled the non-Aligned movement (NAM) in its founding, Belgrade conference of 1961. Steadily for decades, the NAM and Yugoslavia have been directly tranquilizing the mega confrontation of two superpowers and satellites grouped around them (and balancing their irresponsible calamities all over the globe). In Europe, the continent of the sharpest ideological divide, with practically two halves militarily confronting each other all over the core sectors of the continent (where Atlantic Europe was behind some of the gravest atrocities of the 20th century, from French Indochina, Indonesia, Congo, Rhodesia to Algeria and Suez), and with its southern flank of Portugal, Spain and Greece (and Turkey sporadically) run by the military Juntas, Yugoslavia was remarkably mild island of stability, moderation and wisdom.

Additionally, the Yugoslav way of socialism inspired the largest European communist parties outside the Soviet sphere to emancipate themselves, and to formulate the so-called *Eurocommunism*. Notably, the Spanish PCE, Italian PCI and French PCF communist parties have evolved from the pro-Russian into the modern *eurocommunist* popular parties with a help of Yugoslav thinkers and practitioners.

Domestically, Yugoslavia had a unique constitutional setup of a strictly decentralized federation. Although being a formal democracy in its political life, many aspects of its social and economic practices as well as largely enjoyed personal freedoms and liberties featured the real democracy. The concept of self-management (along with the Self-managing Interest Community model) in economic, social, linguistic and cultural affairs gained a lot of external attention and admiration in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Still, there was neither enough sympathies, nor mercy towards-EU-heading Europe, to save either the Yugoslav people from an immense suffering or the symbol that this country represented domestically and internationally. Who needs alternative societies and alternative thinking?!

TRABANTIZE YOURSELF!

Despite the post-Cold War, often pre-paid, rhetoric that Eastern Europe rebelled against the Soviet domination in order to associate itself with the West, the reality was very different. Nagy's Hungary of 1956, Dubček's Czechoslovakia of 1968 and (pre-)Jeruzelski Poland of 1981 dreamt and fought to join a liberal Yugoslavia, and its world-wide recognized 3rd way!

By 1989-90, this country still represented a hope of full emancipation and real freedom for many in the East. How did the newly created EU (Atlantic-Central Europe axis) react? At least tolerating (if not eager to support), or actively eliminating the third way of Yugoslavia? It responded to the Soviet collapse in the best fashion of a classic, historical nation-state, with the cold calculi of geopolitical consideration deprived of any ideological constraints. It easily abandoned altruism of its own idea by withdrawing its support to the reformist government of Yugoslavia, and basically sealed-off its faith.

Intentionally or not, indecisive and contradictory political messages of the Maastricht-time EU – from the Genscher/Mock explicate encouragement of separatism, and then back to the full reconfirmation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Yugoslavia – were bringing this multinational Slavic state into a schizophrenic situation. Consequently, these mixed or burial European political voices – most observers would agree – directly fed and accelerated inner confrontations of the (elites claiming to represent) Yugoslav peoples.

Soon after, Atlantic-Central Europe axis contained its own candidate country, Yugoslavia (and started calling it euphemistically the western Balkans), letting the slaughterhouse to last essentially unchecked for years. At the same time, it busily mobilized all resources needed to extend its own strategic depth eastwards (later formalized by the so-called enlargements of 1995, of 2004, of 2007 and finally of 2013).

The first ever fully televised war with its highly disturbing pictures of genocidal Armageddon came by early 1990s. It remained on TV sets for years all over Europe, especially to its East. Although the Atlantic-Central Europe axis kept repeating *we do not know who is shooting whom in this powder keg and it is too early to judge*, this –seemingly indecisive, wait-and-see, attitude– was in fact an undeniably clear message to everyone in Eastern Europe: No alternative way will be permitted. East was simply expected to bandwagon – to passively comply, not to actively engage itself.

This is the only answer how can genocide and the EU enlargement go hand in hand at the same time on such a small continent. At about same time, Umberto Eco talks about eternal yet reinvigorated Nazism. By 1995, he famously diagnosed: ‘Ur-Fascism speaks *Newspeak*’.

No surprise that the East has soon after abandoned its identity quest, and capitulated. Its final civilizational defeat came along: the Eastern Europe’s Slavs have silently handed over their most important debates – that of Slavism, anti-fascism and of their own identity – solely to the (as we see nowadays) recuperating Russophone Europe.

EUROPE OF GENOCIDE AND OF UNIFICATION – HAPPILY EVER AFTER

As said, the latest loss of Russophone Europe in its geopolitical and ideological confrontation with the West meant colossal changes in Eastern Europe. One may look into geopolitical surrounding of at the-time largest eastern European state, Poland, as an illustration of how dramatic it was. All three land neighbors of Poland; Eastern Germany (as the only country to join the EU without any accession procedure, but by pure act of *Anschluss*), Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union have disappeared overnight. At present, Polish border-countries are a three-decade-old novelty on the European political map. Further on, if we wish to compare the number of dissolutions of states worldwide over the last 50 years, the Old continent suffered as many as all other continents combined: American continent – none, Asia – one (Indonesia/ East Timor), Africa – two (Sudan/South Sudan and Ethiopia/Eritrea), and Europe – three.

Underreported as it is, each and every dissolution in Europe was primarily related to Slavs (Slavic peoples) living in multiethnic and multi-linguistic (not in the Atlantic Europe's conscripted pure single-nation) state. Additionally, all three European – meaning, every second dissolution in the world – were situated exclusively and only in Eastern Europe. That region has witnessed a total dissolution of Czechoslovakia (western Slavs) and Yugoslavia (southern Slavs, in 3 waves), while one state disappeared from Eastern Europe (DDR) as to strengthen and enlarge the front of Central Europe (Western Germany). Finally, countless centripetal turbulences severely affected Eastern Europe following the dissolution of the SU (eastern Slavs) on its frontiers.

Irredentism in the UK, Spain, Belgium, France and Italy, or Denmark (over Faroe Islands and Greenland) is far elder, stronger and deeper. However, the dissolutions in Eastern Europe took place irreversibly and overnight, while Atlantic Europe still remained intact, with Central Europe even enlarging territorially and expanding economically.

Ergo: Our last 30 years conclude that (self-)fragmented, deindustrialized, rapidly aged rarified and depopulated, (and de-Slavicized) Eastern Europe is probably the least influential region of the world – one of the very few underachievers. Obediently submissive and therefore, rigid in dynamic environment of the promising 21st century, Eastern Europeans are among the last, remaining passive downloaders and slow-receivers on the otherwise blossoming stage of the world's creativity, politics and economy. It seems that Europe still despises its own victims.

Interestingly, the physical conquest of the European east, usually referred to as the EU eastern enlargement was deceptively presented more as a high virtue than what that really was – a cold *realpolitik* instrument. Clearly, it was primarily the

US-led NATO extension, and only then the EU (stalking, TRABANT-ising) enterprise. Simply, not a single eastern European country entered the EU before joining the NATO at first. It was well understood on both sides of the Atlantic that the contracting power of the Gorbachev-Yeltsin Russia, in the post-Cold War period, would remain confused, disoriented, reactive and defensive. Therefore, the North Atlantic Military Alliance kept expanding despite the explicit assurances given to Kremlin by the George H.W. Bush administration. It is worth remembering that the NATO was and remains an instrument (institutionalized political justifier) of the US physical, military presence in Europe. Or, as Lord Ismay vocally defined it in 1949: ‘to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down’. The fact that the US remained in Western Germany, and that the Soviet Army pulled out from Eastern Germany did not mean ‘democratization’ or ‘transition’. It represented a direct military defeat of the Gorbachev Russia in the duel over the core sectors of Central and Eastern Europe. As direct spoils of war, DDR disappeared from the political map of Europe, being absorbed by Western Germany, while the American Army still resides in a unified Germany. In fact, more than half of the US 75 major overseas military bases are situated in Europe. Up to this very day, Germany hosts 25 of them.

THE LETZTE MENSCH OR ÜBERMENSCH?

In the peak of Atlantic hype of early 1990s, Fukuyama euphorically claimed *end of history*. Less than three two decades later, twisting in the sobriety of the inevitable, he quietly moderated it with a *future of history*, desperately looking around and begging: ‘Where is a counter-narrative?’ Was and will our history ever be on holiday?

One hundred years after the outbreak of the WWI and 30 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, young generations of Europeans are being taught in school about a singularity of an entity called the EU. However, as soon as serious external or inner security challenges emerge, the compounding parts of the true, historic Europe are resurface again. Formerly in Iraq (with the exception of France) and now with Libya, Mali, Syria and Ukraine; Central Europe is hesitant to act, Atlantic Europe is eager, Scandinavian Europe is absent, and while Eastern Europe is obediently bandwagoning, Russophone Europe is opposing.

The 1986 Reagan-led Anglo-American bombing of Libya was a one-time, headhunting punitive action. This time, both Libya and Syria (Iraq, Mali, Ukraine, too) have been given a different attachment. The factors are multiple and interpolated. Let us start with a considerable presence of China in Africa. Then, there are successful pipeline deals between Russia and Germany which, while circumventing Eastern Europe, will deprive East from any transit-related bargaining premium, and will tacitly pose an effective joint Russo-German pressure on the Baltic states, Poland and Ukraine. Finally, here is a relative

decline of the US interests and capabilities, and to its related re-calibration of their European commitments, too. All of that combined, must have triggered alarm bells across, primarily Atlantic, Europe.

The insight here is that although seemingly unified, Europe is essentially composed of several segments, each of them with its own dynamics, legacies and its own political culture (considerations, priorities and anxieties). Atlantic and Central Europe are confident and secure on the one end, while (the EU and non-EU) Eastern Europe as well as Russia on the other end, insecure and neuralgic, therefore, in a permanent quest for additional security guarantees.

“America did not change on September 11. It only became more itself” – Robert Kagan famously claimed. Paraphrasing it, we may say: From 9/11 (09th November 1989 in Berlin) and shortly after, followed by the genocidal wars all over Yugoslavia, up to the Euro-zone drama, MENA or ongoing Ukrainian crisis, Europe didn't change. It only became more itself – a conglomerate of five different Europes.

Therefore, 9/11 this year will be just another said reminder: How our winners repeatedly missed to take our mankind into completely other direction; towards the non-confrontational, decarbonized, de-monetized/de-financialized and de-psychologized, the self-realizing, generationally fairer and greener humankind. Where is the better life that all of us have craved and hoped for, that we all deserve and that were repeatedly promised of that day in Berlin?

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