The Politics of the *Abendland*: Christian Democracy and the Idea of Europe after the Second World War

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This article traces the deep cultural and experiential foundations that animated Christian Democratic Europeanism between the mid-1940s and the birth of the European Economic Community in the late 1950s. It shows how the language of Europeanness, generated in a period of multiple and intense crisis, congealed around symbolisms of Christianity and spirituality. More specifically, it connects the post-Second World War Christian Democratic vision of Europe to the 1920s German-Catholic articulation of the Abendland *(the Christian West), understood as a supranational and symbolic space alternative to the Soviet Union and the United States and imbued with anti-materialist, anti-socialist and anti-liberal principles. The argument here is that, in mutated form and in context of the Cold War, this view sustained the political reconstruction of Western Europe after the horrors of the Second World War, the 'European' thought and language of Christian Democracy and the commitment to the project of European integration.*

The purpose of this article is to cast some light on the intellectual and cultural roots of Christian Democratic Europeanism as it unfolded from the mid-1940s through to the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. It traces the vision of Europe promoted by Christian Democracy in the context of 1920s German-Catholic ideas about the 'Christian West' (*Das Abendland*), understood as a supranational and symbolic space between Bolshevik Russia and capitalist America. The claim here is that Christian Democracy came to develop close affinities with this view, which was anti-materialist, anti-socialist and anti-liberal at the same time as it was hierarchical and organicist. Based on an idealisation of medieval Christian Europe, its organising concept was that of the pre-modern Catholic 'West', and, partly for that reason, it could never easily turn nationalist nor indeed fascist. As any truly Catholic (i.e.

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universal, from the Greek, *khatolikos*) position must be, it was contrary to nationalism without thereby becoming internationalist. In mutated form and in the context of the Cold War, this view played an important role in the political revamping of post-Second World War Western Europe, in the 'European' thought and language of Christian Democracy and the commitment to the project of European integration.

Certainly, European integration involved small administrative and economic steps that did not always resemble a grand intellectual vision. The European project emerged out of hard-nosed political and economic bargaining, strategic concerns and technocratic imperatives shared by the Christian Democratic 'founding fathers' of Europe (Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi) and other stakeholders, including US State Department planners.[1] Wolfram Kaiser has insightfully investigated how transnational Christian Democratic networks – reflecting the history of political Catholicism since the mid-to-late nineteenth century – shaped the process of political and economic integration of Europe and its institutional structure after 1945, even before the inception of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. Kaiser argues that, in contrast to alternative political worldviews, only Christian Democracy had both the commitment and the transnational network to ensure the success of Jean Monnet's plan for coal and steel integration, advanced by Schuman to the French government and to Adenauer in May 1950.[2]

Whilst this article remains indebted to a transnational approach to European history, it adds to it a symbolic and experiential dimension. Kaiser's book, focusing almost exclusively on networks and historic institutionalism, does not pay sufficient attention to the patterned (recurrent and real, lived) experiences that lay at the base of Christian Democratic Europeanism and to the connections in experience, thought and practice established during the crucial transformative period that led to European integration. In this sense, Kaiser fails to pin down what is really unique and 'Christian' about the democratic movement that spread across Europe and was then institutionalised at this crucial historical juncture. Unearthing these deeper foundations and the background experiences that animated this institutionalisation allows for an understanding of the philosophical baggage that Christian Democrats translated into the process of integration. Given the current heated discussions over Europe's founding values and the deepening crisis of integration, this perhaps deserves more attention than it currently receives.

This article will delineate the specificities of the Christian Democratic vision of a unified Europe epitomised by the reconfiguration of the *Abendland* – as a concept, ideology, and shared imaginary – with respect to alternative political and

[1] Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); John Gillingham, *Coal, Steel, and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945–1955: The Germans and French from Ruhr Conflict to Economic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice of Europe: Social Purpose and State Power From Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Desmond Dinan, *Europe Recast: A History of European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[2] Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

cultural readings.[3] It demonstrates how the *Abendland* assumed different functions throughout history. The idea is not to set the *Abendland* against rational choices, institutional and informal networks or the *Realpolitik* of the time. It is instead to highlight the importance of cultural symbols, semantics and meanings in shaping perceptions, attitudes and politics; to provide, through a genealogical account of post-Second World War Christian Democratic Europeanism, a way to map the interactions of cultural meanings with structures of power and political practices that are often below the conceptual radar of politicians and intellectuals. This article argues that the re-signification of the *Abendland* by Christian Democracy in the specific context of the early Cold War era was the symbolic response to a condition of political and existential uncertainty: it was a process of meaning-formation involving the search for an order and an identity that had been profoundly shaken by the Second World War.

Section one of this article sketches a brief history of the *Abendland* from the French Revolution to the post-First World War period. Sections two to five deal with the term's re-semantisation after 1945 and explores how the *Abendland* combined and interacted, at times conflictually, with other sources of Christian Democracy's political culture. Section six elaborates on the Cold War and the anti-communism of Christian Democracy – thus foregrounding how the *Abendland* influenced European self-understanding of early Cold War politics. The conclusion offers remarks on the symbolic meaning of the *Abendland* in post-war Europe and highlights the relevance and significance of the *Abendland* not only in historical discourse but also in current debate about European integration.

The Construction of the *Abendland*

Philologically, the term *Abendland* (literally 'evening country' or 'place of the setting sun') first entered German as the semantic counterpoint to Martin Luther's translation of the Orient or the East as *Morgenland* ('land of the rising sun'), in connection with the older heliotropic tradition.[4] However, it was only after and against the French Revolution – the event that gave political content to the ideas of cultural difference and popular self-determination – that the notion of a medieval Christian West (*Abendland*) gained political currency. Catholic counter-revolutionary intellectuals such as Novalis, Chauteaubriand and De Maistre deployed the medieval *Abendland* – the world of Charlemagne (*Rex Pater Europa*) and pope Gregory the Great – as the organic contrast to the pretensions of Enlightenment Europe, atheism and

[3] On the ascendancy of the European federalist idea in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War among a variety of political and intellectual groups see Walter Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, vol. I: *1945–1947. The Formation of the European Unity Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

[4] For a concise attempt to define *Abendland* see Günter Barudio, *Politik als Kultur: Ein Lexikon von Abendland bis Zukunft* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Matzler 1994), 1–4; Friedrich Heer, 'Abendland', in *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* (Mannheim, Vienna and Zurich: Bibliographisches Institut, 1971), 57–64.

contemporary fragmentation. The targets of these intellectuals were the Revolution and the Protestant Reformation that had cut the *respublica Christiana* asunder, eventually shattering the unity of the Catholic medieval world and creating the conditions for nationalism and modernity.[5] In other words, the *Abendland* was conceived against the secular occupation of the religious realm, and against the twin ideas of sovereignty: sovereignty of the individual over his/her conscience and sovereignty of the nation state, engendered by a 'contract' (or a 'constitution') between 'atomised' and free individuals. Catholic reaction was counter-revolutionary, anti-liberal and anti-nationalist. Throughout the nineteenth century German Catholics leaned towards the term *Abendland,* rather than Europe, for the latter denoted Protestantism, nationalism and sovereignty.[6]

After the First World War this rough and ready, fragmentary material developed into a full-fledged ideology. The Bolshevik revolution and the metaphysical crisis of the European way of life served to crystallise the notion of the *Abendland* into a widely disseminated discourse.[7] Crucially, *Abendland* became a political catchword through the publication of Oswald Spengler's *The Downfall of the Christian West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918), a theory of history and civilisation in terms of biological morphology. The English translation *The Decline of the West* fails to convey the sense of imminent destruction in the German original: the 'going under' (sometimes translated with the more emphatic 'downfall') of the West threatened by the non-West, i.e. Russia and Japan. The West, to Spengler, was a 'spiritual' community not to be reduced merely to 'Europe', a geographic entity of uncertain extension.

Spengler came from a Protestant background. Yet, the *Abendland* was appropriated by a group of German Catholic thinkers as a way to rekindle images of an organic order in a European framework, from which could radiate a restored civilisational movement. Already in 1913 the humanists Theodore Abele and Hermann Platz organised a circle of Catholic intellectuals (*Katholische Akademikerverband*), which included among others Robert Schuman and Heinrich Brüning, later Reich Chancellor.[8] The group forged a link with the Abbey of Maria Laach and its young abbot Idelfons Hervegen. This interaction triggered the German 'liturgical renewal'

[5] According to Benedict Anderson's influential view, the coincident advent of print capitalism and Protestantism was the historical condition for nationalism; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1983). For a powerful thesis on the genesis of modernity see Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

[6] See Heinz Hürten, 'Der Topos vom christlichen Abendland in Literatur und Publizistik nach den beiden Weltkriege', in Albrecht Langner, ed., *Katholizismus, nationaler Gedanke und Europa seil 1800* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1985), 131–54.

[7] Post-First World War Europe's predicament was often referred to as a 'crisis' of civilisation by, among others, Paul Valéry, Georg Simmel and Thomas Stearns Eliot. However, the *Todessehnsucht* (the 'longing for death') of the age received its greatest expression in the quintessential novel on European civilisation, Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924).

[8] August Heinrich Berning, 'Eine Lebensfreundschaft mit Hermann Platz: Theodor Abele und die Anfänge der katholischer Akademiker-und der liturgischen Bewegung in Deutschland', in Vincent Berning, ed., *Hermann Platz 1880–1945: Eine Gedenkschrift* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1980), 78–85.

and contributed to the remarkable dynamism of post-First World War German Catholicism. More importantly for this article, these experiences and contacts with the German Catholic *milieu* had a deep, formative impact on Schuman's idea of Europe, as he acknowledged decades later.[9]

When in 1925 Platz and the philosopher Alois Dempf founded a journal devoted to European culture, politics and economics, they named it *Abendland: A German Monthly for European Culture, Politics and Economics* (*Abendland: Deutsche Monatsschrift für europäische Kultur, Politik und Wirtschaft*).[10] The subject of the journal was to be a 'Christian West' that transcended the twin horrors of American and Soviet materialism without falling into nationalism and German revanchism. A Christian West that would heal the wounds inflicted on Europe by the Revolution and the ideas of 1789, the Enlightenment and Protestantism,[11] liberalism and individualism, materialism and secularism and eventually atheism. The medieval opposition to the East and to the South (Byzantium, Islam, the Turks) could be redeployed in opposition to Eastern Bolshevism and the spiritual emptiness of the materialist United States.

What these thinkers had in mind more positively was some form of neo-Carolingian reconstitution of Western Europe, a pre- or anti-modern and anti-individualist utopia based on the timeless religious value of medieval Christendom. The inter-, multi- or pre-national character of the Holy Roman Empire – which had combined a wide normative community of Christian-Catholic culture with a variegated series of overlapping jurisdictions and local particularities – was understood as the most powerful antidote to modern nationalism. Indeed, these thinkers were anti-liberals but not nationalists. Quite the opposite, they appealed to the young European generation (a reference to Giuseppe Mazzini) to put aside narrow-minded nationalism in favour of the community of fate of the *Abendland*. At the spiritual and geographic heart of the project lay the Rhineland, the historic intersection between France and Germany, the centre of the Carolingian Empire, the space where Antiquity, Germanium and Christianity had met in the happiest of all syntheses. The Rhine, Platz explained, was the 'mythical current' that endowed those who lived along it with a particular Europeanness. The journal's programme was to strengthen the Franco-German dialogue. It was also to further integrate the *Abendland* idea into leading spiritual, cultural and political circles, so that Europe could once again become the soul of the world and experience its third rebirth. The modern simulacrum

[9] 'Es war dieses Treffen für uns ein Ereignis, ein gemeinsamer Ausgangs- punkt. . . . Damals schon begannen wir einzusehen, daß alles, was der Verständigung, der Einheit und Brüderlichkeit die Wege ebnet, aus derselben Quelle schöpft. In diesem Sinne war auch Maria Laach ein Grundstein für das kommende Europa'; Robert Schuman, 'Ein Blatt dankbarer Erinnerung', *Liturgisches Jahrbuch*, 9 (1959), 195.

[10] Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung, 1920–1970* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 27–56; Dagmar Pöpping, *Abendland: Christliche Akademiker und die Utopie der Antimoderne 1900–1945* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2002), 100–23.

[11] Platz blamed Martin Luther specifically for destroying the unity of the *Abendland* and introducing the principles of immanence and materialism into European history; Hermann Platz, 'Die Zerspaltung des Abendlandes', *Das Heilige Feuer*, 14 (Mar. 1927), 262–4.

of the Holy Roman Empire would take the form of a new spiritual community (*Geistesgemeinschaft*). One way or another, *Abendland* was an attempt to overcome the growing Western split between society (*Gesellschaft*) and community (*Gemeinschaft*).

In line with its original inspiration, *Abendland* looked very sceptically at 'Pan-Europa', the popular project conceived in the 1920s by the Austrian-Japanese Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. When France occupied the Ruhr in 1923 Coudenhove called for the resolution of hostility and the birth of a pro-European federation whose aim would be the creation of a customs and monetary union. Pan-Europa, he claimed, was the only way of escaping the 'Scylla' of Russian military dictatorship and the 'Charybdis' of US financial dictatorship. The federation would rejuvenate the soul of Europe, which for him was the 'Christian cultural community of *Abendland*'.[12] The affinities with the *Abendland* ideology were obvious. Yet, in the understanding of Platz and his group, Pan-Europa cherished economic interests and not spirituality, 'body' ('matter') and not 'soul'. Pan-Europa was an international society of states; *Abendland* was a supranational community of peoples united by shared faith and values.[13]

Catholic cosmopolitanism, however, never took off. The *Abendland* circle remained a small group, its imagery easily overwhelmed by the growing and unrelenting nationalist drift of German and European politics. Many Catholic conservative intellectuals became increasingly anti-Semitic and most welcomed Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s.[14]

Christian Democracy, Europeanism and the *Abendland*

The *Abendland* tradition survived Nazi horror and the destruction of war and could be revamped quite readily, albeit in altered form, to fit the new historical circumstances. Hitler had legitimised his plan for a European New Order with heavily emphasised allusions to Charlemagne, the 'Unifier of the German tribes', and he had invoked the *Abendland* and its anti-Semitic components to justify the colonisation of Eastern Europe as well as anti-Jewish propaganda and policies. In this narrative, the invasion of the Soviet Union with Operation Barbarossa served as a defence against communism and heathen Asia. Alois Dempf's study of medieval philosophy of history *Sacrum Imperium* (1929) had also become, against the intentions of the author, an inspiration to conservative adherents of the Catholic *Reichstheologie*, which flourished briefly during the transitional years from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich.[15] Yet national socialists had never conceded to the *Abendland* the same status enjoyed by

[12] The quote is from an open letter to Benito Mussolini when Coudhenove still thought the Italian could be a useful vehicle; Richard Frommer, *Paneuropa oder Mitteleuropa: Einigungsbestrebungen in Kalkül deutscher Wirtschaft und Politik, 1925–1933* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977), 13.

[13] See Albert Lotz, 'Europa oder Abendland', *Abendland*, 1 (1925–1926), 216–7.

[14] Pöpping, *Abendland*, 28, 100–1.

[15] Michael Hollerich, 'Catholic Anti-Liberalism in Weimar: Political Theology and Its Critics', in Leonard V. Kaplan and Rudy Koshar, eds., *The Weimar Moment: Liberalism, Political Theology and Law* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 17–46.

the *Reich*. Drawing on the nineteenth century tradition of German nationalism, they had eventually opposed it with the Germanic Saxon myth.

The Second World War fragmented the perception of the *Abendland*, allowing part of it to percolate into the nascent conceptualisation of a supranational Europe. The boldest language and imagery of the *Abendland* ideology was co-opted by Christian Democracy and nourished its Europeanist narrative; it came to represent an arsenal of images and meanings that underpinned the legitimate political order of the present with a historical, mythical and quasi-religious foundation. The unity of pre-national medieval Christian Europe had a major symbolic importance for Christian Democrats. It was evoked as a model for the post-war era. The medieval order was defended against external enemies as the emerging post-war order had to be protected from the new, abysmal Soviet threat. At the New International Teams (*Nouvelle équipes internationales*; NEI) congress in Bad Ems in 1951, for example, Heinrich von Brentano, the future West German foreign minister, emphasised the need to defend the European *Abendland* in what he presented as a tradition reaching from Charlemagne to the battle of 955 against the heathen Magyars, the 'liberation' of Granada in 1492 and the victory of the multinational army led by the Polish King Johann III Sobieski against Ottoman troops in 1683, ending the siege of Vienna.[16]

To many Christian Democrats the Carolingian Empire appeared as a supranational political, cultural and geographical space tantamount to the Europe envisaged in Schuman's plan. Charlemagne's 'Frankish' Europe, as many noted, consisted roughly of the same area as the ECSC and excluded Britain.[17] In this narrative, Europe was and had always been an entity of the Christian West – a 'spiritual and cultural community' or a 'common destiny', as Schuman tirelessly repeated[18] – which had to be re-established in a new, different historical context. The democratic and post-totalitarian Carolingian idea of Europe as a novel *Abendland* could have seemed completely out of place in the mid-twentieth century. It nevertheless gained popularity among Christian Democrats, but also among other 'European' activists and intellectual circles. For example, on 18 May 1950, receiving the First International Charlemagne Prize of the

[16] Quoted in Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 228. The NEI was the association of Christian-inspired politicians created in 1947, with the aim of establishing a Christian Democratic International and discussing topics of European and international politics. In 1965 it renamed itself the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD), which, as an organisation of national political parties from various European counties, was the immediate forerunner of the European People's Party (founded in 1976).

[17] The notion of a 'core Europe' with a strong Christian Democratic imprint explains, according to Wolfram Kaiser, why non-participation of the United Kingdom was not only an act of self-exclusion (as Alan Milward has argued) but also reflected assumptions about cultural incompatibilities between Britain and the continent among Christian Democratic leaders; Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 231–7; Alan S. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community, vol. I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy, 1945–1963* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

[18] See, for example, Robert Schuman, 'L'Europe est une communauté spirituelle et culturelle', *L'Annuaire Européen*, 1 (1955), 17–23. This is a speech given in October 1953 in Rome, when the Council of Europe (the organisation established in 1949 with the aim of promoting cooperation between all European countries in the areas of legal standard, human rights and the rule of law) held a roundtable to discuss the idea of European unity. Among the participants were the Swiss cultural theorist and federalist Denis de Rougemont, the British historian Arnold Toynbee and De Gasperi.

City of Aachen,[19] Coudenhove hailed the Schuman Plan, presented a few days before at the Quay d'Orsay, as a move towards the modern recreation of the 'mighty realm' of Charlemagne, the collapse of which had been 'the greater disaster to Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire'. The inventor of Pan-Europa proposed naming the future coal and steel community the 'Union Charlemagne'. He wanted this name to be understood as a reference to the reformation of the Carolingian Empire on a democratic, federalist and social basis.[20]

The new *Abendland* was based on an essential Franco-German compromise. The fact that the actual borderline was on the Elbe, the traditional thousand-year-old demarcation between East and West, between the area where the Romano-Germanic synthesis called feudalism took real hold and where it did not, was in a sense deeply appropriate. Three Catholic Christian Democrats – Adenauer, Schuman and De Gasperi – outlined the European project of integration, which eventually would become the EEC and thus 'Europe'. Not by accident did they hail from the very margins of their respective nation states – a shared formative existential experience, often an active carrier of mutual trust and political and cultural meanings. All had been marked by the sometimes brutal homogenisation of the late-forming nation states, Italy and Germany. All had been defenders of citizens' rights against aggrandised secular, centralising states: De Gasperi of the rights originally accorded by the Habsburg Empire to the citizens of the Trentino; Schuman of the separate rights of the former *Reichsland Lothringen*; Adenauer of a Catholic Rhineland against a heathen republic. De Gasperi had studied in Vienna and served in the pre-1918 Austrian Parliament's lower house (*Reichsrat*); Adenauer had been mayor of Catholic Cologne, very much on the margins of the Reich; Schuman's family had fled Lorraine from Germany to Luxembourg. All could, if they desired to do so, speak German with each other. National sovereignty was neither a value in itself for them nor a pre-condition for creating political meaning in the way it had been for Max Weber.[21] On the contrary it was something to be feared.

These leaders advocated subsidiarity and personalism, traditional tenets of Catholic social thought.[22] They likewise advocated a Europe united in its 'Christian-humanist'

[19] The *Aachen Karl Prize* was established in 1949 to honour public figures for their contribution to European integration; see Sabine Schulz, *Der Aachener Karlspreis* (Aachen: Meyer and Meyer, 1988).

[20] http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/1950/rede_von_richard_nikolaus_graf_coudehove_kalergi.html (last visited 25 Nov. 2016); see also Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *An Idea Conquers the World*, with a preface by Winston Churchill (London: Hutchinson, 1953), 310.

[21] The basic unit of Weber's political analysis is the sovereign nation state – i.e., as Weber explained in his 1919 lecture *Politik als Beruf*, that body which enjoy a monopoly of legitimate violence within a bounded territory; Max Weber, 'The profession and vocation of politics', in Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, eds., *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 309–69: 310.

[22] In Catholic social teaching, the principle of subsidiarity designated the idea that powers which individuals can exercise adequately themselves should not be arrogated to a central authority. In the context of Europeanism, it refers to the principle that the supranational community should only make law in situations where individual nations were incapable of acting. It was formally encoded in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Personalism understands the human being as consistently embedded in groups and natural communities (locality, workplace, religion) and provided with a transcendent nature and

heritage, which they sometimes coupled with other political-ideological traditions (Jacobin republicanism, for example) in an intellectual reconciliation of some philosophical difficulty. De Gasperi constantly referred in his speech to Christianity, and its lessons of 'fraternity, unity, and social values' as an inevitable and compulsory requirement for the construction of Europe.[23] On 21 April 1954, at the European Parliamentary Conference, he explained:

> If with Toynbee I affirm that Christianity lies at the origin of this European civilization, I don't intend by that to introduce any exclusive confessional criterion in the appreciation of our history. I merely wish to speak of our common European heritage, of that shared ethical vision that fosters the inviolability and responsibility of the human person with its ferment of evangelic brotherhood, its cult of law inherited from the ancients, its cult of beauty refined through the centuries, and its will for truth and justice sharpened by an experience stretching over more than a thousand years.[24]

It was perhaps Adenauer who reshaped the *Abendland* discourse in post-Second World War Europe more than anyone else. At the NEI congress of Luxembourg in 1948, he located in the Rhenish region, rather precisely between the East of France and the West of Germany, both the core of the *Abendland* and a community that was already imagining the cosmopolitan Europe coming into being (*im werden*).[25] Here, Adenauer drew also on his critical involvement in the politics of the Weimar period. In 1919, as a mayor of Cologne and pro-European activist of the Catholic *Zentrum*,[26] he had evoked the foundational myth of the Rhine, 'where in the next decades German culture will meet that of the Western democracies'.[27] To draw a direct connection between Adenauer's early Europeanist inspiration and the birth of the European Community simplifies the picture too much. Yet, the European policies of Adenauer, and his desire to work with France and the Western Allies that had emerged since 1945, were consistent with these early remarks and with his

with a concern for the good of all. This implies that national community is just one among other communities and is not fundamentally different from a supranational community.

[23] See De Gasperi 's speech at the roundtable in Rome on the idea of European unity (Oct. 1953), now in Giovanni Allara and Angelo Gatti, eds., *Alcide De Gasperi e la politica internazionale: Un'antologia di scritti su 'L'Illustrazione Vaticana' (1933–1938) e di discorsi all'estero (1945–1954)* (Rome: Edizione Cinque Lune, 1990), 427–30, quote on 429.

[24] Ibid., 437–40, quote on 439.

[25] This was the first international political congress in which Germans took part, even if at first only as observers. For a synopsis of the key points of the speech see 'Christlich-demokratische Internationale?', *Rheinischer Merkur*, 7 Feb. 1948, also quoted in Arnulf Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie. Bonns Beitrag zur Europäischen Verteidigungsgemeinschaft* (Munich: R. Olbenbourg Verl., 1969), 50–1.

[26] The *Rhinelandish Zentrum* mixed Europeanism and Catholicism with a distinct anti-Prussian connotation. Some of its proponents went so far as to suggest the creation of a *Rhinelandish* state within the German Reich that would be associated with France and thus constitute the origins of a larger European order.

[27] The 1919 speech was given for the inaugural ceremony of the re-founded university of Cologne, defined by Adenauer as 'the western-most major city in Germany'; quoted in Hans-Peter Schwarz, ed., *Konrad Adenauer: Reden 1917–1967: Eine Auswahl* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), 39. See also Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer: A German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution and Reconstruction,* I: *From the German Empire to the Federal Republic, 1876–1952* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 161–3.

old ideas of the political and economic integration of Western Europe,[28] as well as with his psychology and with the political and cultural background of his Rhenish Catholicism. As his close advisor Herbert Blankenhorn later recalled, Adenauer was a 'real western German who felt himself to be part of the Rhenish-Western cultural space'.[29]

Between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, Adenauer's *Abendland* inspiration resonated with Charles de Gaulle, paving the way for that process of reconciliation which cemented the idea of a Franco-German axis at the heart of the EEC. Coming from the tradition of French nationalism, de Gaulle did not believe in supranational institutions that could bind France economically and politically. He was rather in favour of intergovernmental collaboration that would guarantee national sovereignty. However, de Gaulle envisaged a concert of European nations that shared a common Christian civilisation and could become 'an extension of each other'.[30] To de Gaulle, Europe was essentially a spiritual and cultural heritage and a civilisational whole. European nations, he wrote in his memoirs, had 'the same Christian origins and the same way of life, linked to one another since time immemorial by countless ties of thought, art, science, politics and trade'. Hence, it was 'natural' for these nations to 'come together' and 'form a whole, with its own character and organisation in relation to the rest of the world'.[31] When *le général* famously spoke of a Europe 'from the Atlantic to the Urals' he was in fact conjuring up, quite in line with the *Abendland* tradition, a continental western European bloc based on a Franco-German entente that could stand on its own both militarily and politically: a Europe independent from the United States and Russia.[32] In short, his vision of a French-led Europe came close to the 'reunited Carolingian Christendom envisioned by most of the founders, but achieved by more organic means'.[33]

De Gaulle was a pragmatist and, for him, throne trumped altar. Yet, he remained a devout Catholic willing to resort to religious symbolism in order to legitimate his European politics. In July 1962 De Gaulle invited Adenauer to Rheims cathedral, which he defined as 'the symbol of our age-old traditions, but also the scene of many encounter between the hereditary enemies, from the ancient Germanic invasions to the battles of the Marne'. The two Catholic statesmen prayed together for

[28] Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, 318–20; see also Hans-Peter Mensing, ed., *Konrad Adenauer Briefe, 1949–1951* (Berlin: Siedler, 1985), 435; Konrad Adenuaer, *Erinnerungen, 1945–1953* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1965), 311–6.

[29] Herbert Blankenhorn, *Verständnis und Verständigung: Blätter eines politischen Tagebuchs 1949 bis 1979* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Wien: Propyläen, 1980), 43.

[30] See the press conference given by de Gaulle, 14 Jan. 1963, quoted in Derek W. Urwin, *The Community of Europe: A History of European Integration since 1945* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 123.

[31] Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor*, trans. Terence Kilmartin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971), 171.

[32] On this see Marc Trachtenberg, 'The de Gaulle Problem', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 14, 1 (2012), 81–92, esp. 84–5; see also the entry of 21 Sept. 1963 in Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle,* Vol. II, *La France reprend sa place dans le monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 239.

[33] Brent F. Nelsen and James L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015), 233.

peace and reconciliation, conjuring up a cultural language that the whole continent understood.[34] And on the basis of this common cultural language the nations of Europe could renew their bonds.

The Spiritual Rebirth of the West and the Place of Germany in Europe

In the context of post-Second World War Christian Democratic politics, the *Abendland* ideology was attractive for many reasons. To begin with, there was the motivating idea of European-Western revival, the vision of a better future, and the 'spiritual' reconstruction (or Renaissance) of a world shattered by the atheist, pagan materialism of Nazism. In other words, there was a diagnosis and an appropriate treatment for the decline of the West and its spiritual vacuum: materialism and the Fall of God had plunged Europe into fanaticism, nihilist totalitarian dictatorship, and war – a thorough crisis of meaning. Salvation lay in re-rediscovering the religious roots of Europe, in its true Christian heritage, and in the teaching of the Catholic faith, which only Christian Democracy could guarantee. This narrative asserted that inter-war fascism had really been a form of materialism; the spiritualism of Christian Democracy – a party provided not only with a political programme but also with a religious view of human life and with a 'missionary' mentality – was the antidote to a return of the past.[35]

The politics of the *Abendland*, moreover, was the solution to the problem that had vexed Europe since 1870: the place of Germany in the continent and its relationship with the neighbouring countries, in particular France. This had been the central concern of Schuman's European politics since soon after the end of the Second World War,[36] the crucial interest of Adenauer and the other German Christian Democrats, and the question more frequently and passionately debated and discussed at the transnational meetings of Christian Democrats.[37] The recourse to the historical

[34] De Gaulle, *Memoirs*, 180.

[35] For example, see the final resolution of the NEI congress of Luxembourg (Jan.–Feb. 1948), insisting on the importance of 'spiritually-minded' (especially German) Christian Democrats as the best way to refuse a return to the past. The text is in Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth, eds., *Documents of the History of the European Integration,* Vol. IV, *Transnational Organizations of Political Parties and Pressure Groups in the Struggle for the European Union, 1945–1950* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 492–3. On how De Gasperi, Adenauer and Schuman understood that 'spiritual security' was a 'real need' see also Milward, *The European Rescue*, 297. On the missionary spirit and the sense of purpose and urgency that the Second World War injected into Catholic politics, see Martin Conway, 'The Age of Christian Democracy: The Frontiers of Success and Failure', in Thomas A. Kselman and Joseph Buttigieg, eds., *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 43–67: 51.

[36] On this point see Raymond Poidevin, *Robert Schuman: Homme d'État, 1886–1963* (Paris: Imprimérie Nationale, 1988), 208–28. On 18 Apr. 1948 Schuman defined Germany 'l'enjeu de l'échiquier politique international'; the speech is in *L'Année Politique 1948* (1949), 329–31, quote on 330.

[37] At the NEI Congress of Luxembourg (Jan.–Feb. 1948), Christian Democrats discussed the German question from a 'cultural', 'spiritual', 'political' and 'economic' perspective; *Le probleme allemande: session de Luxembourg, 30–31 janvier et 1er février 1948. Aspect culturel, par Pierre Friden. Aspect économique, par Désiré Lamalle. Aspect politique, par P. J. Serrarens* (Paris: Nouvelle équipes internationales, 1948).

shape of the *Abendland*, and therefore the definition of a (Western) European unity based on the same cultural background, made it easier to rule out any possible German *Sonderweg*, any ideas of a German exceptionalism which, before the war and the Holocaust, could have been imagined in positive sense. It also quickly deprived the Second World War of its original meaning, i.e. a struggle between Germany and the Allies. Germany took on a new significance, and was turned from the enemy into an ally against the Soviet Union. In the narrative of Christian Democracy – which hinged here on a *topos* of the interwar period, very much in line with the *Abendland* trope – there were two Germanies. There was a Roman Catholic Western Germany, which had never abandoned the *Abendland*. However, there was also a Prussian-Protestant-Eastern Germany, dominated by materialism, atheism and militarism, and first alienated from civilised (Catholic) Europe when Luther and the Reformation had destroyed the unity of the *Abendland*. This latter Germany was responsible for the rise of Nazism, and was eventually lost to Western (*Abendland*) civilisation – as further confirmed by the triumph of communism.[38] In November 1948 Adenauer told Robert Murphy, the political advisor to Lucius D. Clay, the military governor in the US zone, that the mentality of the western Germans was more suitable for a policy of reconciliation with France than that of the eastern Germans, where Marxism, atheism, and nationalism had a stronger hold over the population.[39]

It is evident that this Manichean view permitted European Christian Democrats to gloss over the collaboration of interwar Catholicism with fascist regimes. In any event, on the basis of common *Abendland* values, Germany – without its guilty Protestant-Prussian-Eastern component – could find its legitimate place among the other (Western) European states, and claim, as an equal member of the *Abendland*, the transfer of full sovereignty to the (West) German government.[40] In fact, (West) Germany could *return* to its legitimate place in the Western community of nations. In one of his earliest public speeches as the head of the CDU in 1945, Adenauer declared: 'we want our culture to find its basis again in the *Abendland* culture'.[41] The word 'again' is key here, as it implies that Germany had once been rooted in the *Abendland* (Christian West) and had been led astray by the nefarious Prussian doctrines of materialism and nationalism. Germany needed to return, to re-emerge

[38] Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 215–20. On how the anti-materialist discourse of the *Abendland* allowed equating and condemning first Nazism and then communism and Marxism, with Nazism sometimes characterised as a 'failed' Marxism', see Maria Mitchell, 'Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949', *The Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), 278–308.

[39] Murphy to Bohlen, 24 Nov. 1948, quoted in Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, I, 380.

[40] This gave an extensive background to and bound different political and economic interests, which explains why the *Abendland* discourse was popular also outside Catholic and Christian Democratic circles: Conze, *Das Europe*, 111–69, 291–384; Axel Schild, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1999).

[41] Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer: Reden*, 91. For the importance of the *Abendland* trope for CDU's political culture and ideology see Maria Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 92–104; for the political appropriation of the concept of *Abendland* from the 1920s to the 1950s see Richard Faber, *Abendland: Ein 'politischer Kampfbegriff'* (Berlin: Gerstenberg, 1979).

not to be created anew.[42] And it had to return to the Christian West, which was – he explained to the CDU delegates at a 1947 rally, echoing the inter-war *Abendland* trope and eventually Spengler – not a 'geographical' but a 'spiritual and historical' concept.[43] The basic proposition was that (West) Germany belonged *culturally*, and had always belonged, to the civilisation of the Western world. Thus, (West) Germany would have to re-join France and the other countries of Western continental Europe as a completely equal and fully sovereign partner, and not simply as a supplier of raw materials, a de-industrialised land of ruins, or a market to conquer.

Nationalism, Internationalism and Supranationalism

Beyond the spiritual re-birth of post-war Europe and the reintegration of Germany into the Western community of nations, the *Abendland* vision contained other aspects that attracted Christian Democrats. The idealised vision of the pre-modern and pre-national Catholic 'West' offered an excellent solution to the thorny issue of nationalism, not only in its German form, and to the puzzling dilemma of nationalism-internationalism.[44] In 1951 Schuman cast the international system of the nation states in theological terms as a 'heresy', endorsing the *Abendland* charge against Protestant nation builders.[45] The Reformation, Schuman wrote in a bi-lingual publication edited by the European Movement and directed to American readers, had shattered the religious homogeneity of the continent and entailed the birth of nations whose ambitions had increasingly degenerated into bloody confrontation. The affinities here with the *Abendland* ideology, as articulated in the interwar years, are striking.

> The original outline of a united Europe was that of Christian, medieval Europe under a twin authority – a spiritual one personified by the Papacy, a temporal one embodied by the Emperor, head of the Holy Roman Empire. This unity withered after more than six centuries of existence, when the Renaissance weakened religious ties; the Reformation likewise disrupted religious unity and the Empire lost its prestige to newly sovereign nations. Europe split into a large group of states whose interests and aims conflicted to such a degree that fierce battles ensued.[46]

[42] *Wiederaufstieg* is etymologically related to *Wiederauferstehen*, which means 'resurrection', a point that quite likely would not have been lost on Adenauer's audience.

[43] Helmuth Pütz, ed., *Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone 1946–1949. Dokumente zur Gründungsgeschichte der CDU Deutschlands* (Bonn: Eichholz-Verlag, 1975), 351. On Adenauer's 'historical-world' and not 'geographic' concept of *Abendland* see also Normen Altmann, *Konrad Adenauer im Kalten Krieg: Wahrnehmungen und Politik, 1945–1956* (Mannheim: Palatium Verlag and J. & J. Verlag, 1993), 37.

[44] For a *longue durée* analysis of Christian Democratic attitudes to nationalism and internationalism see Peter Pultzer, 'National and Internationalism in European Christian Democracy', in Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2004), 10–24.

[45] See *Conférences des Ambassadeurs*, 51 (Mar. 1951) quoted in Poidevin, *Robert Schuman: Homme d'État*, 240.

[46] Robert Schuman, 'Concept of a United Europe', in *European American Survey: A publication devoted to a better understanding between United Europe and the United States* (Brussels: European Movement, 1957), 5–9, quote on 5.

In the narrative of Christian Democracy, the order of European history and civilisation had been destroyed by modern nationalism and then by its association with the authoritarian political theologies of fascism and Nazism, which had received major philosophical and theoretical inspiration from the writing of German jurist and Catholic philosopher Carl Schmitt. Furthermore, political Catholicism had long experienced the nation state as a homogenising force threatening communities, from the churches to families. Taming nationalisms and nations, healing the European civil war and overcoming the past through close cooperation beyond the borders of nation states were explicit goals of the Europeanism of Christian Democracy. Yet, Christian Democracy could not get rid of the nation overnight. After all, Christian Democratic parties were legitimated by national politics, national elections and national Parliaments. Furthermore, at least since the Great War, political Catholicism had become acutely aware of the question of the nation and had increasingly engaged with the issue of how religious ideas could be adapted to specific national politics.[47] Finally, 'national' ethnic and cultural feelings and traditions – no matter whether invented, imagined or spontaneous[48] – had provided the symbolic framework for the integration of people into modern politics for more than a century. What would the solution to the conundrum be? In short, to incorporate the nation and at the same time transcend it through the Christian Democratic project of European *supra*nationalism. In other words, to re-enact the medieval ideal of the Christian European community of nations at a time in which the nation was not a fleeting geopolitical moment but a given political construction.

As early as 1913 De Gasperi envisaged the institution of a cogent and structured system of nations and states under the protective and unifying wing of a common supranational political organisation, which would tame the conflicts engendered by nationalism and maintain peace among nations. Nations, the Italian explained, would retain freedom of action, decision making and self-government in their own specific matters. De Gasperi here harkened back, and made explicit reference, to the political philosophy outlined by Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) – the 'Supreme Poet' of Italian literature – in his 1313 treatise *On Monarchy* (*De Monarchia*). The pope, the head of the spiritual aspects of life, and the emperor, the ruler of the temporal areas of concern, were equally ordained by God to exercise different functions in different spheres of power and influence for human welfare. In any event, for Dante in 1313 – and for De Gasperi in 1913 – the 'universal Monarchy' (or the *respublica Christiana*) had to rest on

[47] On the importance of the nation for Italian Christian Democracy see Paolo Acanfora, 'Myth and the political use of religion in Christian Democratic culture', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 12 (2008), 307–38.

[48] On nationalism, in addition to the already quoted Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1986).

the principle of Christian universalism and on the function of mediation exercised by the pope in the conflict between the emperor (sovereign) and the states.[49]

In the different context of post-Second World War politics, the key word for Christian Democrats was 'supranationalism', the 'great experiment' envisaged by Schuman since the late 1940s to overcome the clash of nationalities and nationalisms and usher in a new historical stage of humanity.[50] Supranationalism, Schuman remarked, was 'not to merge States to create a super State'.[51] After all, he continued,

> our European states are a historical reality. From a psychological point of view it would be impossible to do away with them. Their diversity is a good thing and we do not intend to level them down or equalize them.[52]

The real aim of supranationalism, Schuman thus explained, was to 'transcend national boundaries' not 'in order to undermine or to absorb the nation', but to 'endow it with a broader and higher sphere of activity'.[53] Only a 'supranational organisation' would overcome 'selfish and totalitarian nationalism', 'racism' and 'hatred', at the same time preserving 'patriotism', the 'noble feeling' that 'forged nations and enabled them to accomplish magnificent things'.[54]

The tentative distinction between 'noble', healthy patriotism and abnormal, 'totalitarian' nationalism might be Schuman's (or the Christian Democratic) symbolic resolution of something essentially unresolvable. The same distinction, in any event, had become Catholic dogma in the interwar period when pope Pius XI, in the encyclical *Ubi arcano* (1922), denounced 'extreme nationalism' (*immoderatum nationis amorem*) but endorsed, conversely, love of country (*caritas patriae*). Yet the *Abendland* trope permitted Christian Democracy to formulate a relationship between Europe and nation in terms of dialectic rather than radical opposition, or to fashion a nationalism sublimated into a supranational (superior) form of patriotism. It permitted

[49] Alcide De Gasperi, 'Il Turco ride', *Il Trentino*, 9 July 1913.

[50] Schuman initiated the debate on 'supranational democracy' at the United Nations (28 Sept. 1948) and in subsequent speeches across Europe and North America (for example: 5 May 1949, London; 16 May 1949, Festival Hall, Strasbourg, with the title 'The coming century of supranational communities'); see Poidevin, *Robert Schuman: Homme d'État*, 229–43.

[51] Robert Schuman, *For Europe* (Geneva: Nagel, 2010), 16. In *Pour l'Europe*, first published in 1963 after retiring from politics, Schuman set out his reflection on European integration. His only published book, it is a distillation of ideas and themes from notes, articles and speeches that he had previously made on European affairs.

[52] Ibid. See also Schuman's speech at the University of Mainz (21 Mar. 1953), now in Marie-Thérèse Bitsch, ed., *Robert Schuman, apôtre de l'Europe 1953-1963* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2010), 53–7. Other Christian Democrats were aware of the psychological and historical hold of the 'nation', for some a true 'holy' and 'sacred' value; see for example the speech by Georges Bidault (the French Christian Democratic Foreign Minister and president of the ECSC council), at the conclusion of the *Ad Hoc Assembly* for the definition of the European Constitutional Charter (7 Mar. 1953), in Historical Archives of the European Union, European University Institute (Florence), AH8. In a similar vein see the debate at the NEI congress of Tours (Sept. 1953), in Centre Historiques des Archives Nationales (Paris), Archive Privé, Fond Robert Bichet [hereinafter: CHAN, 519AP], 9.

[53] Schuman, *For Europe*, 21.

[54] Schuman's speech in Luxembourg (7 Dec. 1953) at the conference 'Pourqoi et comment unir l'Europe', now in Raymond Poidevin, *Robert Schuman* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1988), 186–7. See also Schuman, *For Europe*, 30.

the imagining of Europe as an ideal and moral fatherland understood in no way as in opposition to, but rather as a natural development of, the traditional fatherland. It offered European society a chance to reconstitute politics after the collapse of traditional nationalism without falling into the revolutionary spirit of socialist internationalism, and it made possible the recreation of a new Europe-centred German national identity.[55] Finally, it provided citizens, intellectuals and former elites of fascist regimes with an acceptable way to express or hide conservative views, including anti-Jewish views, or at least views which excluded Jews,[56] laying an ideological bridge between the pre- and post-1945 world.

Christian Democracy and Mass Politics

Beyond Western revival and the question of nationalism/internationalism, there were other aspects of the *Abendland* which would prove very attractive to Christian Democrats – order and hierarchy, for one thing. Just as the idealised vision of a Catholic pre-modern and supranational West supported a kind of non-nationalist patriotism, so it permitted Christian Democrats to conceive a thoroughly integrated society run by proper elites. The modern form of mass politics was from this viewpoint an abomination. Not only did it deploy the new technological *means* of politics; it also centred strategically on mass mobilisation, as well as permanent political activity through parties and collective movements. These features of modern mass politics – catalysed by the totalitarian regimes of fascism and communism – were abhorrent, philosophically and personally, to many Christian Democrats, especially those politically formed in the liberal period and in the pre-fascist traditions of social and political Catholicism. In contrast, the conservative aspect of the *Abendland* and its idealisation of social hierarchy and order underpinned the distinctly Christian Democratic understanding of democracy – counterrevolutionary and post-totalitarian, post-liberal and with specific spiritual foundations – and its approach to the project of European integration.

Christian Democrats accepted parliamentary democracy and pluralism as the compulsory language of post-war politics, while contextually challenging that strain of liberal democracy which had surrendered to totalitarianism. They followed here the direction of a number of European Catholic thinkers who had led the way in embracing crucial aspects of modernity and human rights as indispensable to a proper Catholic view of the world. The interwar years had proved disastrous for political Catholicism. Much of Catholic politics had been at first fascinated by authoritarian regimes and their promises to tame Bolshevism and revolutionary expectations. However, the development of Catholic thought had not come to a standstill; indeed, it had developed very much as a reflection on the fatalities of the

[55] Thomas Risse and Daniela Engelmann-Martin, 'Identity Politics and European Integration: The Case of Germany', in Anthony Padgen, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 287–316.

[56] Conze, *Das Europa*, 119–20.

interwar period. A central figure in the debates was the French philosopher Jacques Maritain.

Working within a neo-Thomist philosophical framework, Maritain started to embrace human rights and modern democracy in the 1930s. In particular, his 1936 study *Integral Humanism* (*Humanisme Intégrale*) and his 1942 pamphlet *Christianity and Democracy* (*Christianisme et démocratie*) – which was dropped by Allied planes over continental Europe in 1943 – had constituted a cautious, but nevertheless decisive endorsement of the ultimately Christian nature of democracy. His idea of a 'new Christendom' (*nouvelle chrétienté*), or a re-conquest of the modern world and the establishment of a new culture and civilisation of Christian inspiration, influenced Emmanuel Mounier, Étienne Gilson, Henri-Irénée Marrou and, in Italy, Augusto Del Noce.[57] However, Maritain's philosophy did not remain confined to debates among Catholic philosophers and intellectuals. He was a central figure in drafting the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Charles de Gaulle appointed him French ambassador to the Vatican from 1945 to 1948, a timeframe that coincided with the birth of democracy in Italy and the emergence of Catholics as the country's new ruling class. Maritain played a crucial role in the Second Council Vatican, together with neo-Thomist Jesuit John Courtney Murray and other lay intellectuals. It was Maritain who presented pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini) with the 'Message to the Philosophers' at the closing of the Council, and there is no doubt that Paul VI was profoundly influenced by his reading of Maritain. This influence shines through, for example, in pope Paul's encyclical on the 'Development of Peoples' (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967). Here pope Paul refers explicitly to Maritain's writings. Several central passages are literally transcribed versions of Maritain's 'integral humanism' and draw on his image of 'modern man'. Moreover, despite the fact that the French philosopher was not necessarily in favour of founding explicitly Christian parties, the thought and language of Maritain came to constitute an important reference point for European Christian Democrats.[58]

Schuman made direct reference to Maritain in his writings. Many Christian Democrats needed to summon democratic theory to the defence of religious liberty. Schuman went even further. Christianity and democracy were, for him, indistinguishable. Drawing on Maritain, he believed that democracy had its origins in the Christian religion and that the rights of man was a Christian idea.[59] De Gasperi often put forward an ideology which echoed Maritain's philosophy and the well-known thesis of Henri-Louis Bergson (one of Maritain's mentors), according to which democracy has its origin in the values of the Gospel.[60] The language of

[57] On this see Bjørn Thomassen and Rosario Forlenza, 'Christianity and Political Thought: Augusto del Noce and the Ideology of Christian Democracy in Post-war Italy', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 21 (2016), 181–99: 186–9.

[58] See Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth Century Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 135–8.

[59] Schuman, *For Europe*, 43.

[60] See for example Alcide De Gasperi, *Le basi morali della democrazia* (Rome: Società editrice libraria italiana, 1948).

Maritain was one that many Christian Democrats involved in the writing of post-war national constitutions in France, Italy and Germany adopted as their own, and some of the principles based on the philosophy of Maritain were eventually introduced, via Christian Democracy, into these constitutions.[61]

In short, Maritain's philosophy, the experience of the war, and the existential uncertainty it entailed influenced the evolution of Christian Democracy and political Catholicism in post-war Europe. Christian Democrats drifted away from Catholic intransigence and from their earlier fascination with the authoritarian solution, searching for a Catholic response to the problem of modern mass politics. Christian Democracy became the central forum for institutionalising Catholic modernity and democracy. This was a decisive turn in European politics that has too often been taken for granted.

This espousal of democracy was not, however, a surrender of Catholic ideals. The ambition of Christian Democracy was not to restore pre-fascist liberal democracy but to create a new form of democracy: the achievement of a new, social, economic and political order antithetical to liberalism and individualism. Using an anachronistic language, this might be defined as a communitarian rather than liberal democracy. Many Christian Democrats were driven by the idea of 'transcending the principles of 1789', as Giorgio La Pira, one of the Catholics sitting on the board appointed to draw up the new Italian Constitution, once put it; or, in other words, to go beyond bourgeois individualistic liberalism and reconstitute a political order in which the person was embedded in a moral community. Therefore, within the new ethos of post-war Christian Democratic politics, political legitimacy was derived from the will of the people but not exercised by the people.

At the national level, Christian Democrat-led governments espoused a top-down culture of public administration in which decision making was largely remote from the people. National legislation was prepared by bureaucracies, assisted by a plethora of committees and advisory boards without direct democratic mandate. Government was primarily a matter for 'experts' around whom clustered lobbyists and pressure groups, each seeking to ensure that their interests were represented in the detail of parliamentary legislation and administrative regulation. Christian Democracy promised a decent enough form of public life while allowing citizens to turn away from politics if they so desired. Many citizens desired nothing more.[62] As Mark Mazower has argued, Europeans rediscovered after 1945 the 'quiet virtues' of democracy. The freedom to get on with one's own life was one that was understandably cherished by a post-war population less inclined to influence the actions of the state than to ensure that the state did not once again invade their lives.[63] In this sense, the 1940s and the early 1950s were not an age of revolution or triumphant modernity or the triumph of unbridled liberal democracy but rather of

[61] Bjørn Thomassen and Rosario Forlenza, 'Catholic Modernity and the Italian Constitution', *History Workshop Journal*, 81 (2016), 231–51.

[62] Martin Conway, 'Democracy in Postwar Western Europe: The Triumph of a Political Model', *European History Quarterly*, 32 (2002), 59–84, here 65–6; Müller, *Contesting Democracy*, 141–3.

[63] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), xi.

cautious conservatism and stability engendered not only by US support to European economies, but also by cultural components such as the *Abendland*.

At the European level, Christian Democrats gained political legitimacy for the project of integration in an indirect way. Thus, rather than having the peoples of the founding states vote for supranational arrangement, they relied on technocratic and administrative measures agreed upon by elites to yield what Monnet, but also Schuman and De Gasperi, time and again called 'concrete achievements'[64] which would eventually persuade citizens that European integration was a good thing. In other words, Christian Democrats believed in supranationalism as something done by well-connected elites of high-minded planners and bureaucrats. This was the kind of diplomacy that had been foreshadowed by Keynes after the First World War, but which, for the most part, had so spectacularly foundered in interwar Europe.

In retrospect, the official approach has often been derided as European integration by stealth; and its elitist and technocratic traces can still be found in the European Union's (EU) perceived deficits of democracy, legitimacy and popular support. At the time, however, it appeared as a credible response to the dangers of popular sovereignty, to the politics of *piazza* and to the over-confident dogmas of inter-war politics, of which Christian Democratic leaders, even as leaders of people's parties, would remain particularly wary.[65] At the same time, the architects of the integration did seek to instil real political passion for Europe in their people. Europe, Schuman argued, 'cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise; it needs a soul'.[66] 'The people must be given a new ideology', Adenauer remarked in cabinet during a discussion of the coal and steel community. 'It can only be a European one'.[67] And De Gasperi said to the Italian Senate:

> Some said that the European federation is a myth. It's true, it is a myth in the *Sorelian* sense. And if you want there to be a myth, then please tell us what myth we need to give to our youth concerning relations between one state and another, the future of Europe, the future of the world, security, and peace, if not this effort toward unification? Do you prefer the myth of dictatorship, the myth of power, the myth of one's nation's flag, even if it is accompanied by heroism? But then, we would

[64] See for example the text of the Schuman Declaration in David De Giustino, ed., *A Reader of European Integration* (London: Longman, 1996), 58–60. Monnet wrote famously: 'the Schuman proposals provide a basis for the building of a new Europe through the concrete achievement of a supranational regime within a limited but controlling area of economic effort'; Jean Monnet, *Memoirs*, trans. Richard Mayne (London: Collins, 1978), 316.

[65] Adenauer's inclination toward independent decision-making often in an autocratic way led a biographer to call the Federal Republic under his leadership an 'autocracy'; Ulrich Frank-Planitz, *Konrad Adenauer: Eine Biographie in Bild und Wort* (Bergisch Gladbach: G. Lübbe, 1975), 134. See also Karl Jaspers, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik? Tatsachen, Gefahren, Chancen* (Munich: Piper, 1966). De Gasperi valued parliament's distinctive role as a mediator between state and the society, but he mistrusted the politics of the 'piazza'; Steven F. White, 'Christian Democracy or Pacellian Populism?', in Kselman and Buttigieg, eds., *European Christian Democracy*, 199–227: 203.

[66] Schuman, *For Europe*, 58. See also Robert Schuman, 'Les bases indispensables d'une Communauté européenne', *Pax Romana* (June 1953), now in Bitsch, *Robert Schuman*, 59–62.

[67] Lenz diary, 4 Feb. 1952, quoted in Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, 612. See also Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 275.

create once again that conflict that inevitably leads to war. I tell you that this myth is a myth of peace.[68]

If anything, European integration was supposed to have emotional, rather than normative-philosophical appeal. It was to offer Europeans – primarily the youth, betrayed by fascism and Nazism – an alternative to the promises of communism and revolution.[69] It was to create a myth alternative to the otherwise unstoppable myth of the 'Holy Russia'.[70] It had to spread a feeling of shared affiliation. In the context of the emerging Cold War, the symbolism of *Abendland* – with its evocation of manifold sentiments and connoted images rooted in the Europe's cultural memory – proved once more crucial.

The *Abendland* and the Cold War

The symbolism of the *Abendland* shaped the at the time hysterical anti-communist language of the Cold War. It infused the Europeanism of Christian Democracy with the dramatic and eschatological tenor of an impending apocalyptic crisis. The battle against communism was presented in strictly binary terms, as an ideologically invigorated choice between Europe and non-Europe, civilisation and barbarism, good and evil, Christianity and atheism, dictatorship and democracy, East and West; in short it was not a political and economic competition but, Adenauer explained in 1951, a proper clash of civilisations.[71] The *Abendland* became again the bulwark against the Soviet Union, the 'root of all evil'[72] that was imagined to embody all the consequences of the abandonment of Catholicism for the radicalism of the secular Enlightenment.[73] Rather ironically, the idea of a radical alternative expressed the same mood that had been distinctive of fascist and Nazi propaganda, allowing politicians and people to use a familiar rhetoric from the past.

[68] Alcide De Gasperi, *Discorsi Parlamentari*, vol. II (Rome: Camera dei deputati, 1985), 795 (italics mine).

[69] See the speech by De Gasperi at the Council of Europe (10 Dec. 1951) in the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, b. 19, sf. *Consiglio d'Europa – Constituente Europea*, r. 11/5; see also *Alcide De Gasperi e la politica internazionale*, 402–5. See also a memo drafted in spring 1948 (at the time of the NEI congress of Luxembourg), in Lipgens and Loth, *Documents of the History of the European Integration*, 493–5.

[70] As in the words of a young Italian Christian Democrat; Gianni Baget-Bozzo, 'La democrazia cristiana e l'unità europea', *Cronache Sociali*, 3 (1 Nov. 1949), 3–4, quote on 3.

[71] See Adenauer speech at the NEI congress of Bad Ems, 14 Sept. 1951 (CHAN, 519AP, 9). In a similar vein, Schuman, at the National Congress of the Popular Republican Movement (*Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, MRP), May 1956, said: 'la doctrine soviétique n'est pas uniquement anticapitaliste, ce qui ne constituerait pas un fossé à tout jamais infranchissable mais elle est la négation de toutes nos conceptions sur l'Etat, sur la société, sur la personne humaine, ses libertés politiques and religieuses . . . [le] communisme soviétique . . . a pour objectif avoué, primordial, de combattre et de détruire notre civilisation occidental chrétienne'; quoted in Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 229.

[72] Speech by the Italian Attilio Piccioni in Turin (30 Apr. 1949), in Carlo Dané ed., *Scritti e discorsi, 1944–1965*, vol. II (Rome: Cinque Lune, 1979), 355.

[73] Walter Dirks, 'Das christliche Abendland: Sein Nachwirken in der Konfessionen der Bundesrepublik', in Klaus von Bismarck and Walter Dirks, eds., *Christlicher Glaube und Ideologie* (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1964), 118–26, here 125.

Contributing to the vilification of communism in post-war Europe was the *Abendland* conflation of Russians, whose identity as Westerners had always been in doubt, with Asian barbarism. Images and posters depicting Russians as ferocious brutes, with a weakness for alcohol and a penchant for rape, sowed the seeds of fear among Europeans. Russians, after all, were not simply communists, proponents of an alien (i.e. non-European) ideology but Mongoloid Asiatics or ominous Turks who had imperilled European civilisation and the *respublica Christiana* for centuries. These qualities, combined with the official atheism of the Soviet Union, helped to conflate the Red with the Yellow menace; thus stirring a lingering fear of the bloodthirsty Mongol or the rampaging Cossack with the knife between his teeth.[74] The *Abendland* tradition nourished one of the most pervasive images of the Soviet Union to emerge after the Second World War: the Asiatic power that had succeeded in invading Europe. Indeed, a number of leading Christian Democrats alluded to Russia as an Oriental power to support the project of European integration. For example, in October 1948 in the private venue of the Geneva circle,[75] Georges Bidault, the French foreign minister, reported his experience of negotiations with Stalin and Molotov by speaking of 'a new Islam that will never retreat even one step and from which we have to expect everything'.[76] The 'Turks at the gates of Constantinople' became a central rallying cry in Christian Democratic anti-communist propaganda.

By the mid-1950s the image of a Germany raped by the Soviets made its way into official history. The Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims published a multi-volume work on the flight and evacuation of Germans at the end of the war. The series represented an official endorsement of a racial analysis of the rapes, as the ministry offered the following explanation:

> It can be recognised that behind the rapes stood a form of behaviour and a mentality that seem strange and repelling to European concepts. One would have to trace them back in part to traditions and ideas that are still in effect, particularly in the Asian regions of Russia, according to which women, like jewellery, valuables, and the contents of apartments and armouries, are the rightful bounty of the victor. . . . The fact that Soviet soldiers of Asian origin distinguished themselves by a particular ferocity and lack of moderation confirms that certain strains of the Asian mentality contributed substantially to these outbreaks.[77]

What is especially notable here is how such an understanding of the rapes allowed Germans to recall the collapse of the Eastern front as an event in which Western civilisation was violated by a brutal Soviet-Asian culture. The Soviet Union encapsulated values and principles diametrically opposed to the spirit of European civilisation. In the narrative of Christian Democracy, the Soviet Union was a force

[74] See Rosario Forlenza, 'In Search of Order: Portraying the Communist in Cold War Italy', *Journal of Cold War Studies,* forthcoming 2017.

[75] Since 1947 leading Christian Democrats (such as Bidault and Adenauer) had met informally and secretly at Geneva to discuss the German question and Franco–German rapprochement.

[76] CHAN, 519AP, 10. Already in 1946, Adenauer had famously declared 'Asia stands on the Elbe'; Adenuaer to Sollman, 16 Mar. 1946, in *Konrad Adenauer Briefe über Deutschland, 1945–1955*, ed. Hans-Peter Mensing (Berlin and Munich: Goldmann, 1999), 42–3.

[77] *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus den Gebieten östlich der Oder–Neisse* (1954) (Munich: Deutscher Tascehnbuch 1984), 61E.

armed with a Gospel,[78] and therefore a political religion that had to be fought not only for its political programme but also for its false religious message. Against the persistent threat the only solution was the integration of a healthy Europe through the reconstruction of the Christian West.

In this specific respect, the symbolism of the *Abendland* helped assuage the internal frictions caused by interconfessionalism in European politics. Certainly, the cooperation between Catholics and Protestants within the Dutch and German Christian Democratic parties could be hindered by the anti-Protestantism ingrained in the *Abendland*. Yet the symbol was sufficiently diffuse and imprecise. It allowed multiple forms of appropriation. It appealed to different constituencies as a result of its pliability. In the Cold War years the strong anti-communist impetus of the *Abendland* ideology and its emphasis on Christianity as a civilisational link prevailed over the Catholic critiques of Luther and the Reformation, allowing Catholics and Protestants to share a common cultural and mental space. Protestant Christian Democrats perceived the *Abendland* as the embodiment of the (Western) European cultural superiority over the un-Christian and barbaric East. In this interpretation they could make a common front with Catholics.

In the geopolitical circumstances of the Cold War, the *Abendland* was not only a solution to the problems of nationalism and the invention of a post-totalitarian Christian Democratic democracy. It also permitted the reinvention of the Carolingian Empire as a bulwark against the old semi-oriental East, appearing now in the shape of an enormously extended state Bolshevism. The particulars of the *Abendland* and the Christian heritage of the new Europe were not discussed all that much, as long as Christian Democrats identified with anti-communism and fear of the Soviet Union. To be sure, anti-communism is only part of the picture. The Europeanism of Christian Democracy also had more material bases, for it relied on a particular alliance of the middle class and the peasantry – an alliance supportive of and benefiting from European integration.[79] However, without an external enemy it would have been much more difficult for Christian Democracy to define what 'Europe' meant and stood for.[80]

By the late 1940s the feverish atmosphere of the Cold War displaced the interwar vision of the *Abendland*, the older and radical Catholic vision of Europe that wanted to become a geopolitical third way between the capitalist United States and the

[78] See the speeches of the Belgian Robert Houben and the German Fritz Schäffer at the Geneva meeting of February 1950; CHAN, 519AP, 10.

[79] See the historical survey on French Christian Democracy carried out by Jean-Claude Debreil, 'Le MRP et la construction européenne: résultats, interprétations et conclusions d'une enquête écrite et orale', in Serge Bernstein, Jean-Marie Mayeur and Pierre Milza, eds., *La MRP et la construction européenne* (Paris: Complexe, 1993), 330–45; see also Rosario Forlenza, 'A Party for the Mezzogiorno: The Christian Democratic Party, Agrarian Reform and the Government of Italy', *Contemporary European History*, 19 (2010), 331–49.

[80] Once asked about the patronage of the EEC, Paul-Henri Spaak answered that Stalin was its father, inasmuch as fear of the Soviet Union had provided the impetus to hang together rather than hang separately; Paul-Henri Spaak, *Combats Inachevés: De l'Indépendance à l'Alliance*, vol. I (Paris: Fayard, 1969), 149.

communist Soviet Union. Benevolent images of the Soviet Union, such as those suggested by De Gasperi in 1944, disappeared. On 23 July 1944, six weeks after the liberation of Rome, the Italian had characterised Russia as a present-day version of the melting pot: 'I see the Russians made up of one hundred and sixty different ethnic groups', he declared, 'overcoming the differences between Asia and Europe'. He continued: 'this effort towards the unification of human society is, allow me to say, a Christian effort, it is universalistic in the sense of Catholicism'.[81] By contrast, in the next few years Christian Democracy narrowed its conception of anti-materialism to signify first and foremost anti-Marxism, downplaying anti-Nazism and anti-capitalism. The 'neutralist' visions articulated by internal factions that opposed the Atlantic Pact appeared impracticable once the dynamic of the Cold War was in full swing. All Christian Democratic parties gave up the idea of Europe as a third force positioned between the superpowers: there were only two world powers now,[82] and the Atlantic Ocean was the new Mediterranean. Adenauer, by contrast, who constantly referred to the *Abendland* in his speeches, always assumed that the condition of possibility for Europe's post-national project was a security umbrella provided by the United States. In the end, Adenauer always included the United States in his conception of *Abendland*.[83] This was well understood by French and Italian Christian Democrats, who faced opposition from powerful domestic communist parties.[84] To Christian Democrats, fearful that the United States might return to isolationism and withdraw its protection, cooperation with Washington was the only credible foreign policy response to the Soviet threat; it was only once Europe was firmly entrenched in an Atlantic framework that they fully committed to the project of continental integration.

In the context of the Cold War Europeanism nested in Atlanticism with some contradictions. The United States and Christian Democracy sought a convergence through the mythological elaboration of 'the new Atlantis'.[85] Once again the malleability of the *Abendland* permitted Christian Democrats to fuse 'civilisation', 'democracy', 'Christian West' and 'Freedom' into a unique signifier. This allowed

[81] The speech, entitled 'Christian Democracy and the Political Moment', was published by the party's newspaper *Il Popolo*, 25 July 1944.

[82] As Adenauer put it on 1 Aug. 1957, shortly after the ratification of the Rome treaties, in Mainz; see Ronald Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949–1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 96.

[83] See Schwarz, *Konrad Adenauer*, 393. In addition to the speech at the 1947 party rally (quoted in note 43) see Adenauer's speech at the Executive Committee of the CDU, 15 July 1953; Günter Buchstab, ed., *Adenauer: 'Es mußte alles neu gemacht werden.' Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstandes: 1950–1953* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), 648. See also Adenauer to Blumenfeld, 4 Aug. 1953, in Hans-Peter Mensing, ed., *Konrad Adenauer, Briefe 1951–1953* (Berlin: Siedler, 1987), 420; and Adenauer's opening speech at the Second Party Convention of the CDU in the British Zone (Recklinghausen, 28–29 Aug. 1948), 'Eine Hoffnung für Europa', in *Neuaufbau auf christlichen Grundlagen. Zweiter Parteitag der CDU für die Britische Zone, 28–29 August 1948* (Opladen: Bergische Post, 1948), 5–12.

[84] See for example Schuman's speeches at the NATO Defense College (6 May 1954), in Bitsch, *Robert Schuman*, 102–10; and at Washington (2 Apr. 1951) on the Marshall Plan, in Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 221–2.

[85] Anne O' Hare McCormick, 'Cause and Effect of the Rise of the New Atlantis', *New York Times*, 23 Mar. 1949.

them to strengthen the ties with the United States while using a conservative rhetoric. The United States and Europe were now linked in a common cultural space, institutionalised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), a community of nations united by the perception of being threatened by 'Eastern' communism. The liberal, capitalist and militarist precepts of Atlanticism clearly undermined and obscured the principles and values of the *Abendland*. After all, the economic miracles that transformed West Germany, Italy and other European countries from the 1950s onwards put under considerable strain old traditions and cultural references. However, despite being repressed by the Atlantic framework, a dual resistance to US authority was nevertheless able to spread across large sectors of Christian Democracy: this stemmed from a fear of being reduced to a strategic 'vassal' of the United States[86] and from the refusal to fully embrace the materialism indexed by the 'American way of life'. This dual resistance rendered the relationship ambiguous and ambivalent.

Likewise, the *Abendland*'s anti-liberal kernel, and other no longer acceptable components of pre-Second World War *Abendland* such as anti-Semitism, were seemingly silenced by the Cold War politics and the post-totalitarian culture of Christian Democracy. But other anti-liberal aspects of the *Abendland*l did not disappear and instead seeped into the project of integration, ultimately unsettling its design from within. This is clearly evident in the EU's current migratory policy, thus in the creation of detention centres that transform unsanctioned immigration into a criminal act, contradicting liberal values such as human rights and the freedom of movement.

Conclusion

As this article has attempted to show, the *Abendland* imagined in the 1920s by a group of German-Catholic intellectuals was a social organism in gestation, generating symbols and meanings that remained alive in representations, discursive patterns and political symbolism. It was a murky, open-ended and polysemic concept that, in post-Second World War Europe, collected those aspects of the Christian-Catholic-Western heritage that could plausibly be freed from a link to authoritarianism and be combined with liberal-democratic values and principles. This re-articulation and re-adaptation of the *Abendland* was only possible because Europeans had gone through a critical juncture in history. In principle, the *Abendland* was not a ready-made symbol that could be exploited by Christian Democrats in the post-war period without risk. In fact, it was a potentially polluted and polluting symbol, whose ideological nucleus, its boldest language and imagery contained anti-liberal and reactionary features.

In the context of Christian Democratic Europeanism the *Abendland* symbolised the desire to reformulate the appropriate relationship between individual, society and political power – a relationship that required a high level of modification since

[86] See the speech by the MRP member Henry Teitgen at NEI congress of Bad Ems (1951), in CHAN, AP519, 9.

conventional identity and culture, traditional beliefs and worldviews had been shaken by the experience of the Second World War. How were Europeans to make sense of their recent past and how were they to define themselves as a culture and as a people in the present?

The construction of a new political cultural identity attained a special urgency in post-war Europe. The Second World War had been a social revolution and a series of civil wars. The propagation of warfare into society pitting neighbours against neighbours uprooted customary life through forced expulsion, mass genocide, material devastation and the violation of territorial boundaries. Torn by these pressures, the legal framework of the nations evaporated. The life of civilians became a front-line experience, destroying patterns of trust and social consensus and undermining beliefs in elites and political authority. From this condition emerged a situation of unprecedented uncertainty and disorientation that destroyed the symbolic universes of individuals and societies. In addition to this, international alliances were not the same in 1950 or in 1947 as they had been in 1945, and these differed substantially from those in 1940 or in 1938. In the absence of a peace treaty, the war lost its original meaning as a struggle between Germany and the Allies.

The search for a moral purpose of society and the construction of an ideological framework of authority through 'Europe/*Abendland*' helped assuage the deep uncertainty of the period. The main threat to (Western) Europe was not an imminent Soviet attack but the poor condition of the economy, the resulting social and political instability and the existential crisis that followed the war. With the idea of Europe – soon to become equivalent to the West, democracy and freedom – Christian Democracy armed anxious populations with the symbols and markers of certainty. In the context of the Cold War, the *Abendland* image of the communist-Asiatic barbarian offered 'patriotic' Europeans a sense of clarity and stability by providing a coherent vision of the battles to be fought and the enemies to be vanquished. The Soviet Union represented the indispensable 'other' necessary to achieve full identity, an identity whose coalescence had been stalled when the anti-fascist alliance against the common enemy had broken apart. The Soviet threat served as a straw man, or as the oppositional marker of certainty around which a new identity could be constructed.

In a situation where the old markers of certainty had dissolved, and the durability of European political community seemed tenuous, the redefinition of a new political and cultural identity provided reassurance. The search for roots in the past countered the uncertainty of the present. Through its invocation of tacit knowledge and its use of familiar symbols deeply rooted in the grammar of the *Abendland*, 'Europe' helped to craft a new narrative that made sense of the turbulent world Europeans now faced and, more importantly, provided a road map that would enable them to escape their tragic history and enter a new world.

Fast forward to the present. The age of Christian Democracy, the thirty years after the Second World War that constituted its heyday as a political force in much of Western Europe, has ended. The Soviet collapse and the letting loose of what in bad metaphorical language were called its satellites has called into question once again

where Europe begins and what it may mean, wreaking havoc on, among other things, the Christian Democratic Franco-German project of making Europe tantamount to a judiciously expanded version of the European Union. Meanwhile, Central Europe, long since thought vanished, has reappeared, perhaps to allow former Eastern Europeans to rid themselves of a perceived stigma. What is 'West', 'East' and, above all, 'European' is no longer clear. Once again, the *Abendland* has been altogether more successful. It has survived Christian Democracy and the Cold War and still slumbers at the bottom of European cultural self-understanding. It functions as a condition of possibility for the definition of 'Europe' through an 'other': Islam (Turkey), neo-liberalism (the United States), extra-communitarians (i.e, those who do not belong to the imagined community), refugees (liminal figures cast beyond a juridical state of exception) and post-Soviet Russia. And this marks it as a more or less successfully imagined community. The temptation remains to invoke Europe's incompatibility with the 'non-European' and to recreate new symbolic borders which seem, in a continent that increasingly does not belong to a specific people, all the more problematic.