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**European Anti-Americanism (and Anti-Semitism):
Ever Present Though Always Denied**

by

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Abstract

There can be no doubt that the Bush Administration's policies have massively contributed to a hitherto unprecedented deterioration in European-American relations.

However, European antipathies towards many things American date back at least to July 5, 1776, if not before. Following a conceptual discussion of anti-Americanism, the paper then turns to an account of these historical dislikes and anchors them particularly among Europe's elites. A discussion of anti-Semitism in relation to anti-Americanism follows in the subsequent section. A summary of an analysis of newspaper articles collected in the decade of the 1990s highlights the widespread nature of anti-American sentiments in Britain, France, Germany, Italy. Lastly, anti-Americanism's functionality as a useful ingredient in Europe's burgeoning state building process concludes the paper.

I. Introduction and Definition

One need not be a diligent student of survey research to know that antipathy towards America and Americans has become a worldwide phenomenon.¹ Just a glance at newspaper headlines, editorials, television talk shows, as well as casual conversations at parties and dinner tables reveal a widely-held hostility towards the United States that remains seemingly unprecedented.

The study at hand will concentrate on Europe alone though in a comparative context. By any measure, American-European relations have reached a nadir over the past few years. No aspect of public life has remained immune to this tension fraught with recrimination, antipathy, even open hostility. We know that things must be really bad when even the world of accounting, hitherto hardly a hotbed of cultural wars and transatlantic disagreements, recently has witnessed overt hostilities from Europeans towards their American colleagues. Thus, Claude Bebear, the chairman of AXA, the French insurer, who compared accounting rulemakers to Iranian religious leaders: “Most of them are from the United States, he said, but ‘there is a super-super-ayatollah who is not even American but is from Scotland’ and ‘has a fascination with market value.’”² Regardless of the issue involved, about which I claim zero expertise, the tone says it all. The German proverb “Der Ton macht die Musik” (“the tone makes the music”) comes to mind. Indeed, this proverb’s wisdom will inform much of this study, since the saying clearly denotes the important fact that form matters at least as much as substance, or better still, that form is in fact substance. Accordingly, this study is as much about the “how” as it is about the “what.” In particular, it will demonstrate that a steady – and growing – resentment of the United States (indeed, of most things American) has permeated European discourse and opinion since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and thus the end of the bipolar world of the Cold War that dominated Europe since 1945. However, it will also argue that the manifest

¹By using the term “America” and “American” throughout this study to denote the political entity of “The United States of America,” I beg the indulgence of all readers who reside north or south of the respective borders of the United States and are thus, of course, “American” though not citizens of the United States. I am using the concepts “America” and “American” not in their wider and more accurate geographic meaning but in their much more commonly used manner as representing one country, the United States of America. But particularly in a work on “anti-Americanism,” I feel justified in doing so since the term itself has always applied “exclusively to the United States, and not to Canada or Mexico or any other nation of the New World. Many who complain bitterly that the United States has unjustifiably appropriated the label of America have nonetheless gladly allowed that anti-Americanism should refer only to the United States.” James W. Ceaser, “A genealogy of anti-Americanism,” *The Public Interest* (Summer 2003).

As to the surveys, the best known is the BBC’s study of eleven countries for the television program, “What The World Thinks of America” (BBC News, “Poll suggests world hostile to US”). The show was aired on Tuesday, June 17, 2003. In addition, there are the following seven studies by the Pew Foundation Survey Reports – Global Attitudes/International: “Views of a Changing World 2003,” June 3, 2003; “America’s Image Further Erodes: Europeans Want Weaker Ties,” March 18, 2003; “Among Wealthy Nations...,” December 19, 2002; “What the World Thinks in 2002,” December 4, 2002; “Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues,” April 17, 2002; “America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as a Good Thing, say Opinion Leaders,” December 19, 2001; and “Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist,” August 15, 2001. Some of these titles bespeak the aforementioned malaise with and antipathy towards America on the part of much of the world, including Europe. Finally, there was a detailed survey conducted in August 2003 by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and Compagnia di San Paolo of Turin in seven European countries (German, France, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal) and the United States, where the growing and deepening European aversion to America is amply documented.

²Floyd Norris, “Showdown Looms in Europe Over Proposals on Accounting,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 2003.

nature of this antipathy hails from a very long and fertile history and that it is only marginally related to dislike of George W. Bush and his administration's policies. The latter have merely served as convenient caricatures for a much deeper structural disconnect between Europe as an emerging political entity and a new global player on the one hand, and the United States, its only genuine rival on the other. As this paper will argue, anti-Americanism in Europe has long preceded George W. Bush and will persist long after his departure.

Anti-Americanism is a particularly murky concept because it invariably merges antipathy towards what America *does* with what America *is* – or rather is projected to be in the eyes of its beholders.³ Thus, it has characteristics like any other prejudice in that its holder “prejudges” the object and its activities apart from what actually transpires in reality. And just as in the case of any prejudice, anti-Americanism, too, says much more about those who hold it than the object of its ire and contempt. But where it differs so markedly from “classical” prejudices such as anti-Semitism (about which there will be more in this study), homophobia, misogyny and racism, is the fact that unlike in these latter cases – where Jews, gays and lesbians, women and ethnic minorities rarely, if ever, have any actual power in and over the majority of populations in most countries – the real existing United States most certainly does have power. Because of this unique paradox, the separation between what America *is* – i.e. its way of life, its symbols, products, people – and what America *does* – its foreign policy writ large – will forever be **jumbled** and impossible to disentangle. I would argue that it is precisely because of this fact that – unlike these other prejudices which, as a fine testimony to progress and tolerance over the past forty years, have by and large become publicly illegitimate in most advanced industrial democracies – anti-Americanism remains not only acceptable in many public circles, it has even become commendable, indeed a badge of honor, and perhaps one of the most distinct icons of being a progressive these days. After all, by being anti-American, one adheres to a prejudice that ipso facto also opposes a truly powerful force in the world. Thus, in the case of anti-Americanism, one's prejudice partially assumes an antinomian purpose, thereby attaining a legitimacy in progressive circles that other prejudices – thankfully – do not anymore, at least in the accepted public discourse of advanced industrial democracies. Anti-Americanism, as any other prejudice, is an acquired set of beliefs, an attitude, an ideology, not an ascribed trait. Thus, it is completely independent of the national origins of its particular holder. Indeed, many Americans can be – and are – anti-American, just as Jews can be – and are – anti-Semitic, blacks can – and do – hold racist views, and women misogynist ones.⁴ The reason I am mentioning this is because often the very existence of anti-Americanism is denied by dint of Americans also adhering to such positions. It is not a matter of the holder's citizenship or birthplace that ought to be the appropriate criterion but rather her/his set of acquired beliefs about a particular collective. But here, too, context means everything. Delighting in Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* in an artsy movie theater in Ann Arbor, Madison, Cambridge or Berkeley is a completely different experience and has a vastly different meaning from having this film become *the* movie of choice about the United States among German youth, including right-wing and left-wing radicals in towns of the former East Germany, who use it as a bonding experience between and among them. *Bowling for Columbine* has become far and away the most successful documentary film in German history and Michael Moore's books grace Europe's bestseller lists, even before they are translated into the local languages.⁵ Thousands

³The very best article in recent times on anti-Americanism is Fouad Ajami's “The Falseness of Anti-Americanism,” in *Foreign Policy*, September 2003.

⁴For an excellent article demonstrating how American intellectuals have cultivated anti-American views, see Ian Buruma, “Wielding the moral class,” in *The Financial Times Weekend Magazine*, September 13, 2003.

⁵For a fine article showing how Michael Moore's work has a completely different meaning in the United States and in Europe, see Andrian Kreye, “Zugpferd des Antiamerikanismus: Schlecht recherchiert, ohne Kontext: Warum ist Michael Moore in Europa so erfolgreich?” in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 11, 2003. The author makes it clear that whereas in the United States Moore's popularity bespeaks his humorous and biting depiction of a conservative administration and establishment, in Europe Moore embodies little more than a foil behind which one can safely voice one's anti-Americanism without being accused of holding such a prejudice since – after all – Michael Moore, a bona

throughed his lectures on his European tour in December 2003 when he was received like a rock star by an adoring public. This had never happened to any other documentary filmmaker, American or European. It behooves us to seek an explanation for the reasons of Michael Moore's immense popularity in contemporary Europe. Clearly, the texture of the admiration bestowed upon him by these adoring Europeans hails from a source that goes much deeper than disagreements over policy or even the dislikes of a particular president and members of his cabinet. Racist lyrics by rappers do not become less racist by virtue of their being articulated by African-American artists, but their very quality changes completely were the same lyrics uttered by whites. Few people have a more deprecating sense of humor than Jews. Yet it makes a whale of a difference whether the jokester is Jewish or not. The content defines but the context lends meaning.

As much as possible, this study is about the *is*, not the *does*. I will argue that in Europe, anti-Americanism has been much more about the essence of America – or put more precisely, the interpretation of how Europeans constructed this essence for their own purposes – than its actual activities. This is clearly not the case with other manifestations of contemporary anti-Americanism. Thus, for example, as my colleague Meredith Woo-Cummings argues in a perceptive paper on changing public opinion in the Republic of Korea, Korean antipathies towards the United States have none of the depth, characteristics and tradition that their European counterparts have, and remain clearly much more anchored in dislike of America's actual activities – its doing – rather than its character, its essence – its being.⁶ Unlike elsewhere in the world, at least until very recently, America represented a particularly loaded concept and complex entity to Europeans precisely because it was, of course, a European creation which, however, more than any other former European extension, consciously defected from its European origins. Anti-Americanism in Europe has always been much more about America's being, as opposed to the rest of the world's antipathy towards America – which has been much more anchored in its doing.

To be sure, just as to the Europeans this imagined America served all kinds of purposes, not least of which was to delineate a clear “other” to themselves, the exact obverse pertained as well to Americans, who throughout their history created all kinds of imagined Europes that fulfilled an “othering” function. This America as Europe's “other” and vice versa has best been characterized as a “compulsive *folie à deux* for over three centuries with a remarkably stable set of choreographies, but with a rather uneven, historically specific set of performances.”⁷ However, I perceive an important difference in the respective agencies of this *folie à deux* on the two continents: whereas in the United States the carriers of prejudice and antipathy toward Europe have predominated – if at all – in the lower social strata, American elites – particularly cultural ones – have consistently extolled Europe, and continue to do so. This love for and emulation of European tastes, mores, fashions and habits remained a staple of American elite culture even during the country's most nativist and isolationist periods. It is safe to say that virtually all of America's highbrow culture continues to be European. One need only look at the humanities departments of any leading American university to observe this continuing cultural hegemony, which, even in the persistent attempt of negating its Eurocentrism, resorts to ideas and methods that are completely European. (Of course it goes without saying that those among America's cultural elites who decry European culture's hegemony in America's history are equally critical of established American culture and mainstream America. If anything, they see the latter merely as a cheapened version of the former.) In massive contrast to the outright negative and pejorative – at best ambivalent – notions that the word “American” conjures up in

fide American, says the same things.

⁶Meredith Woo-Cummings, “Unilateralism and Its Discontents: The Passing of the Cold-War Alliance and Changing Public Opinion in the Republic of Korea,” (unpublished paper, The University of Michigan, 2003.)

⁷Berndt Ostendorf, “The Final Idiocy of the Reversed Baseball Cap: Transatlantische Widersprüche in der Amerikanisierungsdebatte,” in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, 1 (1999); idem, “Why Is American Popular Culture So Popular? A View from Europe,” in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 46, 3 (2001). I will only look at the European side of this *folie à deux* in this study, not the American.

Europe, “European” invariably invokes positive tropes among Americans (elites and mass alike) such as “quality,” “class,” “taste,” and “elegance,” be it in food, comfort, tradition, romance, eroticism (as in European massage, European decor, European looks and the list can go on). Any resentment of Europe by American mass opinion is of a completely different order of magnitude than anti-Americanism’s presence in Europe. The risible “freedom fries” had zero traction in any segment of American society. First of all, the parallel words to “anti-Americanism” namely “anti-Europism” or “anti-Europeanism” are virtually nonexistent. (Indeed, my computer’s spell checker knows neither, as opposed to “anti-Americanism” with which it seems totally familiar.) Second, Americans in their history have been known to be anti-French, anti-German, anti-Russian, anti-British, and anti-Communist, but never anti-European. To be sure, one important aspect of acculturation to America was to oppose things from “the old country,” to try to distance oneself from the “old world” in an attempt to create a new one. (This, too, changed in the course of the twentieth century since by its end the ideology of a multicultural America demanded pride in one’s origins as opposed to the ideology of the melting pot of the pre-1960s era which exacted distancing from one’s previous culture.) In that sense, one could speak of a distancing from Europe. But this has not been even remotely similar to the degree of aversion that anti-Americanism has entailed for Europeans. And here, too, there are huge differences by social class and status. “Ordinary” Europeans have never exhibited the aversion towards America that their elites have. Indeed, as demonstrated by regular public opinion surveys since the early 1960s, a solid majority of Europeans have expressed positive views of America, with only about 30 percent holding negative ones. Tellingly, the higher one proceeds on the social scale of the respondents, the greater the quantity of negative attitudes towards America becomes. As such, anti-Americanism is arguably one of the very few prejudices in contemporary Europe which correlate positively with education and social status: the higher the education the greater the prejudice. Until the mid-1960s, this was also the case with anti-Semitism in Austria and Germany where, since the nineteenth century, the most virulent anti-Semites were to be found at universities and among their graduates, such as doctors, lawyers and engineers. In the course of the past four decades, conventional anti-Semitism in these two countries has assumed the pattern of other kinds of collective prejudices and hatreds: the lesser the respondent’s education and the lower her or his social standing, the greater the probability of her or his having prejudices and collective dislikes. This has never been the case with anti-Americanism and – as will be discussed later – might yet again have received a new twist in terms of anti-Semitism as well. Thus, a sort of inverted mirror image has characterized this European-American *folie à deux* with very different weights in their respective agencies: European masses have by and large liked and respected America while European elites have certainly not, whereas American elites have liked and respected Europe with American masses much less so.

Perhaps what differentiates the current level and quality of European anti-Americanism from all its predecessors is the fact that for the very first time a solid majority of European publics also bear negative attitudes towards the United States thus establishing – maybe for the first time – a complete congruity with their elites on this topic. There can be no doubt that the Bush Administration’s actions, tone and demeanor have greatly contributed to this congruity – this voluntary *Gleichschaltung* – between European publics and elites in terms of their massively felt and politically mobilized anti-Americanism.

Lest there be any misunderstandings and conceptual uncertainties as to what exactly I mean by anti-Americanism, here is the definition offered by Paul Hollander in his superb and definitive book on the subject: “Anti-Americanism is a *predisposition to hostility* toward the United States and American society, a relentless critical impulse toward American social, economic, and political institutions, traditions, and values; it entails an aversion to American culture in particular and its influence abroad, often also contempt for the American national character (or what is presumed to be such a character) and dislike of American people, manners, behavior, dress, and so on; rejection of American foreign policy and a firm belief in the

malignity of American influence and presence anywhere in the world.”⁸ It is a generalized and comprehensive normative dislike that often lacks distinct reasons or concrete causes.

Anti-Americanism is an “ism” thus bespeaking its established institutionalization and common usage as a modern ideology. Whereas the word itself might not have been explicitly used until the beginning of the twentieth century, the sentiments that it denotes had been commonly understood and employed in Europe since the late eighteenth century, if not before.⁹ Anti-Americanism exists: it is visible, palpable, audible, readable. Lest we get bogged down in fruitless definitional squabbles, Justice Potter Stewart’s famous dictum about pornography (obscenity) pertains here as well: “I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to embrace in that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it...”¹⁰

II. A Brief Historical Overview

In my research of the topic, I reached back into history in order to ascertain whether the current anti-Americanism sweeping Europe is indeed unique. While some of its manifestations might indeed be (as will be discussed later), it is also quite clear that there never was a “golden age” in which European elites genuinely liked America. To be more precise still, there never existed an era in which European intellectuals and literati – European elites – viewed the United States without a huge residue of *ressentiment*.¹¹ As odd as this may seem, this goes back all the way to 1492 and the so-called “discovery” of the so called “New World” – what was to become America and the Americas – by Christopher Columbus. As Ira Strauss argues in a perceptive paper, a simpler, pre-ideological fear of and *ressentiment* towards America emerged among Europe’s elites – both the aristocracy and the clergy – who understood all too well that the changes in the world that Columbus’s journeys wrought could potentially undermine their established positions and ordered views.¹² Well before America had any power, and well before it was an independent country, tropes emerged in its perception that were to become mainstays of European anti-Americanism to this day: venality, vulgarity, mediocrity, inauthenticity but also a clear sense of danger in its undefinable but clearly evident attraction. Thus, the argument that it has been America’s disproportionate power when compared to Europe’s alleged powerlessness that lies at the heart of European *ressentiment* towards the

⁸Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad, 1965 - 1990*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 339 (emphasis in original). In addition to Hollander’s key book on this topic, I would like to mention three others that, in my view, offer the most comprehensive analysis on this topic. For Germany, it is clearly Dan Diner’s *Feindbild Amerika: Über die Beständigkeit eines Ressentiments* (Munich: Propyläen Verlag, 2002). For France it is Philippe Roger’s *L’Ennemi Américain: Généalogie de l’antiaméricanisme français* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002); and for Canada, Mario Roy’s *Pour en finir avec l’antiaméricanisme* (Québec: Boréal, 1993). I have yet to find comparable books for anti-Americanism in Britain and Italy.

⁹“A British economist writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1901 used the phrase anti-Americanism explicitly, and made clear what it was about. To a ‘despairing (European) envy of her prosperity and success’ was coupled a disagreeable new sense of impotence, commercial, diplomatic and moral. “Cultured Europeans intensely resent the bearing of Americans; they hate the American form of swagger, which is not personal like the British, but national.” Here was a country “crudely and completely immersed in materialism.” Little wonder that “anti-Americanism (sic) was on the march.” From David W. Ellwood, “A Brief History of European Anti-Americanism” (unpublished paper, delivered at the 2003 convention of the Organization of American Historians [OAH], Memphis, Tennessee, April 6, 2003.)

¹⁰Justice Potter Stewart, concurring in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (378 U.S. 134, 1964).

¹¹I am purposely using the French word “ressentiment” instead of the English “resentment” because – as Max Scheler in his brilliant treatment of this topic demonstrates – the French term includes dimensions of envy, jealousy and above all lingering hate arising from a certain degree of impotence that the English does not. See Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, edited, with an introduction, by Lewis A. Coser, and translated by William W. Holdheim (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1961). Of course the concept of *ressentiment* plays a central role in Friedrich Nietzsche’s work as well, in which it connotes impotence, hatred, envy, and repressed feelings of revenge.

¹²Ira Strauss, “Is it Anti-Americanism or Anti-Westernism?” (Unpublished paper, 2003).

United States and things American simply does not hold up. For clearly, even when the United States had virtually no power, certainly when compared to the big European players such as Britain and France, Europeans bore hostility towards this new entity. From the very beginning until today, European elites have continued to view America as this threatening *parvenu*. By the eighteenth century, Europeans begin to depict America as “degenerate,” which is particularly odd since the country had barely been born. The French anthropologist Georges Louis Leclercq, better known as Comte de Buffon, argued that, in comparison with Africa, Asia, and even South America, North America’s native population was particularly retarded and “degenerate” and that this physiological and psychological inferiority somehow transferred onto the new European immigrants who, too, regressed once they reached America. According to de Buffon, this inevitable process of degeneration initiated via contact with America also affected the domestic animals that the Europeans brought with them.¹³ Just like their human masters, they regressed once contact was made with this New World. Count de Buffon’s “degeneration thesis” gained immense popularity and a wide audience among Europe’s elites throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was also seconded by other European interpreters of America such as the Dutch naturalist Cornelius de Pauw who decried the existence of America as “the worst misfortune” that could have happened to all humanity, upsetting even the New World’s dogs who – according to de Pauw – never barked.¹⁴ This view of America as “degenerate” has remained a major staple of European elite opinion to this day.¹⁵ As I have argued repeatedly, concurring with others, European antipathy towards America can easily be traced to July 5, 1776, the beginning of the republic. Thus, Herbert J. Spiro: “Anti-Americanism has been endemic among the ruling classes in continental Europe since 1776 at the latest.”¹⁶ No lesser observer of the United States than the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville completely understood – and in part reflected – this European *ressentiment* towards America which already by the early nineteenth century bespoke a clear fear of a loss of control on the part of the Europeans, which rested partly in America’s potential as a powerful country but also in its undeniable – almost irresistible – attraction, especially to Europe’s masses, surely not the aristocracy’s friends. When Tocqueville predicted the rise of Russia and America as the two superpowers of the twentieth century, mainly by virtue of their continental expanse, he clearly understood that one would be much more attractive and successful than the other: The United States, according to Tocqueville, would become a hegemon under the banner of freedom, whereas Russia would do so by means of repression. Tocqueville’s claim that the latter would fail whereas the former would flourish not only uncannily foresaw the events of the last decades of the twentieth century, but also underlined the European elites’ continued fear of and disdain for America.¹⁷ From the get go, there was something eerily attractive about the place well beyond the new life that it offered to millions of Europe’s masses. It was similar, yet different; weak, yet powerful; repellent, yet attractive. In notable contrast to any other country, from the very beginning the enemy for European elites was not “America the Conqueror – not the ‘Imperial Republic’ – but America the Beguiling.”¹⁸ Nowhere has this consistently powerful sentiment been better expressed than in the lyrics of Johnny Hallyday, that self-styled French Elvis Presley, when he sings in his song “Quelque chose de Tennessee”: “Cette force, qui nous pousse vers l’infini; Y a peu

¹³Georges de Buffon, “Of the Varieties in the Human Species,” in *Barr’s Buffon. Buffon’s Natural History Containing A Theory Of The Earth, A General History Of Man, Of the Brute Creation, And Of Vegetables, Minerals, Etc.* (London: T. Gillet, 1807), volume 4 (of 10), pp. 306 - 352.

¹⁴Cornelius de Pauw, “Recherches philosophiques sur les américains” in idem, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, 1974, Volume 1, p. II.

¹⁵Dan Diner discusses de Pauw, de Buffon and other authors and thinkers of the time in his superb *Feindbild Amerika: Über die Bestätigung eines Ressentiments* (Munich: Propylaen Verlag, 2002).

¹⁶Herbert J. Spiro, “Anti-Americanism in Western Europe” in Thomas Perry Thornton ed., “Anti-Americanism: Origins and Context” A special edition of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1988), pp. 124.

¹⁷The ideas regarding Tocqueville hail from an unpublished research proposal that John Torpey wrote in an application to Vienna’s IFK.

¹⁸Josef Joffe, “Who’s Afraid of Mr. Big?” in *The National Interest* (Summer 2001).

d'amour avec tell'ment d'envie" [that force which pushes us towards infinity; there is so little love but so much desire/envy].

In the subsequent few paragraphs I will give examples only from Germany, not because Germany represents a special case in Europe's *ressentiment* towards the United States, but because I happen to know German thinkers and literature better than any other in Europe. Attesting to the Europe-wide nature of this phenomenon, one could easily have given parallel examples from Russia, France, Britain or Italy. From the late eighteenth century until today a strong negative assessment of things American outdistanced any positive views of the United States on the part of German intellectuals and elites. The dichotomy of Germany's "Kultur" vs. America's "Zivilisation" arose to contrast the latter's materialism, vulgarity, and shallowness to the former's idealism, nobility, and depth. Beginning with Hegel, virtually all German observers condemned the political immaturity of the United States, mainly by virtue of its not having a European-style state. As long as the United States failed to establish a European-style polity and state structure – and the prognosis looked bad given the size of the country as well as its civil turbulence (which was an outgrowth of its multiethnic and immigrant population) – the United States, Hegel concluded, would remain forever peripheral to world history. Accordingly, Heine wrote of America: it was a "colossal jail of freedom" where "the mob, the most disgusting tyrant of all" carries out "its crude authority." He continued: "You dear German farmers! Go to America! There, neither princes nor nobles exist; there, all people are equal; there, all are the same boors!" Jacob Burkhardt equated the allegedly a- and anti-historical nature of American society with barbarism. He discussed the "a-historical Bildungsmensch" who exists in America's blandness, monotony, mediocrity, and uniformity, and thus whose only escape lay in an inevitable – and pathetic – imitation of Europe's mores and values. Nikolaus Lenau, a major America enthusiast before his trip to the United States, was so disappointed in all things American after his arrival that he returned to Germany in a completely dejected state, informing his countrymen that there were "serious and deep reasons that there were no nightingales and no singing birds at all" in this awful country of "worn out people" and "scorched forests."¹⁹ To the Romantics, America's "Bodenlosigkeit" (rootlessness) was an unforgivable sin. Simon Schama has argued that the flimsy frame construction of American houses was prima facie evidence for Germans of America's rootlessness. This association of America with rootlessness became, of course, a major staple of German views of America, well beyond the radical right's and the Nazis' blood and soil ideology. Thus, for example, in many a current discussion pertaining to the alleged advantages of the "Rhenish" as opposed to the American model of economic and social management, one often hears that in contrast to the ills of America's "flexible" labor markets, which exact a high degree of geographic mobility by workers, Germans are much more tied to home and hearth.

Whether the aforementioned German intellectuals had actually visited the United States, as had Lenau, or whether they made their judgements from afar (as did Heine, Burkhardt, and Nietzsche), mattered little in terms of their disseminating anti-Americanism among Germany's intellectuals, political and cultural elites, as well as its growing *Bildungsbürgertum*. Friedrich Nietzsche hated America as the epitome of the modern which he foresaw as the inevitable conqueror of Europe as well. Long in advance of Hollywood movies, rock and rap music, the spread of American culture was likened to a form of disease. Its progress in Europe seemed ineluctable. "The faith of the American is becoming the faith of the European as well," Nietzsche warned.²⁰ And Nietzsche's student Arthur Moeller Van den Bruck, "best known for having popularized the phrase 'The Third Reich,' proposed the concept of *Amerikanertum* ("American-

¹⁹Three articles have proven particularly useful for my research on these anti-American attitudes by these giants of German culture, politics, literature and philosophy: Manfred Henningsen, "Das Amerika von Hegel, Marx und Engels," in *Zeitschrift für Politik* (München), 20, 3, 1973; Hartmut Wasser, "Die Deutschen und Amerika," in *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (Beilage zur Wochenzeitung *Das Parlament*) June 26, 1976; and Guenter Moltmann, "Anti-Americanism in Germany: Historical Perspectives," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 21, 2 (August 1975).

²⁰James W. Ceaser, "A genealogy of anti-Americanism" in *The Public Interest* (Summer 2003).

ness) which was to be “not geographically but spiritually’ understood.”²¹ Sigmund Freud viewed the United States as embodying the most pronounced manifestation of everything that he found despicable in modern civilization. It was a place that was solely governed by the almighty dollar, that had “no time for libido,” that was simply an “anti-Paradise.” “What is the use of Americans, if they bring no money?” he asked Ernest Jones? He confided to Jones that “Yes, America is gigantic, but a gigantic mistake.” At least Freud had the good sense to admit that the United States was the embodiment of an enemy he simply could not do without, especially after his *Civilization and Its Discontents* became a bestseller in America, making Freud a wealthy man.²² Peter Gay points out in his superb study of Freud how to Freud America represented something inferior, primitive, materialistic and prudish, yet at the same time also something immensely seductive, alluring, almost irresistible, thus providing fertile ground for *ressentiment* in the most pronounced Nietzschean or Schelerian way. Freud’s ambivalence and *ressentiment*, it seems, were quite similar to those expressed by European intellectuals and elites for the past 230 years. And Heidegger frequently mentioned “Americanism” as a soulless, greedy, inauthentic force that undermined Europe.

Unique among Europeans was the Germans’ inordinate extolling of native Americans as “noble savages” whom the Germans regarded as their true soul mates in the defense of authentic culture against the onslaught of America’s materialist and venal civilization. Nowhere does this theme become more visible than in the writings of Karl May, whose pulp fiction became a staple of every middle-class child’s – particularly boys – reading throughout the twentieth century. May’s books feature a German (presumably the author himself) under the assumed name of Old Shatterhand who, together with his blood brother Winnetou, chief of the Apaches, fights the good fight against an assortment of evil comprising venal Englishmen, drunken Scots, cunning Jews, and excessively cruel Comanches and Sioux, their native American allies. May’s books feature every anti-American, anti-British, and anti-Semitic trope that was common discourse among Germany’s middle class all the way to 1945, if not beyond. The concern with the fate of native Americans remains singular to Germans among Europeans’ antagonisms towards America. The reasons are obvious: by constantly invoking the genocide of native Americans, Germans can readily point to the Americans’ own Holocaust and thus experience some sense of expiation, particularly since they see America – driven by its East Coast intellectuals (a convenient code word for Jews) – as Germany’s most unforgiving reminder of its Nazi past.²³ To be sure, there were a handful of German intellectuals, writers, poets and thinkers who were not particularly anti-American. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe exclaimed that “Amerika, Du hast es besser” when in an unusual (for Goethe) quasi-Tocquevillian mood he weighed the political advances of American democracy in relation to Europe’s continued autocratic forms of government. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were great admirers of the Union and backed it wholeheartedly in its battle against the Confederacy. Indeed, Marx sent a congratulatory telegram to Abraham Lincoln upon his reelection to the presidency of the United States in 1864 to which Lincoln replied in a presciently Wilsonian tone by stating that countries do not exist on their own but rather are part of an international order to which they need to show commitment and respect for the benefit of humanity (pace George W. Bush).²⁴ But adding validity to my argument about European elites’ disdain for America as

²¹Ibid.

²²All these quotations are from Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), pp. 563 and 570.

²³When Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made his provocative remark about “Old Europe,” with which he meant to dismiss the alliance of France and Germany against the Bush Administration’s Iraq policy, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Germany’s paper of record, published a large article in return wherein it featured the voices of many leading French and German intellectuals. Sure enough, one German intellectual, the artist Jochen Gerz, centered his entire response on America’s marginalization of its native population, thus implying that the United States is not a democracy. See Jochen Gerz, “Not in Our Name,” as part of the larger article entitled “Das alte Europa antwortet Herrn Rumsfeld” in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 24, 2003.

²⁴Gernot Erler, Michael Mueller and Angelica Schwall-Dueren, “Die Geburt einer Nation II,” in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 11, 2003. As we will see below, this is a pattern pursued by many European intellectuals in the current

embodiment of modern capitalism was the fact that leading members of the political classes in France and Britain openly rooted for the Confederacy, which they rightly assumed to be much more akin to their own aristocratic ways than was the brash, capitalist, industrial North whose victory would inevitably make the United States a formidable political rival for global domination.²⁵ Lastly, not only German elites and intellectuals of the nineteenth century expressed a habitual disdain for America. I would like to mention Charles Dickens, Frances Trollope, Knut Hamsun, Evelyn Waugh, Joseph de Maistre and Stendhal as eminent representatives of other European cultures.²⁶ Indeed, it is quite clear that there only exists a European anti-Americanism as opposed to a German, a French, an Italian or a Russian one since the tropes that define this prejudice are totally common to (and interchangeable among) all European cultures. In his fine study of Austrian Anti-Americanism, Guenter Bischof gives us ample evidence that this *ressentiment* has been alive and well in that country throughout the twentieth century and – just like elsewhere in contemporary Europe – might indeed be happily proliferating in the current atmosphere of its perhaps unprecedented social acceptability. But, as the author writes in the conclusion of his paper, “Austrian anti-Americanism today is hardly unique.”²⁷ Its acuteness might vary from country to country, but its essence has remained remarkably steady and similar.

The period after World War I began to highlight the often irreconcilable bifurcation between the European elite’s disdain for America and the European masses’ acceptance of it. While the latter’s leaving Europe in waves of emigration to find a home in the New World always bespoke a certain inadvertent attraction for the United States, new forms of mass communication rendered this culture clash a constant presence in Europe’s daily existence to this day. Whereas in the pre-World War I world, Europeans expressed their preference for America by voting with their feet so to speak, now they could do so unabashedly by dancing the charleston, flocking to movie theaters, idolizing film stars, grooving on jazz, in short by making key aspects of American culture part of European life. Needless to say, this, if anything, heightened the elite’s *ressentiment* of America. It was not only jazz that was vilified as decadent “Negermusik” promoted by profit-hungry Jews intent on undermining the very fabric of European life. All aspects of mass culture were decried as inferior, shallow, tasteless. As such, it should never have incurred the wrath of Europe’s elites, since by exhibiting such “qualities” American culture should never have posed any threat to something perceived as so greatly superior. But it did – or at least Europe’s elites feared it as such – and this, in turn, only exacerbated their irritation with and anger toward America and American culture.

cross-Atlantic debate with the United States whereby these intellectuals try to enhance the validity of their criticism of America and American policy by ostensibly following in the footsteps of “good,” i.e. internationalist and enlightened, Americans like Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson.

²⁵Philippe Roger, *L’Ennemi Américain*, *ibid.*, p. 156. According to Roger, the South became a sentimental favorite in the right Parisian circles in the era of Napoleon III.

²⁶For Charles Dickens, see *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. For Frances Trollope, see *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. For Evelyn Waugh see *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies* and *The Loved One*. Knut Hamsun’s pro-peasant and later pro-Nazi views featured a vehement antipathy towards all things American. He had visited the United States twice: the first time he worked as a streetcar conductor in Chicago; the second time as a farmhand in North Dakota. Joseph de Maistre’s work extols prerevolutionary authoritarianism that spurns liberal democracy and can be construed as one of the precursors to the views of Charles Maurras, the fascist editor of *L’Action Française*. For Stendhal, freedom in the United States did not protect against social pressure and did not permit the creation of genius in art and politics.

²⁷Günter Bischof, “Is There a Specific Austrian Anti-Americanism after World War II?” (Unpublished paper presented at the 2003 conference of the Organization of American Historians [OAH], Memphis, Tennessee, April 6, 2003, p. 34.) Bischof writes: “Reading immediate ‘gut-feeling’ internet responses by Austrians on any given day in *Der Standard* or *Die Presse* indicates raw public opinion among Austrians who read quality newspapers. The letter-to-the-editor pages in the *Neue Kronenzeitung* reveal the worst in Austrian anti-Americanism. While anti-Americanism may be on the rise in Austria and more lurid in some instances, the old stock images of European and Austrian resentment are still the same.” *Ibid.*

The Nazis' (as well as most European fascists') hatred of and contempt for America needs no elaboration. America embodied every single social and political dimension that the Nazis found antithetical to their very being. To them, America was a mediocre mongrel mass society devoid of culture, ruled by a Jewish-dominated East-Coast-based plutocracy whose mission was global domination in politics, economics and culture. Bespeaking the attraction of American popular culture for Europe's masses was the fact that the Nazis found it imperative to broadcast jazz, swing and ragtime to their troops during the war lest they turn their radio dials to US-Army stations.²⁸

It is fascinating that the anti-Americanism of the Soviets (and of European communists), though very different in tone or content from that of the Nazis, still featured similar tropes. Indeed, a rapprochement between the European left (mainly communist) and the European right (mainly fascist) on the subject of anti-Americanism developed throughout the 1930s that unites the extremes of these political orientations to this very day: *Les extremes se touchent* on anti-Americanism to a degree and historical consistency that they have done on very few, if any, other topics. This was true throughout the so-called "reconstruction period" of the 1950s, during the protests against the war in Vietnam of the 1960s, the establishment of the new social movements of the 1970s, the opposition to NATO's double track decision of the 1980s, and the beginnings of the anti-globalization mobilization during the 1990s. And never has this rapprochement become more manifest than in our contemporary post 9/11 world.

In an earlier work on anti-Americanism in Europe, I developed a fourfold table that establishes categories along the lines of left and right on the one hand; and politics and culture on the other. These are the narratives that comprise the four fields: *Left/Politics*: "America, as the world's foremost capitalist country, is engaged in imperialism. It is the leader of world reaction. America is a predatory power which is bent on totally controlling the world..." *Right/Politics*: "America, because of its essentially vulgar nature, is not equipped to be the much-needed leader of the free, White and Western world. Because of its lack of traditional elites and its permissiveness, America's political system is disorganized, confused, and completely inappropriate to govern the United States adequately, let alone the world. Thus, Europeans would do well not to trust the United States because it is structurally and historically incapable of furnishing serious political leadership. America ultimately is weak, shallow, naive, inexperienced, and no match for the adversaries of the free world." In a sense then, whereas the left fears America's power by virtue of its size and ubiquity, the right disdains American power for its wannabe parvenu character that pretends but fails to execute effectively. *Left/Culture*: "American culture is the expression of an alienated, brutal, capitalist society which has produced soulless, plastic, and inauthentic artifacts solely for the profit of huge companies. The American 'culture industry' produces cheap, essentially worthless things for a quick fix in a mass market populated by misguided, manipulated and exploited individuals who are stripped of their collectiveness by the inherent divisiveness of a capitalist society..." *Right/Culture*: "American culture is not worthy of the name. The United States, because of its vulgar nature, has never been capable of producing anything of lasting value. Worse, it has used its newly acquired financial might to buy real, that is European, culture and/or imitate it in a crass style behooving the nouveau riche that the United States will always remain. The danger of American culture, however, is its mass appeal which has made it so successful among Europe's masses as well. Thus, American culture is not only worthless and shallow, but also dangerous and corrupting by virtue of its universal appeal." Hence, if the European left has feared American power more than has the right, it is exactly the inverse in the realm of culture: here, the right is much more worried than the left. But both merge in their dismissal of American culture as "inauthentic" with the left seeing this mainly as a consequence of America's commodified essence whereas the right as a result of America's alleged lack of history and tradition, thus of depth, sophistication and the requisite *Bildung*.²⁹

²⁸I am grateful to David Buch for this important point.

²⁹Andrei S. Markovits, "Anti-Americanism and the Struggle for a West Germany Identity," in Peter H. Merkl, ed.,

III. Anti-Semitism as a Constitutive Companion to Anti-Americanism

While any attempt at a meaningful discussion of anti-Semitism in the present framework would be nothing short of intellectually arrogant, the topic needs at least a peripheral mention since in the course of the twentieth century it has become one of anti-Americanism's most consistent conceptual companions, perhaps even one of its constitutive features. To be sure, European anti-Semitism preceded anti-Americanism by centuries. And the two did not emerge as the inseparable tandem that they have now become until the late nineteenth century. However, far and away the most important difference between the two is the fact that European anti-Semitism killed millions of innocent people whereas, even in its most virulent form, European anti-Americanism rarely, if ever, went beyond the prolific burning of American flags and/or the destruction of buildings and property.

Already in the seventeenth century, well before the establishment of the American Republic, the divergent paths that religion took in these two settings – and that still differentiate the United States from Europe perhaps more than any other single social, political or cultural factor³⁰ – also had a major bearing on the development of anti-Semitism in these two respective societies, as well as on its role in their relationship with each other. Whereas Europe's religious life continued to be ruled by a deeply anti-Semitic Catholic Church in the continent's geographic center and its south, a state-oriented, equally anti-Semitic Protestantism mainly of the Lutheran variety in its north (though one would need to differentiate the vehemence of anti-Semitism practiced by German Lutheranism as opposed to its much milder Danish and Swedish variants), and a structurally very similar Orthodoxy in its eastern regions, America's religious life featured two characteristics that Europe never had, and the ramifications of which Europeans fail to comprehend to this day: first, religion in America was completely decentralized and local. The search for political freedom in America was – as Tocqueville so well understood in contrast to other Europeans of his time and so many of Europe's current elites – inextricably tied to the search for religious freedom, thus giving religion and religious vocabulary in American politics a completely different meaning than both have had in Europe. Second, it featured a Protestantism that professed its great admiration for the Jews, that indeed saw itself as a close relative of the Jews, whose ancient writings and customs it extolled. This, after all, was the world in which Biblical names such as Elijah, Jeremiah, Jeddediah, Josiah became commonplace. The point is that from well before the founding of the American Republic the framework wherein people related to Jews and Judaism were profoundly different in America from what they had been in Europe. Still, it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that anti-Semitism began to accompany European anti-Americanism in a systematic and regular manner. It was the fear and critique of capitalist modernity that brought these two *ressentiments* together. America and the Jews were seen as paragons of modernity: money-driven, profit-hungry, urban, universalistic, individualistic, mobile, rootless, hostile to established traditions and values. That it was the fear of modernity linking Jews and Americans at this juncture of European *ressentiment* is best borne out by the fact that Jewish immigration to the United States had not yet reached the large numbers that it would twenty years later, and that American power in the world was still rather ephemeral. In other words, it was not the actually existing United States and its Jews that were feared and disdained but the combination of Judaism and Americanism as concepts and social trends. After World War I, the Jews as rulers of America became pronounced. It was at this juncture that the notions of Jewish Wall Street, Jewish Hollywood, Jewish Jazz, in other words of a thoroughly “Jewified” America became commonplace. It was at this time that all the forerunners for current codes such as the “East Coast” were permanently established. From then on, Jews and America became inextricably intertwined, not only as representatives of modernity but of holders of actual power. America was powerful and the Jews in it even more so. One of the standard staples of Euro-

The Federal Republic of Germany at Forty (New York: New York University Press, 1989), pp. 42, 43.

³⁰On this important difference between the United States and Europe, see the work by Ronald Inglehart and his World Value Survey at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

pean anti-Semitism has always been to impute much more power to Jews than they actually have. Moreover, what makes this putative power even more potent is that it is believed to be clandestine and cliquish. With America's real power massively growing after World War I, power as a unifying notion between Jews and America became more pronounced and also lasting. The hostile perception of this alleged link became as integral to National Socialism as it later did to Stalinism, though with a significantly weaker intensity and less murderous manifestations.

Things appeared to change after the end of World War II, the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel and the Cold War. American power, though still massively resented, became a much-needed protector against the Soviet Union, its allies and Communism. Probably for the first time in over 900 years, the Holocaust rendered overt anti-Semitism socially unacceptable among Europe's elites.³¹ And Jews for the very first time in nearly two thousand years actually attained real power by dint of running a state. While these structural changes substantially altered the tone and the substance of the discourse about Jews and America in Europe, the two remained as intertwined as ever. By the late 1960s, Israel became little more than an extension of American power to many, especially on Europe's political left. Israel was disliked, especially by the left, not so much because it was Jewish but because it was American. And as such it was powerful. It is by virtue of this shift in power that contemporary Europeans dislike Israel so intensely and why their current anti-Semitism assumes a different veneer from the traditional one that dominated Europe for one thousand years. As Mark Lilla has so eloquently argued, contemporary Europe's allegedly postnational elites dislike states that behave the way European states used to before 1945: assertively, unilaterally, particularistically, *realpolitically* – all of which pertain to Israel's conduct in the world, as well as to America's, especially under the aegis of the Bush Administration.³² The fact that current European anti-Semitism has changed is best demonstrated by the fact that the very people who are ostensibly appalled by anti-Semitic incidents in their own countries are also often Israel's most ruthless critics. That they then often resort to characterizations of Israel's essence and its very existence – as opposed to its policies – in eerily similar terms and tone to the old-fashioned European anti-Semitism of yore attests not to the end of European anti-Semitism but merely its mutation from what Daniel Goldhagen so aptly calls the Shylock Jew (which is unacceptable in contemporary Europe) to the Rambo Jew (a highly legitimate perception).³³ And we all know how much Rambo has become a synonym for America and Americans in European discourse of the past two decades. The tough Jew in the form of the omnipotent

³¹I have been impressed with the work of Richard Landes, who dates European anti-Semitism to the winter of AD 1010, which brought the first organized massacres of Jews in Europe (France in particular) as a consequence of the Muslim Caliph al-Hakim's destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. These systematic and politically motivated mass murders occurred in the context of Christianity's new state-building and modernizing measures that were necessary to raise armies to fight the Muslims in the Holy Land. There were, of course, violent actions against Jews before this event but – according to Landes – these did not go beyond the usual vendetta-type revenge that have characterized the cohabitation of any rival societies and cultures anywhere in the world. See Richard Landes, "What Happens when Jesus Doesn't Come: Jewish and Christian Relations in Apocalyptic Time," (Unpublished paper, Center for Millennial Studies, Boston University, 2000, pp. 1, 2.)

³²Mark Lilla, "The End of Politics," in *The New Republic*, June 11, 2003.

³³Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, "The Globalization of Anti-Semitism," in *The Forward*, May 2, 2003. The concept of the "tough Jew" is nothing new, of course. Particularly in the United States, there is an entire literature on "tough Jews," mainly gangsters and boxers among whom Jews played a prominent role, often to the delight – even pride – of other Jews, especially Jewish men. See for example Rich Cohen's *Tough Jews* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), an excellent account of the life and world of Jewish gangsters. Paul Breines offers a very different study under the exact same title. (Paul Breines, *Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry* [New York: Basic Books, 1990]). In addition to dwelling on Sigmund Freud's tough Jewish fantasies, Breines argues that the fantasy about and the role of the tough Jew increased in direct response to the horrors of the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel which – for the first time in nearly 2000 years – accorded the Jews real power. See for example his sections "From Massada to Mossad: A Historical Sketch of Tough Jewish Imagery" as well as "The 'Rambowitz' Novels."

Israeli has led to a new twist on the longstanding interaction between anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism: if in former times it was the almighty United States that basically used powerful Israel as its puppet in its “imperialist” and “neocolonial” designs, then we witnessed a reversal, especially in the context of the Iraq War of 2003, in which an all-powerful Israel and its East Coast minions were alleged to have coopted American power for their own purposes. As I mentioned above, anti-Americanism had been perhaps the only prejudice in Europe which correlated positively with the respondents’ level of education and social position. One could legitimately voice this prejudice because it inevitably also expressed a critique of – often even an opposition to – a very powerful actor. Being prejudiced against the powerful has an entirely different social acceptability than being prejudiced against the weak. And this is the position to which the new European anti-Semitism has mutated. While it has become illegitimate in the post-Holocaust world to express hatred for powerless Jews – meaning Jews currently living in Europe – it has become all the more acceptable to express antipathy towards powerful Jews. The former is obvious anti-Semitism which one can only express in the pub, the Stammtisch or on the Internet, in other words apart from acceptable public discourse. The latter has become a badge of honor and very much forms acceptable public discourse.

Jews have become contested space by dint of the following developments:

1. The disappearance of communism as an enemy and a perceived threat and thus the need to accord absolute primacy to the task of containing, even defeating, this perceived ill (maybe even evil). This is gone.
2. Indeed, with the disappearance of communism and the major task at hand to begin coming to terms with that past, anti-Semitism has made its periodic appearance in a number of East European countries where the old adage of Jews = Bolsheviks has been revived. Somehow, the anti-Semitic dimensions of Communist regimes – the Doctors’ Plot in the Soviet Union, the Rajk Trial in Hungary, the Pauker trial in Romania, the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia, and the Merker affair in East Germany, to mention but the most obvious ones – come up much more rarely when compared to the constant mention of the disproportionate presence of Jews among the Communist elites.
3. Because of Communism’s defeat, the immensely decreased need for the United States as a protector. This fostered the resurgence of an already present anti-Americanism of which the intellectuals and the political classes have been the most avid carriers. As is well known, with manifest anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism has been rarely behind.
4. What makes them so related is, of course, their being perceived as the quintessential expressions of modernity. With a massive critique of modernity afoot in Europe – just as in the United States and elsewhere – there emerges yet another piece of the puzzle that might explain a necessary, albeit not a sufficient, reason for the rise in anti-Semitism in Europe.
5. Modernity is, of course, also associated with “Europe,” with Brussels, with this new central power of a newly-constituting state in this fascinating process of state-building before our very eyes. As we know from history, all state-building processes are very painful. Inevitably, there are clear winners and clear losers – and the losers do not fade easily.

The debate about a European identity, about Europe’s constitution, about what will constitute the soul, the flesh and blood of this new entity – never mind its skeleton which is now being gradually put into place – has not even begun yet. We have no idea what shape it will take, where it will go, who will lead it, who will be the winners and losers.

What is quite clear – to me, at least – is that the enemies of this process have already mustered tropes from the past that have not been the most favorable to Jews.

6. Everything that I said about “Europe” in point 5 pertains to the whole issue of “globalization,” a process that has been with us most certainly since the advent of capitalism and the discovery of the Americas in the sixteenth century, and that has had many more vastly greater leaps in its history than the one we are currently experiencing, some of which – like the one from 1890 until 1920 – changed human existence much more profoundly than anything that we are witnessing today. (Fordist mass production, the automobile, the airplane, antibiotics, the radio, women entering the public arena via the franchise, a major step no matter how limited we view it as today [and correctly so], World War I as the most important hiatus

between the old, essentially feudal, world and the new capitalist world of what Eric Hobsbawm has aptly called the “short twentieth century”). That one of the major responses to this massive transformation was the “age of fascism” should not surprise us in hindsight but should give us pause as to what collective social formations and political manifestations might be still awaiting us in response to the globalization phase that we are currently experiencing.

7. Europe’s multiculturalism. This has a number of dimensions:

a) The simple fact that as a consequence of the post-Yalta world, borders have opened up and population shifts have occurred that Europeans never expected and that exacerbated the earlier immigrations waves of the 1960s and 1970s which these states could contain under the guise that these workers were merely “guests” or “temporary.” In the 1990s, the whole question of identity and citizenship – of permanent inclusion and exclusion – became central. This changed the tenor of the debate completely. Suddenly, the multiculturalism that these Europeans enjoyed in terms of the growing diversity of their culinary possibilities mutated into a nasty contest over identity, citizenship, permanence, language, ethnicity, religion – the hot buttons of politics.

b) The empirical reality that a large number of these new immigrants hailed from the Muslim world: Turkey (but also Arab countries and Iran) in Germany, The Magreb (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco) in France, Pakistan and the Arab world in Britain, Kurds in Sweden, Albanians in Italy, Moroccans in Spain. While these immigrants awakened first and foremost a nasty strain of xenophobia in all European countries against themselves, they also have triggered a massive reemergence of anti-Semitism in a twofold way: first, on the part of those who hate these newcomers and wish them ill. This is the European anti-Semitism of old, “your father’s anti-Semitism”; second, on the part of those who are the targets of this hatred who happen to be from cultures where anti-Semitism has attained a major presence mainly – though not exclusively – by dint of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It is not that Muslim anti-Semites and German (or European) anti-Semites suddenly discovered their mutual love for each other – although that has happened too, and is increasingly becoming common in certain right-wing circles in Germany and elsewhere in Europe where radical rightists seek out radical Islamists as allies even though they hate each other, but in the hierarchy of their respective hatreds that of Jews and Americans receives respective pride of place thus fostering this otherwise bizarre alliance – but that anti-Semitism has yet another voice in these plural and democratic societies where such voices have often reached very receptive audiences. By having to adjudicate far-away conflicts on their own soil – i.e. when the Middle East conflict is suddenly carried out in the middle of Hamburg, London or Paris – these European states invariably and inevitably are drawn into disputes that willy-nilly involve Jews yet again. And they do not like it.

8. Surely one needs to mention Israel’s deeply problematic policies and frequently objectionable actions in the occupied territories as irritants to most European publics, elite as well as mass. But here, too, the line between completely legitimate criticisms of policies and the much more worrisome questioning of Israel’s very existence needs to be strictly delineated. Alas, it is increasingly less so in the commentaries of the European public. Be it *The Guardian* or the French ambassador to Britain, there is increasing irritation and impatience with Israel that goes well beyond the country’s policies, and questions the worth of its very existence. While such things are nothing new in the worlds of the extreme right and left in Europe and have been commonplace since the Six Day War in June of 1967, they were not part of Europe’s accepted political discourse until the 1990s. After all, many people have been rightfully upset with many a country’s policies. But in virtually no case that I can recall has that led to the questioning of the very worth of that country’s existence. Slobodan Milosevic’s Yugoslavia became the bogeyman of Europe’s publics (certainly after the slaughter of 9000 Bosnian Muslim men in Srebrenica) but even this atrocity never led any British, French, German or Italian diplomats or journalists writing for these countries’ papers of record to question the very right of Yugoslavia to exist as a country. Put crudely, it is becoming clearer by the day that the post-Auschwitz “Schonzeit,” as the Germans so aptly have called this era, tellingly using a term from hunting which means the “no hunting season” or the “off-limits season,” is gradually coming to an

end. The Jews are not “off limits” anymore in Europe.³⁴ This development reinforces my view that among all the prejudices that have beset European history, anti-Semitism has constantly assumed a place all its own. It is related to racism but yet different from it, furnishing a category all its own. And it is back with a vengeance in acceptable European discourse. “Der Ton macht die Musik,” the tone makes the music. Seldom has this been clearer than in the case of contemporary Europe’s irritation with Israel and Jews which can never be analyzed by itself but must be done so in a comparative context.

A new tone has entered among European intellectuals in which criticizing Jews – not merely Israel and Israelis – has attained a certain urgency that reveals a particularly liberating dimension. One can almost hear the cries of relief: “Free at last, free at last, we are finally free of this damn Holocaust at last!” In this context Europeans posit that Jews, who created a culture of guilt and shame for Europeans, and kept them from speaking their minds as they wished, now behave just like they did. The lid is off; Jews are legitimate targets yet again. To be sure, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are distinguishable: one is a political position, the other a prejudice. “Yet the overlap between anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist discourses today is considerable, and it is especially striking at a time when many intellectuals, notably the post-modernist left and post-colonial theorists, base their work on the very notion of ‘discourse,’ contending that clusters of assumptions, embedded in our languages and cultures, pre-select how we think about the world, and mesh the production of knowledge and power.”³⁵

By constantly bringing up the truly warped and ill-willed analogy of the Israelis with the Nazis, Europeans absolve themselves from any remorse and shame and thus experience a sense of liberation. As well, one hurts the intended target by equating it with the very perpetrators who almost wiped it off the earth in the most brutal genocide imaginable. Above all, all of this needs to be viewed in a comparative context both in terms of its tone as well as its substance: as to the former, what is important here is that no other vaguely comparable conflict has attained anywhere near the shrillness and acuity as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If one looks at two much more bloody – and geographically proximate conflicts – the four succession wars following the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and the Russian wars in Chechnia – neither of them have even vaguely created a tone of dismissal, bitterness and contempt for the respective aggressors (the Serbs, the Croats and the Russians) among Europe’s intellectuals as have the Israelis. Oxford dons never even thought of banning Russian, Croatian or Serbian researchers from their laboratories, as actually happened with Israelis. Norwegian veterinarians did not refuse to send DNA samples to institutes that requested them if they were in Russia, Serbia or any other country that was engaged in a military conflict, or even in measures of undeniable repression and injustice. But they certainly did when a Jerusalem institute asked for such samples. The editor of *The Translator and Translation Studies Abstract* published in Britain did not dismiss colleagues from its editorial boards because they belonged to nationalities whose countries were engaged in some form of conflict and injustice. But two Israeli academics – both critical of the Sharon government and active in Israel’s peace campaigns – were summarily dismissed from this board merely for being Israeli citizens. No European intellectuals and academics called for an organized boycott of Serbian, Croatian or Russian institutions, including research and cultural links, as did 120 university professors from thirteen European countries in the case of Israel. Studies by German researchers of the tone in which the Israeli-Arab conflict has been reported by the mainstream German media showed clearly that there was a marked difference in that the Israelis and their actions were much more frequently couched in words with negative and pejorative connotations as compared to the actions by the Arab side, which were conveyed in a much more neutral tone. Invariably, Palestinian suicide bombers were “nationalists” who acted out of “desperation” whereas Israeli retaliation was inevitably “vengeful” and “brutal.” Interestingly, the German media have without any hesitation always depicted the Basque ETA and

³⁴For an amazingly stark demonstration of this, see *The New Statesman*’s cover story called “The Kosher Connection.” Also Peter Beaumont’s article in *The Observer* of Sunday, February 24, 2002. Peter Pulzer’s reply was not published by this newspaper.

³⁵Mitchell Cohen, “Auto-Emancipation and Anti-Semitism: Homage to Bernard Lazare,” in *Jewish Social Studies*, Indiana University Press, 2004 (forthcoming).

the Irish IRA actions in Spain and Britain respectively as “terrorist.” The passion against Israel is simply disproportionate in its tone and its shrillness when compared to other agents of injustice.³⁶

This noticeable change in European discourse hails much more from the left than the right. The latter – mainly because of the continued illegitimacy and unacceptability of Nazism and fascism in European public opinion – has had a much more circumspect influence on how Jews and Israel are depicted than the left has had. Because classical anti-Semitism – certainly in its praxis – was mostly associated with the European right, the left enjoyed a certain bonus when it came to discussing all matters relating to Jews and Israel. The left could take liberties with being anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic that the right could never have. This legitimacy bonus enabled the left to employ anti-Israeli discourse that – in the meantime – has become completely common and acceptable parlance in Europe. Because of this general acceptability and overall legitimacy, left-wing anti-Semitism is much more relevant and disturbing than right-wing anti-Semitism, which has essentially remained the same, without major mutations. It thus embodies old-fashioned, i.e. “your father’s anti-Semitism.” Today’s neo-Nazis are ugly and unpleasant, but as they are beyond the pale of acceptable European discourse, they are not particularly dangerous in a systemic kind of way. *The Guardian*, the BBC, *The Independent* – to borrow from the British case which, however, has its counterparts in all European countries – have not assumed their overly one-sided language about Israel, Jews and the United States under the influence of the National Front, but reflect changes in British and European attitudes and the altered nature of discourse among Britain’s and Europe’s intellectuals in the wake of the late 1960s. It is by dint of this left-liberal voice, not the right’s old-style anti-Semitism, that 59 percent of Europeans view Israel as being the greatest threat to global peace, putting this country in first place ahead of countries such as Iran, North Korea, the United States, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, in that order. China was mentioned by 30 percent, thus ranking it as number 13. Not surprisingly, Europeans had the best opinion of themselves, placing Europe as dead last in terms of representing any danger to world peace. Only 8 percent of the respondents listed the European Union or any of its members as threats to peace with the Germans having the self-confidence (or might it be a bit of selfish arrogance) to list themselves dead last at 2 percent. The respondents in the Netherlands were particularly critical of Israel, viewing it as a threat to peace by a whopping 74 percent. The equivalent figure in Germany was 65 percent. Anybody following the European media’s tone in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the second Intifada in September 2000 will not be surprised by these results. Once again, the origins of this hegemonic tone in Europe’s totally acceptable discourse does not hail from the right but from the left. And the tone set by elites and opinion leaders, such as journalists, really matter in terms of framing the acceptable contours of mass opinion.³⁷

And this brings us to the difference in substance. It is rather evident that European intellectuals and political classes – as well as increasingly the general public – are not so much expressing their sympathies for suppressed Muslims or disadvantaged Arabs as they are their antipathies towards Israel and (not so indirectly) the Jews. This is best demonstrated by the following paradox: precisely those Europeans who were the most silent during the Bosnian War’s massive slaughter of Muslims at the hands mainly of Serbs but also Croats have been among the most vocal opponents of Israel. These people only raised their voices in the Bosnian War once the United States intervened. Because the United States intervened on behalf of Muslims, many European intellectuals de facto rallied to the side of Slobodan Milosevic, who had engaged in mass murder of such Muslims. Thus, antipathy towards Israel and its accompanying anti-Semitism cannot be separated from a larger enmity towards the United States and what it represents. How else can one explain the attitude of Greek intellectuals, politicians, clergy, and public opinion, all of whom

³⁶For a fine paper on the inextricable relationship between recent anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, see Yossi Klein Halevi’s paper, “Entwined Hatreds: Anti-Americanism,” delivered to a conference on “Anti-Americanism” at the Gloria Center, Herzliya, Israel, September 17, 2003.

³⁷For a solid treatment of this issue, see John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

were rabidly pro-Serbian and vehemently anti-Bosnian Muslim (whom they pejoratively called “Turks”) while at the same time they are among the most pro-Arab and Palestinian Europeans? What drives the liberal left in Europe is dislike and hatred of Israel and America, and not a genuine sympathy for and identification with downtrodden Muslims. It was not the slaughter of innocent Muslim women and children that really riled the European left. Instead, what mobilized thousands in the streets of Berlin, Paris, and Athens once the much-belated step was taken to intervene on behalf of the brutalized Muslims, was once again the American bogeyman. And once again, far right and far left meet on matters relating to America and Jews. No far right in Europe has a nastier anti-Serbian history than the German and Austrian, both of which have been long-time supporters of the most vicious anti-Serbian fascists in Croatia (the notorious “Ustashe”) and elsewhere (primarily Bosnia). Still, their hatred of Serbs could not compete with their hatred of Americans, and once the United States intervened against Serbs on behalf of the Bosnian Muslims and their Kosovar co-religionists, German and Austrian neo-Nazis and far rightists rallied to Milosevic’s side in their unmitigated opposition of NATO’s American-led interventions. “Les extremes se touchent” on matters related to Jews and American yet again, as they did so often throughout the twentieth century.

The common trope here – as elsewhere – is mobilized anti-Americanism. When José Bove, the anti-globalization leader, joined the Palestinians in Ramallah in the spring of 2002 instead of traveling to Gujarat, where many more Muslims were slain in multiple pogroms by Hindu mobs, he did not primarily express solidarity with a repressed people and their religion but rather voiced a collective enmity towards the United States and everything that it purportedly represents. It is by dint of America’s proximity to Israel that the latter has become such a bogeyman to the anti-globalization movement. We were all witnesses to that ugly – but telling – political theater by demonstrators at the Davos meeting in 2003 when one person sported a Donald Rumsfeld mask and a yellow Jewish star of David (the kind the Nazis made the Jews wear everywhere in German-occupied Europe) with the word “sheriff” on it. His companion was dressed like a cudgel-wielding Ariel Sharon. They and their colleagues danced around a golden calf embodying money and wealth. And surely most, if not all, of the anti-globalist protesters in that scene viewed themselves as leftists, not as rightist. Similar openly anti-Semitic iconography was commonplace at anti-globalist meetings in Porto Alegre and Durban among others. Clearly, the intensity of the hatred borne towards Israel, which goes far beyond a legitimate criticism of its policies, derives in good part from Israel being perceived as the complete American proxy, as a de facto part of the United States. And as such, any tone – no matter how offensive – is completely legitimate and acceptable since it is directed against a very powerful entity rather than a weak minority. But there is also an anti-Semitic dimension to this linking of Israel to the United States among the anti-globalization movements. Why Israel, why not – say – Saudi Arabia, to which the United States is equally close and which – arguably – has a greater global role and influence than does Israel? The answer to this aspect of the puzzle lies not only in Israel’s political proximity to the United States but also to the former’s identity as a Jewish state and in the Jews’ relationship to Europeans and their history. The Israeli psychologist Zvi Rex once said that the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz. The issue goes far beyond the Germans and pertains to all of Europe. The surplus of enmity exhibited towards Israel by Europeans, the much greater coverage of Israel by the European media than any other conflict in the world, including those much closer to Europe, bespeaks a qualitative dimension to this sentiment and attitude that borders on an obsession that reaches way beyond the conventional criticisms that are accorded to other political conflicts and disagreements. Much deeper historical, cultural and psychological forces are at work here. And thus we are back to the three standard pillars of classical anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism: Jews, America and modernity.

The substance and tone of public debates really matter. These debates create “frames” that influence political behavior and can also contribute to enduring elements of political culture. Debates shift the boundaries of legitimate discursive space in politics since they define the realm of acceptable terms and sanction those who violate them. Debates shape language and create new code words for old ideas, includ-

ing prejudices and antipathies. Above all, the ensuing changes in discursive space change how elites and ordinary citizens discuss and then think about a topic. Thus, the tone of these debates reflects broader ideological shifts in politics and society.³⁸

IV. Europe's Elite Voices on America from January 1, 1992 Until December 31, 2002: A Crescendo of Condescension, Ridicule, Irritation, *Ressentiment* and A New Sentiment – *Schadenfreude*

As part of a larger empirical project on European anti-Americanism, I collected nearly 1000 articles written on the United States in the four key European countries: Germany, France, Italy, Britain. In order to maximize America's "is" dimension as opposed to its "does" one for my study, I consciously *excluded* articles and reports that dealt with *overtly* political questions, particularly all those related to American foreign policy broadly construed, since it is via its foreign policy that America "does" things most overtly to other countries. I concentrated my research on articles about film, theater, food, travel, human interest pieces, the descriptions of the iconography of particular events such as party conventions, car manufacturing, subway construction and the world of sports. Now, as a child of the 1960s, I realize that there is no realm of social or cultural activity – or any activity for that matter – that is not also political. But I tried as best I could to eliminate the obviously political from my study precisely to analyze a *ressentiment* against America by Europeans that one could call "surplus" or gratuitous anti-Americanism. This is an anti-Americanism for its own sake so to speak, where the invoking of a generalization about the United States added little analysis or description to the issue at hand but merely served to reinforce already present prejudices instead. My sample included elite as well as other publications in Britain, Germany, France, and Italy. The publications that I consulted and analyzed were: *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Observer* in Britain; *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *L'Express*, *Le Point*, *L'Equipe* in France; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *die tageszeitung (taz)*, *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel* in Germany; and *Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *La Repubblica*, *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in Italy.³⁹

Well before George W. Bush became the convenient – and partly appropriate – caricature of the American cowboy for the European press, over two-thirds of the collected and analyzed articles included some form of irritation with, condescension towards or ridicule of the topic that was being described. Overall conclusion: virtually all aspects of American culture – including its highbrow variant – experienced at least one derisive or dismissive comment, even in an otherwise positive review. The term "Americanization" of whatever the case may be (movies, theater, universities, business practices, habits) was invariably invoked in a negative manner and conveyed an undesirable situation as in "Wien darf nicht Chicago werden," Jörg Haider's highly successful slogan in an Austrian electoral campaign (Why Chicago? Why not Palermo? Liverpool? Or any number of troubled European cities). Or take Gerhard Schroeder's constant invoking of "amerikanische Verhältnisse" (American conditions) as a very powerful bogeyman for his successful electoral campaign in 2002. This campaign was the very first in Europe's postwar history in which a major – indeed governing – party structured its electoral strategy around a negation of America. One hardly needs a more persuasive example for the acceptability of anti-Americanism as a potent agent of political mobilization. Above all, America was damned if it did, and damned if it did not.

³⁸For a superb treatment of these ideas in the context of the different approaches to the Nazi past taken by Germany and Austria, see David Art, "Debating the Lessons of History: The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring 2004).

³⁹That there exists a clear discrepancy – but also a certain underlying congruence – between how the European elite media view and interpret the United States and how the "regular" European "man in the street" does, is best described by a French baseball fan's statement: "It's the media that make this distaste for the United States, but the people aren't in favor of it." As quoted in John Vinocur, "Continental Divide: Despite Some Promising Signs, Europe Is Still a Baseball Backwater," *The New York Times*, July 19, 2003.

The negative judgement was almost automatically assured independently of the action's intention, process or outcome.

The world of soccer offers a fine example for my point precisely because, whatever one wants to argue about this sport and its culture, it is clear that the United States has been – at best – an also-ran in it throughout all of the twentieth century with no power or importance. America simply did not matter – and still matters very little. When the World Cup was awarded to the United States for the summer of 1994, much of the European press was appalled. Instead of rejoicing that the last important terra incognita for soccer was about to be conquered by the “beautiful game,” the usual objections to American crassness, vulgarity, commercialism and ignorance were loudly voiced by Europeans – in notable contrast to Latin Americans who, if objective criteria and real injustices were to decide predilections and negative opinions, have had many more compelling reasons to dislike the United States than do Europeans. Many Europeans argued that giving the tournament to the Americans was tantamount to degrading the game and its tradition. The facilities were denigrated, the organization ridiculed, the whole endeavor treated with derision. When the stadia were filled like in no other World Cup tournament before or since, when the level of violence and arrests was far and away the lowest at any event of this size, the European press chalked this up to the stupidity and ignorance of Americans. Of course Americans came to the games, because they like events and pageantry, but did they really enjoy and understand the games? Could they ever learn to? When more than 60,000 people crowded into Giants Stadium near New York City on a Wednesday afternoon to watch Saudi Arabia play Morocco (surely no powerhouses in the world of soccer), this, too, was attributed to the vast ignorance of Americans regarding soccer. Indeed, five articles proudly pointed to the fact that similar games in soccer-savvy Italy attracted fewer than 20,000 people in the 1990 World Cup held in that country. Those few European journalists that bothered to write anything about American sports such as baseball which, as always in the summer, was in full swing at the time, had nothing but contempt, derision and ridicule for the game: no attempt to engage its traditions, no endeavor to understand it on its own terms, just merely yet another vehicle to confirm one's prejudices about America. Michel Platini, the former French soccer great of the 1980s and in charge of organizing the subsequent World Cup in France, summed up his feelings and judgments in the vernacular of current Europe: “The World Cup in the United States was outstanding, but it was like Coca Cola. Ours will be like sparkling champagne.”⁴⁰ Surely Platini could not have meant to characterize the riots, the violence, the ticket scandals, the racial insults that occurred during the tournament in France as “sparkling champagne.” And it is equally unclear what he meant by characterizing the American tournament as “Coca Cola.” The code, however, is clear to all: regardless of its actual success and its achievements, the American event was by definition crude and inauthentic (like Coca Cola), whereas the French – equally by definition – was inevitably going to be refined and profound (like champagne).

It was remarkable how differently the European press reported on the World Cup 2002 in Japan and South Korea, both newcomers to the world of soccer, just like the United States. Rave reviews were accorded to the facilities and organization in both countries. This contrasted sharply to the negative tone describing the equivalent structures in the United States in 1994 even though FIFA, for example, and soccer officials had nothing but praise for the American effort. What was viewed as kitsch in the American context (the opening ceremony, for example, and other pageantries accompanying the tournament) was lauded as artistic and innovative in the Japanese and South Korean equivalent. Lastly, the American team was first ridiculed as an incompetent group of players who barely deserved to be in the tournament. The huge upset over Portugal was attributed to sheer luck. When Team USA advanced to the second round and then defeated its archrival Mexico, the press corps who were vocally rooting for the Mexicans during the game remained stunned in silence at the press center. In notable contrast to the positive sentiment that was ex-

⁴⁰As quoted in Andrei S. Markovits, “Reflections on the World Cup '98” in *French Politics and Society* 16, 3 (Summer 1998): 1.

pressed towards Turkey, Senegal and South Korea, the other Cinderella teams of the tournament, nothing but bitterness and derision was voiced towards the American team. And when the mighty Germans narrowly (and luckily) beat the Americans in a quarterfinal, some European commentators became genuinely alarmed. Quipped one British journalist: “This is terrible. Now they are getting good at this, too. They will steal our game. Imagine eleven Michael Jordans running onto the pitch at Wembley. That would be the end.” Damned if you do, damned if you don’t – it could not be articulated more clearly: when the Americans play poorly, they are irritating merely by doing so and because they are aloof from everybody. When they finally play well, they are disliked because they have joined everybody but in doing so have also become threatening.

This underlying irritation was further confirmed during my many lectures on comparative sports in Germany, especially on my two book tours in support of the German edition of my book *Offside*. In literally every forum in which I presented my book and work – from university campuses to book stores; from rented public halls to semi-private settings; from Saarbrücken in the West to Potsdam in the East – at some point the question arose as to whether I did not find it arrogant that the Americans’ sports culture centered on baseball, basketball and American football, and did not include soccer; whether indeed this was not yet another expression of America’s self-anointed status as being better than the rest of the world. To many people my response that this development bespoke America’s different history and its construction of its own modernity, which indeed entailed creating its own sports culture, did not allay their suspicions that underneath it all there lurked a normative dimension that somehow made America – in the Americans’ eyes – better rather than just different. Fears along the lines that Americans might yet prove successful at soccer as well merely reinforced the constant malaise with and disdain for the United States regardless as to what it actually did or did not do.

While it was indeed the case – as expected – that left-leaning publications like *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *die tageszeitung* featured on balance much more negative reporting about things American both in style and in content compared to that of their centrist and conservative competitors, this was by no means always the case. Precisely because my sample was heavily skewed towards cultural topics and away from conventionally political ones, disdainful language toward and ridicule of America was often also quite eminent in such publications as *Le Figaro*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *The Times* and *La Stampa*. Notable was the increase in irritation as the decade progressed. Well before George W. Bush entered the White House and even during Bill Clinton’s presidency, European newspapers became noticeably more critical of the United States. After all, this was the decade in which the French foreign minister Hubert Védrine used every opportunity to inveigh against the United States, this new “hyperpuissance.” And with each passing year of the decade more Europeans welcomed his message.

The negative predisposition ran so deep that even those few American innovations that one would expect European progressives to like were deformed into basically negative caricatures. Take affirmative action, multiculturalism, feminism and America’s campaign against cigarette smoking. Rather than seeing these as impressive steps towards progressive reform, many European commentators – even on the Left – decried these as merely mutated expressions of American puritanism, collective control and hysteria. Many articles derided these reforms under the rubric of “political correctness.” They warned that American universities had been taken over by zealous feminists who dictated a moral code that forbade flirting and punished men for complimenting women. Indeed, key French elites all but accused American feminism of deviously undermining the purity of the French language. When the French decided to introduce some neologisms such as “directrice,” “conseillère” and “Madame la ministre” that feminized hitherto male nouns for women holding such positions of distinction, the secretary of the Académie Française, among others, opposed these potential changes not only on the ground of tradition and linguistic esthetics but by virtue of seeing this unwanted reform as a dark ploy by American feminists who, by way of Québec and the successful perversion of the French language used in that Canadian province, were going to undermine

surreptitiously the purity of the French language in France proper. Concerning the prominence of women in America's soccer world, to Europeans this was yet another *prima facie* case for the American penchant to subvert, distort and essentially sully a sacred European tradition.

Article upon article warned of the decline of American universities whose curricula were allegedly hijacked by ideological commissars whose task it was to replace Western civilization with politically correct multiculturalism. Once again, damned if you do, damned if you don't. If one of the standard staples of European complaint against American universities consisted of their alleged elitism, now the alleged opposite was held against them: somehow they seem to have degenerated into institutions wherein standards of achievement were completely forfeited for measures governed by political correctness dictated by the unqualified. To many European commentators – and their high-brow audiences – America had degenerated into a quasi-Orwellian society, following the dictates of a puritanical culture supervised by increasingly rigid governmental rules on the one hand, and succumbing to the exigencies of an uncontrolled market with no social consciousness whatsoever. America the prudish and the prurient; home of unbridled individualism and collectivist conformity; progenitor of Harvard and Hollywood, the former representing the very best education that only lots of money can buy, the latter embodying shallow shlock. In a sense, ever more Europeans began to view America as a different civilization from Europe's, and surely an inferior one.⁴¹

European labor's anti-Americanism, usually confined to vocal opposition of American capitalism and foreign policy, also manifested itself in a clear disdain for American workers. In a detailed study of Daimler workers' attitudes in Stuttgart towards their presumed fraternal colleagues in the Daimler-Chrysler plants around Detroit, there were no attempts made to hide the contempt and disdain. Chrysler workers were characterized as lazy, incompetent, inferior. The Stuttgart crew did not want its allegedly superior products "contaminated" by the shoddy American ways of the Chrysler workers. The contempt did not remain confined to the factory gates. Chrysler workers' home milieus and recreational habits were also ridiculed and characterized as inferior.⁴²

Overall conclusion: virtually all aspects of American culture – including its highbrow variant – experienced at least one derisive or dismissive comment, even among the minority of articles that featured a positive view towards the issue reported. More than 75 percent of the articles were overwhelmingly negative in the presentation of their topic. Most of these exhibited what I have called "gratuitous" or "surplus" anti-Americanism meaning that there were objections lodged which were not immanent criticisms of the issue at hand but rather catered to a pejorative generalization of America or Americans that had little bearing on the immediate topic. The term "Americanization" of whatever the case may be (movies, theater, universities, business practices, habits, subway construction, car manufacturing, sports) was almost always invoked in a negative manner and conveyed a clearly undesirable situation. Even beyond the United States itself, many adversities in Europe are conveniently associated with America. When a crazed teenager gunned down his classmates and teachers in Erfurt, much of the subsequent German debate blamed an alleged "Americanization" of German youth, society and culture for this tragedy. When an extreme heat wave tormented Europeans, articles appeared decrying the "Americanization" of Europe's climate. Americans were to blame when the dollar was high, just as they were to blame when the dollar was low. Thus Gerhard Schroeder's constant invoking of "amerikanische Verhältnisse" as a negative icon for effective political mobilization made perfect sense for his successful electoral campaign in 2002. "Americanization" of anything has in the meantime developed such a solid basis of pejorative connotations in Western Europe that it pays for politicians to use this sentiment as an agent of mobilization and legitimation.

⁴¹For a succinct summary of this argument, see Dmitry Shlapentokh, "The New Anti-Americanism: America as an Orwellian Society," in *Partisan Review* LXIX, 2 (2002).

⁴²Andrei S. Markovits, "Deutscher Hochmut statt internationaler Solidarität – ein trauriger Vorfall," in *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 52, 3 (March 2001): 186 - 188.

September 11 added a hitherto underdeveloped sentiment to this anti-American mix – that of *Schadenfreude*. One always hears on this side of the Atlantic how Europe’s good will towards the United States immediately following 9/11 was squandered by the Bush Administration’s aggressive unilateralism. True for the masses, not true for the elites, who had no such good will to squander. Never before was the cleavage between the views of Europe’s elites and its masses concerning America clearer than in the immediate wake of that tragedy. While, on the whole, Europe’s mass opinion was deeply sympathetic towards Americans (New Yorkers in particular) and empathized with Americans as victims, Europe’s elites – especially its cultural ones – by and large did neither. Ground Zero was still burning when the first reports in the quality media initiated all the arguments, objections, analyses, conjectures, conspiracy theories and open rejoicing that have become commonplace: that the Americans clearly had it coming to them; that this was justified payback for all American misdeeds of the past, from Vietnam to globalization, from exterminating the Native Americans to Dresden (two often-voiced staples of the German reaction as expressed repeatedly in *taz*, *Der Spiegel*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, radio and television talk shows, and the *Römerberggespräche* in Frankfurt to mention but a few venues); that this was no big deal since many more Americans die in yearly traffic accidents; that, if anything, the destruction of the Twin Towers improved New York’s skyline; that the Israeli Mossad was behind it all since many Jews stayed away from work that day lest they be killed; that it was all a ploy by the American government to obtain a *carte blanche* for its imperialist endeavors, very similar to the burning of the Reichstag in February of 1933 that led to the consolidation of the Nazi dictatorship (again, often voiced in Germany, though not exclusively there); that George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden were identical in their mental makeup and their (mainly religious) fanaticism, basically mirror images of each other, just as the United States in its religious revivalism was not a real democracy but in fact resembled the theocratic fanaticism of the Islamists. Just as the Israeli psychiatrist Zvi Rex was completely correct in saying that the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz, so, too, will they never forgive the Americans for being daily reminders that it was they – together with the Red Army – who defeated Nazism, not the Germans. By year’s end, bookstores in Paris, Berlin and London were full of publications that – basically – rejoiced at the tragedy of 9/11. In France, Thierry Meyssan’s *L’Effroyable Imposture (The Terrible Fraud)*, which argued that the crime of 9/11 was totally committed by the American government, made it to the top of the charts and became a steady bestseller. Ditto Mathias Broecker’s – a former *taz* editor’s – book with an identical theme that sold 130,000 copies for a very small German publisher in less than eight months and remained on various bestseller lists for many more. Examples abound wherein a significant voice of Europe’s intellectuals and elites expressed a virtually unveiled *Schadenfreude* in America’s woes: for Baudrillard the destruction of the Twin Towers was the fulfillment of a long-held dream; for Stockhausen it was a great piece of art. And the rhapsodization by European intellectuals goes on and on. A close reading of Jean-Marie Colombani’s editorial in *Le Monde* of September 12 entitled, “Nous Sommes Tous Américains,” which has been touted as a major statement of solidarity with the United States, reveals quite the opposite: Colombani accuses the Americans of being the progenitors of Osama Bin Laden and thus the godfathers of Jihaddist terrorism. Permit me to submit the following telling counterfactual: had the Air France Airbus A-300 Flight 8969 on December 24, 1994, crashed into the Eiffel Tower in Paris, as the Groupe Armée Islamique wanted it to, I doubt very much that any – let alone many – American intellectuals would have written lengthy pieces in prestigious publications like *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* by, say, December 26 and 27 all but exculpating this crime by invoking France’s many military and political missteps as well as its atrocities, from the Vendée to the Paris Commune, from Indochina to Algeria. Nor would they have invoked all kinds of conspiracy theories involving the French government, the Israeli Mossad or any of the other agents so often mentioned in connection with 9/11. I doubt very much that books purporting that such a crime was actually planned and executed by the French president – had this terrible tragedy become reality – would have been written by American intellectuals, let alone become bestsellers in the United States. But all of this has indeed happened in Europe, particularly among social groups from whom one

would least expect it by dint of their intelligence and education. Clearly, antipathy, as has often been the case, trumps either and both.

It was payback time for Mr. Big's arrogant attitude and demeanor, for his general misdeeds like imperialism as well as specific ones like the bombing of Dresden, but above all simply for his being big. To be sure, everybody hates Mr. Big in any contexts, be it in politics or in the classroom, be it Manchester United, the New York Yankees, or Harvard.⁴³ Alas, *Schadenfreude* is a very human trait which in fact gains in respectability and legitimacy when it pertains to the suffering of a perceived giant. That the widely held and vocally expressed *Schadenfreude* and anger pertaining to 9/11 quickly shifted from Europe's intellectuals and elites to a significant percentage of the population is best demonstrated by opinion polls, which clearly reveal that by the summer of 2003, for example, one-third of Germans under age thirty believed that the U.S. government sponsored the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington. About 20 percent of the entire German population agreed with this view, according to the same survey.⁴⁴ And when as serious a person as Andreas von Buelow, former state secretary in an SPD-led government, writes a very successful book touting these views and when conspiracy theories deeply steeped in anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are entering the mainstream in Germany and France, then this clearly constitutes a serious matter.

V. From *Ressentiment* to Rebellion? The Political Function of Anti-Americanism in Europe's State-Building Process

So what? What does it matter that Europe's elites, particularly its "chattering classes," disdain the United States? As this work has argued, there seems to be nothing new here. And yet, it seems to me, the spillover from elite to mass opinion delineated by the aforementioned survey does in fact represent a new situation at this particular juncture in Europe's political development. Whereas there still was a clear disconnect between elite and mass opinion in Europe following the 9/11 tragedy, there emerged a hitherto unprecedented congruence in opinion of all constituents concerning the war in Iraq. In no other instance that I can recall in Europe's postwar development did such a complete convergence of views emerge between elites and masses, between government and opposition, among voices on the left and the right, as occurred in France and Germany, in particular, during the four months of build-up to the war with Iraq. I would go so far as to characterize the public voice and mood in these countries, but in others as well, as "gleichgeschaltet." What rendered this *Gleichschaltung* so different from those that accompany most dictatorships was its completely voluntary, thus democratic, nature. Everyone united in their opposition to what America was about to do. While the thrust of this antagonism focused on America's actions, its amazing passion was deeply anchored in what Europeans perceived as America's very core, its identity. To many Europeans, even in the countries where the governing elites maintained the deeply unpopular position of supporting the United States in its imminent war with Iraq – Britain, Spain and Italy come to mind – America had become the "un-Europe," a clear "other." This othering was, of course, not totally new and had many precedents. Well before the arrival of the Bush Administration, even under the aegis of Bill Clinton, whom European intellectuals embraced wholeheartedly as a kindred spirit – particularly during the Lewinsky scandal and the ensuing impeachment proceedings – Europeans commenced the conscious construction of Europe being America's other. "Europe: The Un-America" proclaimed Michael Elliott in an article pub-

⁴³There are many books dedicated solely to expressing antipathy towards Manchester United. Among the better known are *Manchester United Ruined My Life, Red Devils: A History of Man United's Rogues and Villains*, and *Yesssss!!!: United in Defeat*, the latter being an especially evocative expression of *Schadenfreude* at its purest. As for parallels concerning the New York Yankees, one only need to think of the immensely popular musical "Damn Yankees," in which the Yankees are equated with the devil. And pertaining to Harvard, I have never heard colleagues refer to any other university as the "evil empire."

⁴⁴Jochen Bittner, "Umfrage: Blackbox Weisses Haus – Je komplizierter die Weltlage, desto fester glauben die Deutschen an Verschwörungstheorien" in *Die Zeit*, July 31, 2003.

lished in *Newsweek International* in which he dismissed any semblance of a common transatlantic civilization.⁴⁵ Many European intellectuals, particularly in France, Germany, Britain and Italy basically appropriated Samuel Huntington's famous and controversial notion of the "clash of civilizations," with which they characterized what they perceived as the increasing divergence between Europe and the United States and not – pursuant to Huntington's original – a clash between the predominantly Christian West and the Islamic world.⁴⁶ The widely voiced indictment accused America of being retrograde on three levels: moral (America being the purveyor of the death penalty and of religious fundamentalism, as opposed to Europe's having abolished the death penalty and adhering to an enlightened secularism); social (America being the bastion of unbridled "predatory capitalism" to use the words of former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and of punishment as opposed to Europe being the home of the considerate welfare state and of rehabilitation); and cultural (America the commodified, Europe the refined; America the prudish and purrulent, Europe the savvy and wise.)⁴⁷ It was well before George Bush was close to running for president that French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine inveighed against the United States as a "hyperpower" – *hyperpuissance* – which needed to be brought down by an "un-American" Europe obviously led by France. To Hubert Vedrine the clarion call of Europe's rise against the United States centered on the following American ills that all good Europeans had to fight tooth and nail: "ultraliberal market economy, rejection of the state, nonrepublican individualism, unthinking strengthening of the universal and 'indispensable' role of the U.S.A., common law, anglophonie, Protestant rather than Catholic concepts."⁴⁸ The *Kulturkampf* had commenced long before George W. Bush's arrival in the White House. Indeed, this very term is often used as a rallying cry by German intellectuals and cultural elites in their battle against the United States. Overt hostilities in language and attitude that have remained taboo against any other culture or country among European intellectuals and elites have attained acceptability when it concerns America. As I stated at the outset of this work, overt anti-Americanism has become a badge of honor in certain European circles. Thus, a well-known German director: "*Kulturkampf*? Count me in. I am deeply detest America."⁴⁹ Or take the British novelist Margaret Drabble: "My anti-Americanism has become almost uncontrollable."⁵⁰

To be sure, the Bush Administration's actions intensified this *Kulturkampf* and legitimated it among European publics to a degree unimaginable before. Scheler reminds us that *ressentiment* can linger and fester, thus becoming ever more consuming of the subject who holds this sentiment. It thus remains solely a negative and destructive force. Or, conversely, it can transform itself into rebellion which – so Scheler – always necessitates the affirmation of counter-values as the first positive step towards the construction of a new identity.⁵¹ No mobilization around these European counter-values could have been more emphatic than the huge demonstrations on Saturday, February 15, 2003. As never before in Europe's history – not in the halcyon days of August 1914 when Europe's armies marched into slaughter against each other, nor the end of World War II nor the fall of communism – did so many millions of Europeans unite in public on one day for one purpose. From London to Rome, from Paris to Madrid, from Athens to Helsinki, from Berlin to Barcelona, Europeans across most of the political spectrum united in their opposition to the impending American attack on Iraq. And sure enough, a number of European intellectuals pro-

⁴⁵As cited in Joseph Joffe, "Who's Afraid of Mr. Big?" in *The National Interest* (Summer 2001).

⁴⁶Far and away the most prominent interpretation of this increasing clash between Europe and the United States – that Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars – is, of course, Robert Kagan's superb book *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

⁴⁷Joseph Joffe, "Who's Afraid of Mr. Big?" in *The National Interest* (Summer 2001).

⁴⁸Hubert Vedrine in his book *La carte de la France à l'heure de la mondialisation*, as cited in Joseph Joffe, *ibid.*

⁴⁹Peter Zadek, "Kulturkampf? Ich bin dabei. Mir ist Amerika zutiefst zuwider" in *Der Spiegel*, July 14, 2003. As is so typical of many of the most rabid anti-Americans, Zadek proudly exclaims that he has never been to the United States nor does he ever intend to visit it.

⁵⁰As quoted in Richard Bernstein, "Europe Awaits, With Bated Breath," in *The New York Times*, May 31, 2003.

⁵¹Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, p. 24.

claimed this day as the one that historians will someday view as the true birthday of a united Europe precisely because, like no other day in European history, it united Europeans emotionally and not only by fiat of a faceless bureaucracy issued in impenetrable language from Brussels.

At least to my knowledge, the first and most emphatic interpretation of February 15, 2003, as Europe's nascent national holiday was offered by Dominique Strauss-Kahn in a lengthy article in *Le Monde*. Strauss-Kahn could not have been more explicit straight at the outset of his piece: "On Saturday, February 15, 2003, a nation was born on the streets. This nation is the European nation."⁵² Every facet of Strauss-Kahn's article makes it unmistakably clear that the only commonality of this nascent nation lies in its opposition to the United States. Lest there be any misunderstanding that this pertains only to policy interpretations, political rivalries or differences in interest, Strauss-Kahn leaves absolutely no doubt that he sees the chasm between Europe and the United States as a matter of values, identity, essence. While these might be negotiable on a superficial level, they are deeply irreconcilable dimensions that obviously clash with each other. Barely two month later, Jürgen Habermas entered the fray with a hitherto unprecedentedly coordinated endeavor: As a number of commentators remarked, only a man of Jürgen Habermas's stature could have pulled off a Europe-wide publication event of this magnitude. On May 31, 2003, Habermas published an article on Europe's rebirth following the war in Iraq in Germany's paper of record, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Coauthored with the world-famous French intellectual Jacques Derrida, a French version of this piece was also published in *Libération*. On the very same day, Habermas's friend, the American intellectual Richard Rorty, published a supportive piece in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Germany's other paper of record and the *FAZ*'s main rival. Adolf Muschg wrote in the eminent Swiss paper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Umberto Eco in *Repubblica*, Gianni Vattimo in *La Stampa*, and Fernando Savater in *El País*. Excepting the Habermas-Derrida article in *FAZ* and *Libération*, all other contributions were completely independent articles united only by one common theme: the war in Iraq was to be the auspicious beginning of a European nation. While all pieces dwelt on the United States being Europe's "other," Eco deviated from this accusatory tone by arguing that the United States – far from being this hotly desired "other – was merely different, just like it had always been, and was always going to be." Exhibiting a sobriety in tone that none of the other contributions possessed, Eco warned the Europeans that the major problems awaiting the continent could never be solved merely by rallying around the negative moment of opposing the United States, as was increasingly the case in many European circles among intellectuals, the political class and – for the first time – increasingly the public as well. Particularly disappointing to me was the obviously conscious exclusion of intellectuals from Britain, the Scandinavian and Low Countries, and – most of all – Eastern Europe. Indeed, even a cursory reading of the Habermas-Derrida text which – by the authors' own admission – was largely penned by Habermas alone, reveals how much this allegedly European vision is little more than an undisguised advocacy of a Franco-German core that is to lead Europe away from its tutelage to the United States. Habermas speaks openly about a "vanguard" ("avantgardistisches") core Europe. Apart from the text's haughty dismissal of other options and its complete disregard for East Europeans and their five-decade-long experience under Communist rule, it is remarkable how German-centered this manifesto is, particularly given its author's bona fide standing as a genuine *Weltbürger*. Tellingly, the only European politician whom Habermas mentions explicitly by name is Joschka Fischer, Germany's foreign minister. Habermas centers his entire argument on the alleged hegemony of the following clearly preferable European values that he juxtaposes – implicitly, though obvious to any reader – to their naturally inferior American counterparts: a large dosage of skepticism towards the market combined with an acceptance of the state as a major social actor; a cautious attitude towards technology; a secular conviction that rejects any kind of religiosity in public life. These alleged European virtues have been the staples of Europe's debate about America and Americanism at least since 1945, if not before. Many European intellectuals – like Hubert Vedrine, as mentioned above – have listed them well before Habermas. But as Jür-

⁵²Dominique Strauss-Kahn, "Die Geburt einer Nation," in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 11, 2003. This is a verbatim German translation of the French original.

gen Kaube in a brilliant critique of Habermas points out, many of the values that Habermas claims for Europe do not pertain: few entities are more market-driven than the European Union; the French, Swedes and Belgians certainly do not share the Germans' fears of technological progress; and religion in Poland, Spain or Ireland certainly continues to play an important role in public life. Kaube concludes that Habermas really refers to mainly German values, which he then blithely extrapolates to the rest of Europe.⁵³ Jan Ross, another of Habermas's critics, correctly observes that Habermas's view of European values closely resemble those of the old Bonn Republic and of the old EU before the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁵⁴ This indeed is eerily true but with one major exception: after all, it was Jürgen Habermas more than any other German intellectual who always argued that the greatest achievement of the old Bonn Republic was its unconditional acceptance of the West in all its forms: cultural, social, political. And it was obvious to anybody who listened at the time that the West for Habermas not only included but actually featured the United States. For Habermas, too, apparently, one aspect of "othering" the United States in the current European development is to claim a strong affinity with the "genuine" United States that over the past decade or so seems to have lost its way. Thus, for liberals of Habermas's normative predilections at least, the new Europe is not only the "un-America" but actually a sort of "ur-America"

VI. Conclusion

At the end of the day the debate about America and the various views of and attitudes towards America by Europeans have little to do with the "real existing America" itself and everything with Europe. It is far from certain in which direction the anti-Americanism analyzed in this work will proceed, since it remains equally uncertain where, how, perhaps even if and whether Europe will develop. But one thing remains quite telling: nobody ever spoke of Europe's birth being the fall of the Berlin Wall or the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its communist rule over the eastern half of the continent. And true enough, none of those events attained nearly the popular enthusiasm that February 15, 2003, clearly did. Then, in 1989-1990, while Berliners danced in the streets, Londoners and Parisians fretted in their homes. And nobody in Europe's West thronged any public place in support of the celebrations in Warsaw and Prague. Whether Strauss-Kahn, Habermas and their friends will prove correct in that this day will indeed become Europe's national holiday, only future historians will be able to ascertain for certain. One thing is clear, though: the long tradition of a deep ambivalence towards and a constant preoccupation with America in Europe clearly set the intellectual stage for the powerful symbolic presence of this potentially fateful day. History teaches us that *any* entity – certainly in its developing stages – only attains consciousness and self-awareness by defining itself in opposition to another entity. Every nationalism arose in opposition to another. With the entity of "Europe" now on the agenda, anti-Americanism may well serve as a useful coagulating function for the establishment of this new entity and become a potent political force on the mass level way beyond the elites' antipathy and *ressentiment* that has been a staple of European intellectual life since July 5, 1776, if not before.

⁵³Jürgen Kaube, "Sind wir denn vernuenftig?" in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 2, 2003.

⁵⁴Jan Ross, "Die Geister des Pralinengipfels" in *Die Zeit*, June 5, 2003.