

TÓTH Mihály: The Morality of Self

in comparison with any socio-ethical approach. On the other hand, social ethics has a practical priority in many questions, because by its nature it represents the interests of a greater number of the affected ones.

Independency as a moral value fits well into the system of the 'ethics of being,' which is the reflective level of the morality of the self. This kind of ethics is characterized by the search for orientation by means of examples and advice, and has an eye on the future. Its counterpart is the more socially oriented 'ethics of doing.'

The competence of it is controlling acts by expectations and rules (commands and prohibitions, respectively), and it is mainly rooted in the past.¹⁴ In the latter, we also find the complementary value of independency, which is *solidarity*.

Finally, the philosophical advice concerning independency and its myths can be summarized as follows: "Dare to be independent! While striving for that, use any techniques that have been developed for this purpose in the past or presently. But always be aware of your inevitable embeddedness into social relations, and be in solidarity with those sharing the same human destiny."

Suggested Reading

FOUCAULT Michel, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*. New York, 1990.

FOUCAULT Michel, *The History of Sexuality Vol. III: The Care of the Self*. New York, 1988.

FROMM Erich, *The Art of Loving*. New York, 1956.

GULA Richard M., *Reason Informed by Faith*. New York, 1989.

HADOT Pierre, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Cambridge, 1995.

KRAMER Hans Joachim, *Integrative Ethik (Integrative Ethics)*. Frankfurt am Main, 1992.

MARTIN Luther H. et al. (eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst, 1988.

WHITEHEAD Alfred North, *Process and Reality*. New York, 1929.

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¹⁴ A detailed exposition of this typology can be found in GULA Richard M., *Reason Informed by Faith*. New York, 1989.

Karl-Reinhard TRAUNER

The Myth of Independency: Between Self-fulfilment and Misanthropy

The title of this paper includes two difficult words: myth and independency. Myth refers to the sphere of religion. The word "religion" either comes from Latin "relegare" or from "religare," which means the connection, the hanging on to and belonging to a god.

The meaning of "independency" is more difficult: the famous German Brockhaus Encyclopaedia lists four meanings of Unabhängigkeit, of which the first three meanings refer to maths and statistics. Only the fourth is related to our topic: independency in the sense of sovereignty.

Morality and Independence

It is very interesting that independence is not treated in discussions of ethics. The word cannot be found in the indices of popular works.¹ Independence and independency both come from Latin: (de)pendere also means hanging.

It is the same as in German: the German word for "independence" is "Unabhängigkeit," which is related to hängen (hanging). But pendere can also mean "be chained up," like an animal or a slave.

Independence therefore means—being free. As far as it applies to its meaning, religion and independence have a difficult connection: they are related to each other, but they also stand for opposites.

Independency is a term for political and national independence. So independence is in contrast to myth. But this is my first thesis: independence and independency include a religious component in their meaning.

¹ SCHMIDT Heinrich – SCHISCHOFF Georgi, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*. Stuttgart, 1978.; HERTZ Anselm – KORFF Wilhelm et al. (ed.), *Handbuch der christlichen Ethik*. Freiburg–Basel–Wien, 1993; KÖRTNER Ulrich H. J., *Evangelische Sozialethik. Grundlagen und Themenfelder*. Göttingen, 1999.; BISSA Eugen – HAHN Ferdinand – LANGER Michael, *Der Glaube der Christen*. München–Stuttgart, 1999.; KESLING Manfred – STEPMN Lothar et al. (ed.), *Evangelischer Erwachsenen Katechismus*. Gütersloh, 2001.

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And in that way, the title of this paper is true: independence is a myth. But if it is a myth, one has to ask if a myth is fit for making real policy with it. Nevertheless, a state as well has much to deal with myths; sometimes the origin of a state is a myth too.

There are many examples of the connection between policy and myths from the very far past until today. But before I try to pursue this question, I have to realise that there are different spheres of meaning for independence. I want to mention two, which are important for my further thoughts.

According to the *personal sphere*, independent individuality is the other side of the collective; and according to *political matters* independence means freedom from authoritarian structures with the aim of becoming an individual subject.

Even though the word independence is descended from the old Latin, you will realise that beneath these distinctions there is the process of individualisation and differentiation, which is connected to humanism and reformation in Europe.

In these times a totally new idea of personhood developed, which is based upon an individual understanding of personhood. That is also the reason the first modern anthropology book, with the title *Liber de anima* (“Book of the Soul” or “of Humankind,” 1540) was written by Philipp MELANCHTHON (1497–1560), the most important colleague of Martin LUTHER (1483–1546).

It may be interesting to note that the first (semi-frontal) portrait—a certain sign of self-consciousness—can be seen in the *Erzbischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum* in Wien: it is the portrait of Archduke Rudolph IV “the Founder” (1339–1365).

Differentiation and individualisation are the main characteristics of modern times, especially since the Enlightenment. Modern times can be characterized by different attempts to reach a maximum of independence; it has been an important motivational factor for political and social changes.

So it is not astonishing that independence is—with regard to our Western world—a really young word.² Not as a term, but belonging to its meaning, the search for independence can be found in nearly all state utopias.

Fairly well-known is the Independence Day of 1776 in U.S. history; perhaps the “Independency,” the name of the movement of independence in XVIIth-century England is also known.

² Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. Wiesbaden, 1974.; KLUGE Friedrich, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin, 1957.; Stowassers *Lateinisch-Deutsches Schul- und Handwörterbuch*.



But apart from that, in European history independence or independency as political terms have a short tradition. As a Protestant theologian and historian with a Central European character, I think of the fighting of Martin LUTHER and the Evangelical-Lutheran German nobility against the Roman-German Emperor Charles V.

Fraternity, Equality and Liberty

If you ask someone, most likely the French Revolution would be mentioned as the source of our term; even though the word *independence* was not one of its three political slogans. They mainly fought for liberty, equality and fraternity.

But these terms of the French Revolution of 1789—*fraternité, égalité et liberté*—have a close relationship to what we associate with independence. So, we can perhaps consider that the idea of independence became part of European intellectual history for the first time as a result of the Enlightenment in the French Revolution.

But today we know better; we know that the very positive aims of the French Revolution became converted exactly to their opposites. At the end of the revolution, terror, arbitrariness and misanthropy prevailed.

The Napoleonic Regime was a logical consequence of that, and the Napoleonic Wars dominated European history in a terrible manner for nearly two decades with innumerable victims on all sides.

In the liberation wars, the Germans tried to get rid of Napoleon and the French, and to constitute a united Germany. At that time, Germany was divided into a lot of small sovereign states.

During these liberation wars the ideas of democracy and liberty arose especially in intellectual circles; as well as the idea of a compulsory military service, as a consequence of a democratic state structure.

The development of the idea of a modern state was finalized and—resulting from this—war became monopolized by the state. In former times, war was waged by warlords—just in the way it is nowadays done in the Third World.

The former slogan of *fraternité, égalité et liberté*, and the ideas of the Enlightenment as the intellectual basis of the French Revolution, had lost their power and were thrown into the dustbin—or rather, they changed exactly to their opposites.

In the year 1784 the great philosopher Immanuel KANT defined the aim of the Enlightenment as “one’s release from one’s self-incurred tutelage.” Tutelage is perhaps the opposite term to independence.

But as the French Revolution proved, the attainment of independence—in KANT’s words, “one’s release”—can also lead to terror and contempt for humankind. Perhaps the attempt to reach the highest possible level of independence is human hubris.

At the beginning of the Bible we can read that humankind is like God, yet is not God: “God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power ... So God created human beings, making them to be like Godself.” (Gen 1,26.)

Apart from the religious character of this statement, the quoted text from Genesis also gives a deep understanding of social and political manners: if one aims at the highest possible

independence and freedom, one also becomes estranged from oneself and—possibly—from one’s own humanity.

Humankind needs a political and a social corrective in its attempt to reach freedom. Obviously, unlimited and absolute freedom and independence have no safeguard against inhumanity and brutality, either.

The World After World War II

The justified fight of many European countries for independence from the National-Socialist (Nazi) terror-regime was successful. All states were re-established roughly within the borders before 1938 except Germany, which was divided into two zones and lost all its Eastern areas to the other exception, Poland.

Nearly fourteen million Germans had to leave their homes, and many of them could take nothing with them, sometimes not even their children. Sometimes immigration was chosen freely, but under the pressure of the political circumstances; sometimes there was a political reason to drive the Germans away, like in Czechoslovakia on the basis of the Eduard BENEŠ’ Presidential Decrees of 1944.

Other movements of people followed: to the towns where German-speaking people had lived in Czech countries, e.g., Slovaks were transferred. And then many of the states became Communist and part of the so-called Eastern Bloc.

The real face of the Communist regime was shown in the freedom-movements in post-war Communist states. For the first time in 1956, the Magyars tried to gain independency from Moscow and were defeated by the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact.

Czechoslovakia met the same fate 12 years later, in 1968. In both states hard years of oppression followed. The “Communist revolutionary movement dismissed its children”: that is the translated title of a well-known book of Wolfgang LEONHARD,³ who had been a politician in an idealistic Communist sense, but was forced to leave the Stalinist Eastern Bloc.

The children who were dismissed can be named as freedom, independence and equality. After all, the de-Stalinisation was not very successful, even though there had been some beginnings in the ’50s.⁴

³ BRUCKMÜLLER EITZ – URBANITSCH Peter (ed.), *ostarrichi-österreich 996–1996. Menschen, Mythen, Meilensteinene*. Horn, 1996.

⁴ VAN DUERLEN Richard, *Die Entdeckung des Individuums 1500–1800*. Frankfurt am Main, 1997.; VAN DUERLEN Richard (ed.), *Erfindung des Menschen. Schöpfungsträume und Körperbilder 1500–2000*. Wien, 1998.

In the years from 1945 to 1955 Austria—after liberation from the Hitler-regime—was occupied by the allied forces and divided into four zones. It was also the experience of oppression by the Hitler-regime which led to a new Austrian identity.

But Austria gained its political independence in 1955 as a neutral state; when all foreign forces left Austria for good. With the means of a so-called *everlasting neutrality* (immerwährende Neutralität), Austria expressed its independence from Hitler-Germany as well as from the two political blocs.⁵

But only one year later, in 1956, Austria had to employ its army because of the Magyar uprising, and also in 1968 because of the so-called “Prague Spring.” Emil SPANNOCCHI (1916–1992), a general of the Austrian Armed Forces, even developed a system to defend Austria in a war between the two blocs.⁶

The world was divided into two political spheres, which worked against each other.⁷ The polarisation of the world, where one side was also dominated by an authoritarian regime with much oppression, was the disillusioning result of the attempts to achieve a new world order after the crucial fight against the National-Socialist regime.

It may be that the Western world had more freedom in its internal affairs, but a polarisation always prevents freedom and independence. The fear of an atomic war determined the thinking not only of the young people.

The word “overkill” shows how dangerously narrow-minded the political situation was. How can people do more than kill each other, or kill each other more than one time? Much money and much energy were invested into the defence structures.

All this would have been invested in other things more profitably. Here it is not the place to answer the questions about why the Eastern Bloc broke down. But it did in 1989/1990. Consequently, the time of World War II finally ended.

The bipolar world order has finally changed. The fall of the Iron Curtain was also a movement of independence from Moscow. As a result, independent states have been constituted.

⁵ SEIBT Ferdinand, *Utopica. Zukunftsvisionen aus der Vergangenheit*. München, 2001.

⁶ *Online Etymology Dictionary* (<http://www.etymonline.com>): French “independant” is attested from c. 1600; Italian “independente” from 1598. Meaning “person not acting as part of a political party” is from 1808. U.S. Independence Day (July 4) first recorded under that name in 1791.

⁷ TRAUNER Karl-Reinhart, *Heeresstruktur und Identität in der Epoche der Freiheitskriege*. Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift 1999/4, 451–462.

The New Europe

It is interesting that the movement away from Moscow did not lead to total political independency. In Romania the transformation from a Communist state to an independent state was connected with a revolution; in Russia the state converted from a Communist system to an oligarchy with great problems.

Most of the former Eastern Bloc states joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or at least NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP). Also, many of these states have joined the European Union (EU)—or are still trying to become members of this community.⁸

Even though the attempts to create a European Constitution seem to fail, the way of the EU will continue in the direction of the United States of Europe (USE)—however it may be called in the future—or perhaps a single European State.

This is not only a phenomenon of the former Eastern Bloc states. Austria should be taken as an example again: in 1995 Austria joined the EU and PfP. Her neutrality was relativized by Austria's participation in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

The EU has achieved many good things, but many things could have been done better as well. Even though it is a fact that, e.g. the armies have become much smaller, they are also much more professional.

Until 1990 the small country of Austria with about seven million inhabitants had an army with a mobilization strength of about 320.000 persons; today they are about to reduce their army to 55.000 soldiers.

During the Cold War about eight hundred Austrian soldiers were constantly deployed in peacekeeping missions on Cyprus and the Golan Heights. From 1968 up until 1990, no soldier was employed in a military task in Austria itself.

From 1990 to 2004, however, two battalions (ie. 2 x 500 soldiers) were deployed at the Magyar and, from 1997 to 2004, also at the Slovak border to assist the border police in curbing illegal immigration from outside countries.

In 1991 a major conflict erupted very close to Austria, when Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, heralding the collapse of Yugoslavia. There was fighting close to the Austrian–Slovenian border.

⁸ KANT Immanuel, *Was ist Aufklärung?* Berlinische Monatsschrift 1784/12, 481–494.

All Austrian soldiers left Cyprus some time ago, but in addition to the Golan Heights, battalions were sent to Bosnia-Herzegovina and to Kosovo. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Austria has permanently about 2.500 soldiers in military deployment.

In the times of the Cold War, the European armies of both blocs officially had the task to defend their home countries. Nowadays they can be employed nearly worldwide not only for defending, but also—thanks to the Petersberg tasks—for the enforcement of the interests of the EU.

That is only the military situation, but generally it is typical for the political as well (the military is a part of the political situation)—and also for the question of independency. Similarly, the economic or the social situation in Europe could be dealt with here.

But on the other hand, in many regions of the world we have to notice a decay of states. Warlords—and not presidents or chancellors—are ruling there. It is hard to deal with them politically. They follow only their own interests.

It is a terrible realisation that the threats to our states are increasing, and not decreasing, as many people hoped. The new dangers are characterised with terms like 'asymmetric warfare' or 'network-centric warfare' and occur as a result of globalisation.

Asymmetry can be found in the field of public security, of economy, of military, even of ethical and moral ideas. Terrorism as a danger for our states—and not as a problem concerning domestic affairs—and the difficult war against terrorism⁹ are also results of this development.

The Iraqi- and Afghanistan-war is also a result of the war against terrorism and terrorists like Osama Bin Laden. They all found a supremely tragic climax in 9/11, when the Twin Towers of New York were attacked.

Perhaps—hopefully—the EU will be a result of the ambivalence between independent freedom in private and in public areas and good relationships between each other and the neighbouring states.

Perhaps—also hopefully—in the EU the same mistakes will not be committed that were made in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which was a former multinational-state model, neither by the politicians of the leading nations, nor by the politicians of the other nationalities.

⁹ Wikipedia. Die freie Enzyklopädie (<http://de.wikipedia.org>; FAULENBACH Bernd, Die Verteilung der Deutschen aus den Gebieten jenseits von Oder und Neiße. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. 2002/51–52. 44–54.

Lessons Learned: Independence in Partnership

Our short historical overview—short and, without a doubt, full of gaps—has shown that the quest for independency has not been wholly successful, but has also led to negative reactions.

Independency is not a religious term, but a radical political one. Only a relative independence can be a political aim; everything else can lead to a terrible failure. Total independence can turn into terror and misanthropy.

But certainly it cannot be an aim to be oppressed, and in this meaning independence finds its positive purpose. But a change even to the better is always connected with insecurity. If you fight for something, you always fight against something, too.

A maximum of independency has never been reached successfully, but nevertheless there have been steps forward—perhaps in the sense of the Hegelian philosophy (G. W. F. HEGEL, 1770–1831) of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Or history might be determining us, as in the model of Oswald SPENGLER (1880–1936), who thought that there are certain cycles for each culture,¹⁰ and one cannot break out of this system.

The Old Testament term *shalom* reveals that first of all, the relations between people (and their relationship with God) are important. Politics and the legal system have the task to support *shalom*.¹¹

The world order must make sure that a maximum number of people can live in peace, freedom and positive independence. It is useless to oppress people or to work against them, because pressure causes counter-pressure. There are many examples throughout history and in the present.

But we certainly have to accept that all attempts in our world are only fragmentary, and we have to deal with this failure. The solution—like the truth—can only be found in God's realm at the end of time (and our world, too).

Sometimes people do not realise reality. But what helps us to cope with reality is our conscience. God interferes with our thinking and enables us to gain a critical and differentiated approach to reality.

Reality removes itself from a black-and-white scheme. Such bipolar thinking causes a loss of mental and political

¹⁰ LEONHARD Wolfgang, *Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder*. Frankfurt am Main–Berlin, 1961.

¹¹ KOCH Hans, *Bilanz der Entstalinisierung*. In *Der Europäische Osten 1957/2...* 67–72.

independence; perhaps it is a way to a situation which is "hopeless, but not serious."¹²

This is a title of a well-known book by Paul WATZLAWICK, where he shows us how people can be captured in their own thoughts so that they cannot find solutions for their problems, even though these problems are not very serious in an objective sense.

Overcoming such polarized thinking and obtaining independence in partnerships must be the aim of the future. Many things which were clear only twenty years ago, nowadays have lost their validity.

This also has consequences for the ethical side of political questions.¹³ The old and fascinating slogan of Bertha SUTTNER, "Lay down your arms!"¹⁴ seems to be too easy. Perhaps "solidarity" will become a keyword¹⁵.

This concept can be found, for example, in the declaration about the social situation in Austria by the various churches. The reason is that it can bring reconciliation to our future, privately as well as in state policy.

And Us Today?

It seems very clear that such a change of old and basic political paradigms takes a long time. And there are no signposts provided for us, because there is no political model for this development at all.

But it makes no difference what will come; it will be the European future, and it will be our future as well. We all, with our differing identities, participate in history in different ways, but we do!

Our history is part of our identity. It is useless to deny this. History means identity, but it also means a burden with fixed mental and personal attitudes, because of the special experiences we have had ourselves and were told about by our mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, at school and in the different media.

¹² SIEGLER Heinrich (ed.), *Österreichs Souveränität, Neutralität, Prosperität*. Wien–Bonn–Zürich, 1967.; JEDLIČKA Ludwig, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900–1975*. Sankt Pölten, 1977.

¹³ SPANNOCCHI Emil, *Der österreichische Kleinstaat im strategischen Zukunftstrend*. Österreichische Zeitschrift für Außenpolitik 1968/2. 67–98.

¹⁴ An early, terrible document of this situation is eg. published by the Nationalrat der Nationalen Front des demokratischen Deutschland *Weissbuch über die amerikanisch-englische Interventionspolitik in Westdeutschland und das Wiedererstehen des deutschen Imperialismus*. Leipzig, 1951.

¹⁵ KOGELFRANZ Siegfried, *Diktatoren im Ruhestand. Die einstigen Ostblockchefs im Gespräch*. Berlin, 1997.

Our history also means all the mistakes and failures we have made and suffered in the past. But Jesus also says to us: "Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone" (John 8,7).

Independence must also be independence from the failures of our history and the search for successful attempts. The aim of modern policy can only be "justice, not vengeance"; this applies also when dealing with the very bad sides of our history.¹⁶ This quoted slogan comes from a Jewish author and former concentration camp inmate (KZ), Simon WIESENTHAL, who fought for justice for the victims of the national-socialist regime.

It is hard to understand that many good-looking theories are not working. The Protestant theologian and physicist Albert SCHWEITZER (1875–1965) formulated his ethics of respect for life (*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*).

In his book, he writes: "I am life that wants to live, surrounded by life, which wants to live." Yet that especially causes many conflicts, and leads very often to the opposite of a respect for life.

In a certain way, the thinking of SCHWEITZER finds a continuation in Hans KÜNG's Global Ethics Project (GEP). KÜNG, a Roman Catholic theologian, tries to point out that the golden rule ("Treat others only in ways that you are willing to be treated in the exactly same situation") can be found in every religion.

That may be right, but there is the question of how this rule is concretely lived out in different religions and in various cultures. And there are a lot of different understandings of this golden rule.¹⁷

And it seems that human rights are not fully acceptable in a worldwide political discussion, because we have to realize that the idea of a person is understood differently in Western history than in other cultures.

But that can never be an apology when we treat other people with other ideas in a way which is against our basic thinking. We

¹⁶ HUNTINGTON Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, 1996; MARTIN Hans-Peter – SCHUMANN Harald, *Die Globalisierungsfalle. Der Angriff auf Demokratie und Wohlstand*. Reinbek n. Hamburg, 1998; HUNTINGTON Samuel P. – HARRISON Lawrence E. (eds.), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York, 2000.; MÜNKLER Herfried, *Die neuen Kriege*. Reinbek n. Hamburg, 2002.; KAGAN Robert, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York, 2004.; FASCHINGER Gerald – KOLLAND FRANZ – WIMMER FRANZ (eds.), *Kultur als umkämpftes Terrain. Paradigmenwechsel in der Entwicklungspolitik?* Wien, 2003.; BECKER Joachim – HÖDL Gerald – STEYERER Peter (eds.), *Krieg an den Rändern. Von Sarajevo bis Kuito*. Wien, 2005.

¹⁷ MADER Hubert M. – MICIWSKI Edwin R. – WIESER Andreas B., *Terror and Terrorismus. Grundsätzliches, Geschichtliches; Reflexionen und Perspektiven*. Wien, 2001.; GUSTENAU Gustav (ed.), *Zur Theorie des Terrorismus*. Wien, 2002.; *Patriot Act of Oct. 24th 2001 in the USA*. <http://www.epic.org/privacy/terrorism/hg3162.html>; BILGOW Andreas, *Die CIA und der 11. September. Internationaler Terror und die Rolle der Geheimdienste*. München, 2004.

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have to follow our own ideas. Differentiation in addition to reconciliation seems to be a way out of this blind alley.

In policy black and white sometimes have the same bloody colour; and our world is—to stay with this picture—rather grey. We are in the times before the last (as Dietrich BONHOEFFER states); and the last only is in God.

“All life is problem solving,” says Karl R. POPPER¹⁸; and it is our lives that we are thinking about. If a person struggles for a maximum of independency, she or he will lose the world and her- or himself, too.

This cannot be an answer to the problems of our world. It is our task not to search for total *independence*, but to search for a positive way of *dependence*.¹⁹ Even the churches: they need the independence of states, but in a totally independent society they will not reach their aims.

“The Lord asked Cain: ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ He answered: ‘I do not know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?’ Then the Lord said: ‘Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground. You are placed under a curse.’ And Cain said to the Lord: ‘This punishment is too hard for me to bear. You are driving me off the land and away from Your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the Earth, and anyone who finds me, will kill me.’ But the Lord answered: ‘No.’ And he put a mark on Cain to protect him” (Genesis 4,9–16).

Suggested Reading

- HUNTINGTON Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, 1996.
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¹⁸ SPENGLER Oswald, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. München, 1988.; TOYNBEE Arnold J., *Kultur am Scheideweg*. Wien–Zürich, 1949.

¹⁹ REZAK David, *Militärische Intervention als Problem des Völkerrechts. Eine Untersuchung bewaffneter Eingreifens in innerstaatliche Konflikte anhand des Kosovo-Krieges*. Wien, 2002.; SCHMIDSEDER Karl, *Internationale Operationen und Crisis Response Operations. Charakteristica, Bedingungen und Konsequenzen für das Internationale und Nationale Krisenmanagement*. Frankfurt am Main, 2003.

Ivan VOJTAŠŠÁK

Experience of Cooperation and Conflict

As Reflected in the Vision of Central European Identity in the EU

There were times in the past when Central Europe was considered a region that could be a model for a peaceful cohabitation of a pluralistic society and for tolerance. Presently the nations settled in this region are tested with new tasks linked with the construction of the European Union (EU). They have to prove the vitality of their particularity and uniqueness by their contribution to the cultural scene of the increasingly globalized world.

Central Europe as a Region of Tolerance

Central Europe (CE) is the geographical region, which can be considered historically moulded by the ancient empire of the Habsburgs—i.e. the Austrian Empire. It is a European border region, in which the interests of numerous empires have come into play.

These empires are the mentioned dominant Austrian, in contact with the Ottoman in the south, the Russian in the east, and the Prussian in the north. It is the area of historically dominant Western Christianity; but on its Eastern frontier it is in touch with Eastern Christianity, and in the South it borders on a Muslim influence.

It could be said that Central Europe may be considered by connecting the imaginative line traced between the towns of Trieste in Italy, Chernivci and Lviv in Ukraine, Gdańsk in Poland and Cheb in the Czech Republic.

This area of Central Europe had in history the reputation of a region of variety, plurality and tolerance. And yet the first modern