« L'EUROPE DES NATIONS : HISTOIRES, CULTURES, RELIGIONS »

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY

WALTER BRANDMÜLLER

I. The institutions of integration.

In a process lasting a good two hundred years, medieval Christendom gradually arose from the ruins of the Roman Empire. Its most important structural component was the link between Rome and Aix-la-Chapelle, the Roman Church and the Frankish Empire, which will be discussed below. For a whole millennium the fate of Christendom was determined by the sometimes harmonious and frequently conflictual relations between the two poles of *sacerdotium* and *imperium* – papacy and imperial power. Until the discovery of the New World, Christendom and Europe were essentially one and the same, with the northern and eastern frontiers of Europe shifting as the Christian mission gained ground around the year 1000.

As has been mentioned, the unique historical phenomenon of Christendom was comparable to an ellipse: force applied at each end of the axis – Papacy and Empire – created tension, sustaining the entire structure.

1) The Papacy

Of the two institutions that produced this integrated system, the Papacy will be considered first, not only because of its historical precedence, but also for practical reasons.

According to Matthew 16:16 ff, Jesus Christ built His Church upon Peter, the rock. Therein lies the origin of the Papacy, which subsequently withstood attempts by the Caesars to suppress it and by Christian emperors to make it politically subservient. It also survived the fall of the Roman Empire.

Henceforth the Roman successors of Peter represented the only authority whose message cut across the boundaries of the new tribal divisions and made claim to universal validity.

As Christianity developed in the different tribal kingdoms, religious life there centred on "national churches" and their links to the Roman Papacy were therefore fairly loose. But from the 7th century onwards Rome re-emerged – no longer as the capital of an empire but as the burial place of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the seat of the Apostolic succession – to make a forceful impression on the Christian consciousness of the early Middle Ages.

As far as political conditions allowed, the Popes of Rome exerted more and more authority over the whole of Christendom. Even the Christian East was in no doubt that in ecclesiastical matters – whether of faith or of law – the final decisions were made by Rome.

The upshot was that this collection of tribal kingdoms, the precursors of the modern European states, and no longer held together by the Roman Empire, now had a common

focus, a common point of reference, namely the Pope in Rome. Rome was no longer a centre of political power as in ancient times; indeed, it had long ceased to be any such thing, despite the formation of the Papal States in the 8th/9th centuries. At this time it was seen rather as a stronghold of faith and justice.

An eloquent expression of this conception of Rome is to be found in the letters written by Saint Boniface (+754) to the Popes of his time, from whom he sought and received direction and instruction for his mission to the Teutons.

Exchanges of this kind between the outside and the centre gave rise to medieval canon law. Council canons had provided the legal basis for ecclesiastical life until the end of the 4th century but now the legal corpus was being expanded by increasing numbers of papal decisions on individual cases, the so-called decretals: a contentious case would be submitted to Rome, where a decision would be made. And so medieval canon law came into being. The crucial moment for canon law, indeed for European law, came around 1144, when the Bolognese monk Gratanius – nothing is known of him but his name – gathered together all the disparate legal texts of the Western Church, arranged them systematically, resolved contradictions in the Decretals and published them under the name of "Concordantia discordantium canonum". This unofficial scholarly work became *de facto* the first law book of the Western Church – generally known by the name of "Decretum Gratiani" – and provided the basis for the "Corpus Juris Canonici", which remained in force until 1918.

And so the work of Gratianus produced nothing less than a common European law. Although it focused directly on ecclesiastical life, it nevertheless exerted a far-reaching influence on civic society; one need only consider how closely sacred and secular life were interwoven for hundreds of years. Canon law was a factor of the first importance in the integration of the Europe that was now emerging, as was the closely related ecclesiastical court system, with its different stages of appeal: local court, metropolitan court, up to the Sacra Romana Rota or the Signatura Apostolica, the two highest papal tribunals. Precisely because the last two were independent of local and national authorities, the papal courts guaranteed maximum legal security. While the papal Curia was reputed to be a place where anything could be bought for money, the papal tribunals were held in the highest regard and their decisions were respected from Reykjavik to Catania.

In a sense the cause of integration may have been served by the much-maligned Papal tax system, particularly in the form it took during the period of the so-called Avignon Papacy (essentially the 14th century). It involved highly developed procedures for regulating the payments made to the Papal coffers by individual dioceses, abbeys and even small

churches. Income was collected by the Institute of Papal Collectors, who either operated on the spot or were specially dispatched from Rome. At the very least, this system encouraged a flow of information between the centre and the outside and the collectors often acted as papal diplomats.

And so we come to yet another integrating factor, namely Papal diplomacy. This was already developing towards the end of the early Middle Ages out of the system of papal legates. When necessary, Popes would send out high-ranking representatives with more or less extensive powers to settle ecclesiastical disputes, put through reforms or overcome heresy, and thereby fulfil the higher pastoral duties of the Papacy. In the late Middle Ages in particular we also find such emissaries acting as mediators between warring kings or Princes.

The fora that did most to promote integration, however, were the General or Ecumenical councils, called by the Popes and presided over by them or their legates. These councils brought together all the Church's bishops to decide upon common practice in the exercise of teaching and pastoral duties, and their decrees were binding upon the whole Church, as they still are. The interpenetration of the sacred and secular spheres in medieval Christendom also meant that Councils were attended by kings and princes, or their representatives, who exerted considerable influence on the proceedings even though they had no vote. The Councils were also attended by varying numbers of higher ranking clerics and scholars.

It is not difficult to grasp the significance of these events, where large numbers of people from all countries spent long periods, even years together, in a small space, seeing each other on a daily basis. The councils were attended by the intellectual, cultural, religious and indeed the political elite of Europe, and offered an extraordinary forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences. The Councils were an occasion for the outside world to assemble at the hub of ecclesiastical and political life. A particularly striking example is the Council of Constance (1414-1418), which qualifies as the largest assembly of the European ruling class in the Middle Ages, only ever surpassed in terms of numbers by the Second Vatican Council.

This movement towards the centre, characteristic of the council system, had its counterpart in a current flowing outwards from the centre. Everything drawn up and agreed at a council and ratified by the Pope was disseminated throughout the Church to be implemented in individual dioceses, etc.

Ecclesiastical and secular life throughout Europe thus came to assume a uniform character, though opposition to the trend meant that developments did not always occur in the same way in all places. This uniformity

is illustrated by a phenomenon resulting from the Council of Trent, which lasted – with long interruptions – from 1546 to 1564. The Council's doctrinal decrees – leaving aside those providing for reform – inspired the historically and culturally unique phenomenon of the "Catholic Baroque", which informed all aspects of life in the parts of Europe that remained Catholic and left its strong unifying stamp, still visible today, across geographically disparate lands.

2) The Empire.

However much the emperors of the Middle Ages liked to see themselves as successors of the Caesars, their empire differed fundamentally in terms of its legitimacy. When Jesus Christ was born under the reign of Augustus Caesar, the Roman Empire already had a long, illustrious history behind it and had arguably reached the height of its power.

In the case of the *Renovatio Imperii*, the situation was quite different. When the Frankish Majordomo Pepin took power under the Merovingians and wanted to call himself king, the rightful king being the person who held power, he needed to gain legitimacy. His claim to kingship required a legitimacy that would give him clear precedence over the blood heir.

Such legitimacy could only be granted by the highest religious authority – by the Petrine successor in Rome. In 754 Pope Stephen II anointed Pepin king in St.-Denis and bestowed the title *Patricius Romanorum* upon him and his sons, Charles and Carloman. Subsequently, when Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor on Christmas day 800 Karl, the Renovatio Imperii was proclaimed and this revived Imperium was henceforth called the Sacrum Romanum Imperium. The Church thus presided over the foundation of this new Holy Roman Empire.

Although the power of the empire was soon to decline as the new "national kingdoms" gained in strength, its sacred character still made it a significant factor in the integration of a Europe that was becoming increasingly fragmented.

The last striking demonstration of the empire's cohesive power occurred under Sigismund of the House of Luxembourg (crowned 1433, +1437). Although he had not been crowned at the time, he was universally known as Emperor Sigismund.

The election of an anti-pope in opposition to Urban VI. (20.9.1378) had led to the Papal Schism. Following the unsuccessful attempt to reunite the Church at the Council of Pisa, (1409) the situation had deteriorated to the point where there were three pretenders to the Papacy. As a result of the schism, the political map of Europe was divided, first into two and then into three blocs, each of which had its "own pope".

In this situation, embarrassing both to the Church and the secular powers, it was the Emperor who, in his capacity as Advocatus ecclesiae, was able to reunite the Church after all other attempts had failed. He brought the opposing parties together at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), where unity was restored following a unanimous vote for Pope Martin V.

The way in which the unity of Europe was maintained by reciprocal action on the part of the two poles – empire and papacy – is quite remarkable

When the empire subsequently lost its holy character, it also lost its significance for Europe. What remained was a purely ceremonial order of rank. Meanwhile the disintegration of Europe continued apace.

3) The universities

Any discussion of the institutional pillars on which medieval society rested must take account of the Church, the Empire and also the universities – the three powers: *sacerdotium, imperium, studium*. By analogy with the mythos of the *translatio imperii*, i.e. the transfer of legitimacy from Constantine to the Pope, from the Pope to the Emperor, mention has also been made of a *translatio studii*, a transfer of culture from Athens via Rome to Paris.

This view may owe less to the facts than to a sense of more significant linkages – and that too is a reality. There can be no doubt that the Papacy gave its blessing to *studium*, the universities, just as it had presided over the foundation of the empire. And yet this image falls short of the reality: the university is not a godchild of the Church, but her legitimate daughter. The "studia generalia" emerged from the gradual amalgamation of schools for clerics, lawyers and doctors at different times and in different places, and they were first established in Paris and Bologna at the end of the twelfth century. It was the Pope who granted legal status to these loose associations of schools, and the "Universitas magistrorum et scholarium" that grew up around them. Secular patronage came later.

Another decisive factor was the widespread provision of church grants, giving teachers and students a secure income.

In this way a loose-knit web of higher education establishments spread across Europe from around 1200 onwards. The universities founded within the next hundred years included those of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Salamanca, Coimbra, Padua and Montpellier. The University of Naples was an exception, having been founded by Fredrick II in 1220 without the involvement of the Church. By 1300 there were 13 universities in the whole of Europe, by 1400 the number had risen to 28, and by 1500 there were as many as 68.

But what did this particular pillar of medieval society have to do with European integration?

These institutions had much the same structure, the examinations were the same, as was the curriculum – Christian revelation and ancient tradition – and their degrees were universally recognised. Moreover, every Magister or Doctor was granted the "licentia ubique docendi", authorisation to teach anywhere.

As a result, and because Latin was the everyday language in Universities (and elsewhere), graduates and students became highly mobile, moving from one university to another to study under the most renowned teachers or in the best conditions. This process produced a Pan-European intelligentsia, made up of individuals with the same education and experience, who proceeded to take up positions, not only in schools, but also in the chancelleries of bishops and princes and in the courts. They acquired increasing influence if not power. This cultural and social trend reached its highest point with the Renaissance and Humanism. The humanist fraternity, who set the intellectual agenda throughout Europe and generally looked up to Reassume of Rotterdam as their head, were committed to the common educational ideal, and they were behind the first attempts to overcome the religious divide that had arisen in the 16th century. The universities must be rated as a highly important factor in European integration, particularly in the Middle Ages, when all intellectual life had a common basis.

II. Aspects of European Unity

1) The calendar

A European need spend only a week in Jerusalem to experience the strange effect of three different calendars, like cross-currents, on the course of normal city life. The Muslims celebrate their holiday on Friday, the Jews have their Sabbath on Saturday and the Christians have their Sunday, with corresponding implications for working time, etc. After the Emperor Constantine had declared Sunday a day of rest reserved for worship, Sunday became the essential factor in determing the rhythm of life across the empire and also, after its decline, throughout the new "Europe". The same was true, especially since Leo the Great, of the major holidays, festivals and Lent.

Now that everybody dated bills of purchase or sale, wills, contracts, peace treaties and even private letters according to the Church calendar, the Gospel message was clearly associated with everyday secular matters. From the 6th century at least (Dionys Exiguus ca. 550) the years were numbered from the birth of Christ and called *anni Domini, anni salutis, anni incarnationis Domini*, etc. The fact that various dates –25th December (birth of Christ), 25th March (Annunciation), etc. –

were chosen as the first day of the year before 1st January was finally adopted, would appear to create more difficulties for modern historians, who have to date old documents etc., than it ever did for the people of the Middle Ages. This way of reckoning time and numbering the years still reflected the universally acknowledged spiritual dimension of everyday life in medieval Europe, where the rhythm of life was determined by the Church calendar.

It is interesting to note that subsequent division in European was also reflected in the calendar. When Pope Gregory XIII did away with the traditional Julian calendar to introduce the Gregorian calendar, named after him, the Protestant and Orthodox countries rejected the reform, even though it represented a marked improvement.

The most decisive break with the Christian tradition came two hundred years later, when the revolutionary calendar was introduced in France on 14 July 1790. This calendar did not number the years of our Lord but the years of the Republic. Even the biblically based seven-day week, together with Sunday, were abolished. After the closure of all places of worship, the final vestiges of religion were to be eliminated. "On 31 December 1805, this aberration was abolished by a decree issued by the Emperor Napoleon" (H. Grotefend).

In contrast, the fascist calendar introduced by Mussolini in 1922 did not represent any real change (the year of the fascist era appeared next to the "normal" year). This calendar was also abolished after the downthrow of the regime

2) Language

Language was a much more significant factor in integration than the common church/civic calendar. Whereas the many peoples of imperial Rome had late ancient Greek, or Koine, as a common language (κοινη means "common language"), the lingua franca of the new Europe was Latin. If it was not worthy of Cicero – it might be compared to the everyday English spoken in the British Commonwealth – common Latin still had outstanding potential as a means of communication. Here again it was the Church that introduced Latin to lands north of the Alps, not only through its teaching, but above all through the use of Latin in liturgy, administration and law.

The Roman tongue was not only used by scholars for teaching purposes or by literary authors. A Norwegian tradesman would order cloth from Florence in Latin and a traveller would use it to ask the way or seek accommodation.

But Latin was of particular importance for intellectual and spiritual life. It meant that universities of different countries throughout Europe could communicate in a way unequalled today. Teachers and students were therefore highly mobile until the early

years of the modern age. The German elite of the 15th and early 16th century, for example, could study in Bologna, Padua, Pavia and Siena without first having to learn a foreign language. Moreover teachers could exercise their "ubique terrarum" right when looking for work. Everywhere, the standard teaching language, the language of disputation and examination was Latin.

The upshot was a highly intensive interchange of academic knowledge and free academic discussion, which contributed to the formation of a Pan-European academic elite. In the age of humanism, this environment produced the intellectual and literary groups who regarded Erasmus as their head and revered model. In circles such as these Latin experienced a Europe-wide renaissance at the highest level. Even in the early nineteenth century it was still possible to write in Latin on scientific matters, as well as the humanities and the law.

3) Pilgrimage

It is a mistake to believe that medieval man was so attached to his native soil that he hardly ever left his village, monastery or town and knew almost nothing of what lay beyond his limited horizons.

Leaving aside the fact that trade flourished in the Middle Ages, travel was a natural part of medieval life and the high level of mobility in society is most clearly seen in pilgrimage, which was prompted by churchly piety. From the outset, the faithful travelled not only to the places referred to in the Gospels, but also to the graves of the Apostles and Saints, in the hope that they would intercede on their behalf before God.

In addition to the Holy Land, there were the graves of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, the grave of Jacob in Santiago de Compostela, and the sanctuaries of the Archangel Michael on the Gargano in Puglia and at Mont St. Michel in Normandy. The Grave of St. Thomas Beckett in Canterbury was also a place of pilgrimage, made famous by Geoffrey Chaucer's literary monument "the Canterbury Tales". But what did this mean? Quite simply that thousands of the faithful, women as well as men, were to be found on the roads of Europe, on their way to these holy places. Going on a pilgrimage meant leaving home, crossing frontiers, learning foreign languages and meeting foreign people. They would return home with a host of impressions they could barely have conceived of upon setting off – not to mention the actual spiritual benefit of the pilgrimage. If contemporary sources are to be believed, the pilgrimage routes must have been as crowded as the congested motorways of today. Those determined to go on a pilgrimage could obtain pilgrims' guides or travel guides – printed in the late Middle Ages, and once underway, they found a well planned system of hostels for their accommodation and hospitals for those who fell ill. On the pilgrimage route and at the shrines Christian met Christian, European met European, and

the spiritual dimension of European consciousness came to the fore. Pilgrimage linked even such remote destinations as Santiago at "finis terrae" or Canterbury on the other side of the Channel to the centre of the continent. It played an important role in the spiritual integration of Europe and today this role is being revived.

III.
The spiritual foundations of Europe

Only a rough sketch can – some would say should – be given of the institutions and customs that underpinned the life of our continent for more than a thousand years.

That life, even though the ideal was never fully realised, can only be described as magnificent. It has sometimes been said that everything great in the history of Europe arose from foundations laid in Jerusalem, Athens and Rome.

Jerusalem stands for the knowledge that mankind and the world exist in relation to God the Creator, to whom they owe their being and from whom they hope for final salvation.

Man sees himself as one made in the image of God, part of the Creation but also shaping it and exercising stewardship over it, God's partner, one granted freedom and called to account before God. This view of himself, together with the knowledge that he is on a quest for eternal salvation, must make a lasting impression on his feeling for life and his relationship with his fellow man and the world.

There is no doubt that each individual was aware of this, more or less keenly depending on his capacity. It is also undeniable that the powers of evil were still not easily banished from the life of the individual or society. But the very sense of sin and guilt, the realisation that the individual could and must change his ways and obtain forgiveness, was the undisputed common heritage of Christian society. Without such a context any attempt to explain the tremendous achievements in scholarship, the arts and culture generally would seem doomed to failure. These results rather demonstrate the creative power of the ideals and moral standards, shared by the population of the continent for a thousand years, in shaping its culture.

If "Jerusalem" stands for the transcendent dimension of old Europe, dominating everything else, "Athens" represents the primacy of the intellect, which underpins European culture. The philosophical fathers of our continent are not the Sophists, who were in favour of misusing knowledge and reason for specific purposes, but Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The intellectual endeavours of the Middle Ages were characterised by a disinterested quest for knowledge of the ultimate foundation of existence, contemplation of the truth, goodness and

beauty of all being, and a search for the criteria governing the good life, which were woven into the very fabric of existence.

At the schools of Athens, the great minds of the early Church – the "three Cappadocians", Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa come to mind – sought and found the conceptual tools they needed not merely to unlock but to make intelligible the mysteries of Christian belief, notably the belief in one God in three persons. The harmonious synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christian revelation is associated with Augustine, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinus, in whose theological works it was given consummate expression. The Scholasticism of the High Middle Ages, whose high point coincided with the rise of the universities, taught Europe the intellectual discipline and conceptual precision on which its future scientific and intellectual development depended. Without this breaking down of concepts by scholastic theologians, there would have been no splitting of the atom.

Lastly we come to Rome, a name immediately associated with the concepts of power and law, as well as the ideas of violence and war. Rome's owes its great historical legacy to the former rather than the latter. If Athens was the birth place of philosophy, Rome fathered jurisprudence. Until modern times the *Ius Romanum* was the basis of all jurisprudence, and therefore of legislation and legal customs as well. Although there was often a wide gulf between the ideal and the reality, there is no denying that that power could always be reined in by law. Its principles, such as the principle that contractual obligations must be observed - *pacta sunt servanda* – have exerted a decisive influence on communal life right up to the present day. The role of the rule of law in the communal life of individuals and peoples is undoubtedly of Roman origin.

Old and New Testament revelation and Greco-Roman culture together with a Teutonic-Celtic element were combined to form a great historical synthesis, in which Christian revelation displayed its formative power. This was the world-historical development that grew out of the collaboration between the Papacy and the new empire at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, when a stupendous effort was made by sacred and political authorities alike. In its essential features, this culture continued to prevail until the French Revolution

At that point a split occurred, which not merely differentiated "Classical Europe" from that of today, but marked a break in the historical continuity between the two worlds.

The past two centuries of European history have been characterised by a complete break across a broad front with the intellectual and spiritual heritage of more than one and a half thousand years. We need only cite Goethe's assessment of past European history, as shaped by the Church: "The entire Church history is but a mishmash of error and

violence" (Zahme Xenien IX). Still more radical was his retort: "....give thanks for deliverance to the one sleeping up there? I should honour you? For what?" (Prometheus). And, horrifyingly prophetic: "Here I sit, making men in my own image, a race that will resemble me ... and pay you no heed, as I!" (ibid).

What is striking here is the fundamental transformation of the feeling for life under the Enlightenment, to which nineteenth century Europe – barely affected by the interlude provided by the romantic period – owed its essential character.

The Hegelian law gave rise to the totalitarian state, and Hegel's left-wing imitators ultimately produced *homo sovieticus* in the form of Lenin and Stalin and the populations of the erstwhile Eastern Bloc. There is little to distinguish the racially pure *homo nordicus* from them, and the *homo oeconomicus* of the capialist world is hardly better, just different. These people, archetypes of the new European, created their world, state and culture in their own image. The catastrophes of the twentieth century, from the disastrous matériel battles of the First World War to the extermination camps of the Third Reich and the Gulag Archipelago, are the result of Europe's having broken with its origins in Jerusalem, Athens and Rome. As the Christian view of man and the world disappeared under the influence of the rationalistic philosophy of the Enlightenment, so the way was opened up to the dog-eats-dog world of social Darwinism, which finds expression in today's culture of abortion, euthanasia and cloning. All of this began, as I have said, when we rejected the principles of cultural development that governed the thousand-year long Christian period.

But now we must also consider Europe's responsibility to the rest of the world, whose population is incomparably greater than its own.

Europe's former greatness was also the reason why its spiritual and cultural heritage was adopted in all corners of the Earth, and why America – North and South – and Australia fell under European influence.

Leaving aside the Far East and Africa, Europe has set its cultural seal on the whole world. With the export of European culture, which has been steadily increasing since the Age of Discovery, the Old Continent has taken on a very weighty, oppressive responsibility.

These European "exports" included rationalism of a more or less atheistic complexion, which was carried over to Latin America around the middle of the 18th century. In the 19th century it was ideologies dreamed up in European heads. The ideals of the Hegelian left, Marx and Engels, positivism, vulgar materialism and, most virulent of all, nationalism have demonstrated their effects in Latin America and above all in Asia. If we ask where the great revolutionary leaders of the of the Third World went for their intellectual

opposition from the camps of liberalism, individualism and relativism. All of these ideologies are unanimous in acknowledging that there is no transcendent, and therefore objectively valid truth, and no moral standard that is binding on human beings, in so far as they are human. To proclaim that there is such a truth, as the Catholic Church continues to do – appealing to the inherent order of creation itself and to divine revelation (the Bible) – arouses opposition. So in these circumstances, what chance does it have of helping to shape the Europe of the future? All it has left is the power of argument. And the argument – leaving aside all the others – takes the form of a question (a utopian question at that), namely: what kind of society would arise, what culture would be produced, if today's Europe – its thinking class at any rate – were to adopt a Magna Charta reflecting the Catholic understanding of man and the world as the basis of society and culture in the continent now being consolidated?

This would quite simply mean that the catholic notion of natural law, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount would provide the yardstick by which standards of private and public life had to be measured. There can be no doubt that such a society would be far more humane than one in which the power of the strong catered for the boundless egotism of the individual, in which the weak had no prospects and money, power and consumption were regarded as the greatest goods in life.

If on the other hand the inviolability of the person, the responsibility of the individual for the whole community, reverence for the creator and His creation, and respect for marriage and the family were to be granted "constitutional recognition", the result would still not be heaven on earth. But surely on this basis, we could build a far more humane society – even if the ideal was not fully realised – than the one we live in today. A utopia like the one described in Kant's "Eternal Peace"? The classless Marxist societies have demonstrated that utopias tend to unleash their power – in their case the power to destroy the world. But why should the utopia of a Christian Europe not exhibit a constructive, creative dynamic? In the meantime Europe can look back at a century of catastrophes. These were the ultimate consequence of the national socialist and Marxist ideologies, the inhuman error of which was so drastically demonstrated. Following their decline, it would seem that the ideology of liberalism is now making a bid for power. We are not of course referring to the type of liberalism that set out to free the citizen from state oppression. The type I refer to is that which rejects any connection between the individual and universally valid truths and standards. This liberalism, which frees the individual from the law, so that he can follow his most individualistic moral code, his own individual truth, seems to be at work today. The forms it takes are too well known to need further elaboration. But there can be no doubt that if the ideology they represent were to be

implemented as national socialism and Marxism were, a 21st century catastrophe. perhaps less tumultuous than those of the 20th century but all the more destructive for all that, would be the necessary consequence. Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World " could be a vision of the future. In this situation we may well wonder whether the state of modern Europe might not produce the sense of curiosity and boldness that would prompt us to take a risk and attempt the "Catholic experiment".

When the famous Scottish statesman and historian T. B. Macaulay reviewed Leopold von Rankes book "The Popes of Rome" in the Edinburgh Review in 1840, he wrote: *"There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving, of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries; the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth;*

and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustin, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in am former age. Her Acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated for what she has lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn, countries which a century hence, may not improbably, contain a population as large as that which now, inhabits Europe. The members of her communion are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it will be difficult to show that all other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feet no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished

vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. (Th. B. Macaulay, *Review of* L. v. Ranke, *The Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes of Rome during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, London 1840, in: *Edinburgh Review* 72 (1840) 227-258)".

There is no reason why Macaulay's vision should not be fulfilled. What risk would Europe be taking if it placed its trust in an enterprise that had survived two thousand years without going bankrupt?

But that, as they say, is utopian.