

Germany's President Herzog on the wrong political path

by Helga Zepp LaRouche

This article was first published in the German weekly Neue Solidarität, on Oct. 30, 1996. We publish a translation now, for broad international circulation, since its impassioned defense of the sovereignty of the German nation-state is extremely relevant today, in view of the savage attempts by London-backed banks to destroy the heart of German industry (see Economics, p. 4).

“He who does not learn from history is condemned to repeat it.”

In the following article, my intent is not to personally attack Germany's President Roman Herzog. Rather, I see the necessity to speak frankly, because the political implications of President Herzog's speech at the 41st *Historikertage* (Meeting of Historians) in Munich in September could lead to the destruction of Germany. How, permit me to ask, are we to understand the following sentence by Herzog: “At a time in which the principle of the nation-state has outlived its usefulness, in which there are no more national economies, national history also no longer has meaning”? The fact that the President assumes he can give such a presentation with this core thesis, without triggering a public storm of protest, shows, unfortunately, that it seems to be understood by the political “elite,” including the government, that the political judgment of the population has sunk to the catastrophic level of the Saturday evening television talk shows.

Public speeches, by their nature, do not merely contain concrete assertions, but also expose the underlying axioms as well as the method of thinking of the speaker.

In this regard, the speech of President Herzog, whosoever may have formulated it, offers embarrassing insights. Roman

Herzog reveals that his understanding of history is based less on actual knowledge, and more on the internalization of prejudices of an Anglo-Saxon origin. One is almost reminded of the “Bettelheim Syndrome.”¹ In addition, the frame of mind expressed in the speech shows a typical Aristotelian narrowness of thinking, and betrays some rather un-Christian, ugly features.

Learning from history is rejected

Herzog begins his lecture by acknowledging that, while reading the motto of this year's *Historikertag*, “History as Argument,” he “indeed began to feel a bit dizzy.” Especially now, he continues, the recourse to history is so dangerous, because this most often occurs in moments of fundamentally new orientation of politics. In times, thus, in which “the need for orientation is especially great and the calculability of the future especially small.”

This assertion is, in its implications, indeed monstrous. Should one learn nothing from history? “In these times of new orientation,” no vision is to be expected from the government. Whence then, should a perspective come? Are we merely the plaything of events to which we surrender, like crests of foam on the waves of the ocean? I maintain, on the contrary, that all positive periods of history, from the standpoint of the development of mankind, were successful because the leading thinkers of the time had a very clear vision of what the future should bring. Herzog's view, that

1. The “Bettelheim Syndrome” refers to studies of prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, conducted by Prof. Bruno Bettelheim. These studies were the basis for Bettelheim's book *Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations*.



German President Roman Herzog maintains that “the principle of the nation-state has outlived its usefulness . . . there are no more national economies, national history also no longer has meaning.”

in these periods the “calculability of the future” is especially small, is more likely the result of his methodological weakness, than the description of historical reality.

British Empire: more attractive than the nation-state

The President laments that the discussions about Europe’s future are characterized by a narrow point of view, because the questions and paradigms are taken only from the categories of the “well-organized nation-state.” This sentence simply contains a falsehood. If one singles out the most important of the many points of controversy respecting the Maastricht Treaty, it is shown that the questions and paradigms upon which these are based certainly do not originate with the “well-organized nation-state,” but come from the domain of the supranational structures, whose aim it is, to do away with the nation-state. Nobody would maintain that the Maastricht Treaty does not dominate the discussion about the future of Europe. The axioms of thinking, out of which this Maastricht monstrosity arose, originate from an ideology which sees, precisely in the principle of national sovereignty and the nation-state oriented to the general welfare, its greatest enemy.

The same is true of the final document of the Group of Seven summit in Lyons in June 1996. Nobody would dismiss the final document of this G-7 summit, the group of the seven most powerful industrial nations, as irrelevant to the future of Europe. The document demanded practically the complete surrender of national sovereignty and the establishment of a constant supranational directorate, consisting of the heads of the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. A kind of world dictatorship was demanded, which would have the highest authority over nearly all central political and socio-economic spheres. The globalization of the world economy would be an irreversible reality with which we must learn to live, as would the “marginalization” of whole regions of this planet, which means, in plain language, the elimination of “the useless eaters” of this world.

In the next sentence of his Munich speech, Roman Herzog demands that other historical formations also be included in the discussion of Europe’s future: “The Roman Empire prior to Caracalla or the British Empire of the 18th and 19th century, not to mention the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations.” In this way, the number of conceivable possible solutions for Europe would be increased.

The fact is, both the Maastricht Treaty and the final document of Lyons already contain imperial structures, but, in speaking of Europe’s future, to so openly propagate the model character of the Roman Empire, or even the British Empire, requires either nerve or that kind of simplemindedness one expects “from the mouths of babes,” which divulges a truth that adults only whisper in private.

‘Feeling good’ in the status quo

But it gets even better! A few paragraphs later, President Herzog presents himself, totally unabashedly, as an apologist for the hedonistic consumerism and social Darwinism of our time. He, Roman Herzog, feels decidedly “good” in our prosperity and in the relative security of our democratic and constitutional conditions. It is clear to him, that, compared to the rest of the world, “this condition” exists only as an “exception” and only accounts for a “fraction” of the socio-economic state of world affairs, but exactly for this reason one should “take great pains” to “preserve it still longer.”

One could also express this message differently: We support the speculation-based casino model of the international financial systems and the IMF, because in this system we are, so to speak, living high off the hog. Too bad if our industries in Germany, and jobs with them, are destroyed because of these policies. What matters is that we remain the “exception.” What matters is that we, a small elite—to which the President belongs—are thriving. It does not matter if Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America, or even Italy collapse, in the truest sense of that word. We will do that which will preserve our privileges. In order to preserve “this condition” still longer, one must teach a lesson to all nations that attempt to

defend their populations against the genocidal conditionalities of the IMF. Thus it happened during the President's most recent trip to Africa: Fully in unison with Great Britain, Sudan was viciously attacked, and the Ugandan dictator Museveni was most heartily supported, precisely because he is the darling of the IMF in Africa. Our prosperity, i.e., that of the upper classes to which the President belongs, just so happens to be linked to the system of the IMF. Of course one must assume that the "casino economy" will soon collapse, but what matters is that we "feel good" in the here and now.

It is quite regrettable that the President, who, because of his position, should be a role model, represents a self-esteem which actually characterizes the Baby-Boomer generation. The President should not sympathize with the lowest common denominator in the population, namely the all-encompassing concern with one's own lifestyle—in the here and now—paired with an unbelievable indifference toward the world's real problems.

The upheaval of 1989

If one takes into account these axioms of Roman Herzog's thinking, which derive, epistemologically, less from Christianity than from Locke, Hobbes, Bentham, and Mill, then it becomes clear why the President arrives at such unusual conclusions in his analysis of the "historic caesura" of 1989. Herzog begins by explaining that the events of the years 1989 and 1991 are the proof, that democracy "as a form of government" had never before been so unequivocally accepted throughout most of the world. Never before had there been greater support for the free-market economy, "that form of economy, which transforms the energy and the ingenuity of the people most directly, and therefore most securely, into wealth." Obviously, Roman Herzog does not go along with the warnings of the pope, who, especially since 1989, has emphasized again and again that the "structures of sin" in East and West are equally evil.

The assertion, often repeated by conservative circles in the West, that the collapse of the Soviet Union is proof of the superiority of "liberal capitalism," does not become any more convincing by its constant mantra-like repetition. Herzog should ask the citizens of Russia or Ukraine today, what they think of the so-called economic reforms, which have collapsed the industrial production to 20% of 1991 levels. Wages, including pay to the army, have not been paid in months; hunger and cold threaten this winter. The nations of the former Soviet Union are at the brink of a bloody civil war. And all that, after five years of free-market economy!

The President further concludes that 1989 also proves that knowable "laws of history" do not exist. Therefore, nobody can predict future developments. "Above all, we should not make the mistake of deducing from the events of the past, necessary and inevitable future developments." It is indeed remarkable that politicians in Germany think they can get away with such statements. It was, after all, the predecessor

in that office, former President von Weizsäcker, who only in May 1990, had spoken of Europe's great historical chance! Whatever one may think of the former President, here he was absolutely right.

How much would have been possible at that time! If the Kohl government had had a visionary plan for that extraordinary historic moment, it would have been possible to base the East-West relationship, for the first time in this century, on a true community of principle, and to establish a genuine peace. All that was required, was to adopt the economic development program of the "Productive Triangle Paris-Berlin-Vienna" as a motor for the development of infrastructure in the East. This development program was proposed at that time by the American economic scientist Lyndon LaRouche. The economic principles upon which this program is based have been employed, in the meantime, by the Chinese government.

But, instead, the government in Bonn capitulated to a complex "geopolitical" strategy of a new version of the "Entente Cordiale," led by Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand. The third in the league was George Bush, although, to this day, Bonn refuses to acknowledge this. Through a combination of events, Bonn allowed the historic initiative to be taken away from them: the "Fourth Reich" campaign of the Thatcher government; the murder of Alfred Herrhausen, by the ominous "third generation" of the Baader-Meinhof Gang; the geopolitically motivated Gulf War, in which the central role of George Bush can obviously not be denied. Kohl was able to seize the historic opportunity and reunify Germany, above all with his ten-point program—and for that he deserves credit. But, Bonn was unable to use the historic dynamic to create a genuine new beginning and peace for all of Europe and Eurasia.

Making history is seen as 'meaningless'

If Herzog concludes, from the developments of 1989, that there are no "laws of history" and that one can not predict the future from the events of the past, then this is purely a result of his axioms of thinking, which are, ultimately, Aristotelian. It is a typical mistake of this way of thinking, to see the future as a fixed point on a time line. This time line is thought of essentially as a linearized infinity—a "bad" infinity in the sense of Georg Cantor. But, since neither history nor the universe follows a lawfulness in which causality continues the condition of the past into a "bad" infinity of the future, it is only too understandable that Roman Herzog feels "dizzy" in these "times of upheaval." Historical turning points, as the year 1989 was without a doubt, are, in the sense of Riemannian mathematical physics, singularities, which according to the understanding of the Aristotelian school and their followers in mathematics, do not exist at all.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and, following that, the Soviet Union, proved nothing less than that the entirety of all assumptions which were based on the axioms of Soviet communism, were wrong. That included, fundamentally, the



The worldwide "casino economy" led to the financial shock of October-November 1987, and is now heading for a much worse collapse. Shown here are foreign currency traders in Frankfurt, Germany, on "Black Tuesday," Nov. 10, 1987.

economic principles of communism.

However, it had already become clear at that time, that the so-called free-market model was bankrupt, not only from the moral standpoint ("structures of sin") but economically as well. This system ultimately is based on equally indefensible axioms, as for example the monetarist assumption that financial speculation is the source of wealth. We explicitly warned, already in November 1989, that catastrophe would be the result, if the populations of the East were subjugated after the collapse of communism, especially by "shock therapy," to the inherent problems of free-market economics. Only if the problems which had to be overcome after the occurrence of the historic singularity, had been solved from a higher standpoint than the existing systems of communism and free-market economics, could the "period of upheaval" have led to a real improvement in the development of mankind.

The crisis in today's science of history is underscored by the fact that nobody at the *Historikertag* objected to Herzog's theses. The same holds for the theses developed on the same occasion by the historian Lothar Gall, who imputed that one can no longer seriously assume that "behind the events and developments of time, a unified history as a meaningful and content-giving process, is at once effective and recognizable." Obviously Herzog and Gall are discussing a universe and a history in which they do not exist. The fact is that the continued existence of the human species, and, above all, the positive development of its demographic characteristics, present an irrefutable proof not only of universal history as a

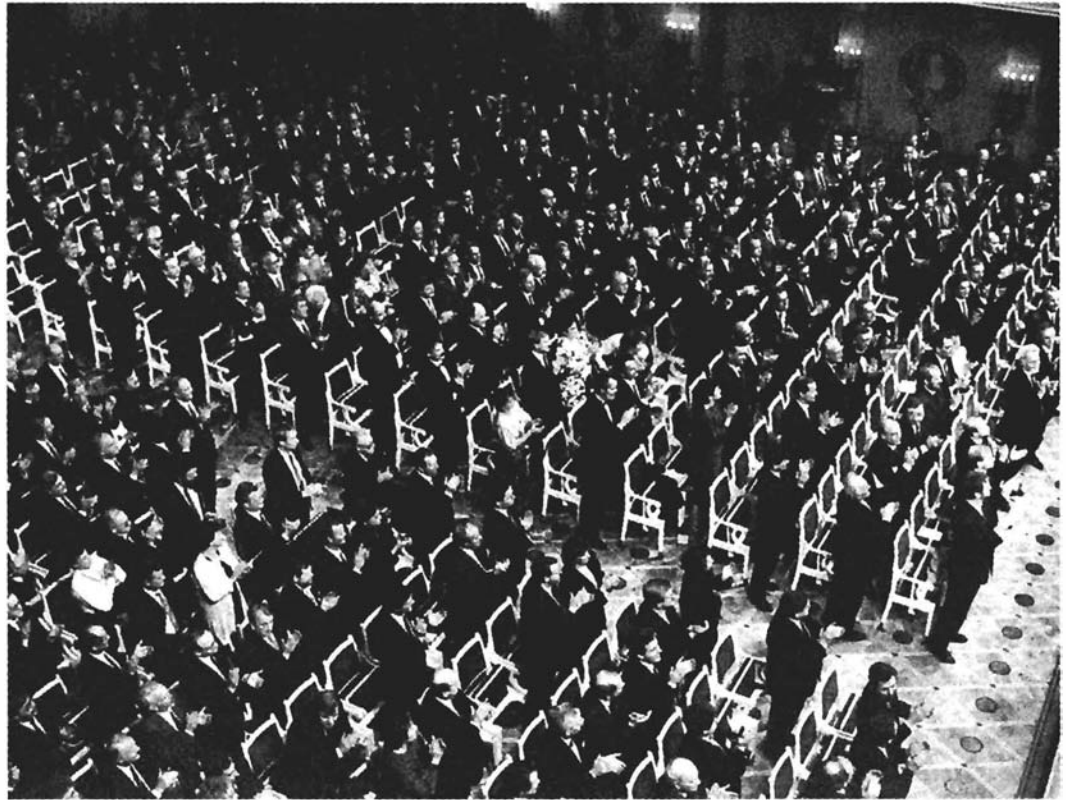
unified process, but also of the meaningful nature of this history.

'Development? No thanks!'

The fact that man, unlike any other species, is capable of increasing the degree of effectiveness of his mastery over nature, by ever-more-adequate hypotheses respecting the lawfulness of the physical universe, and that this development represents the precondition for his existence, says something fundamental about the character of human knowledge. From this follows that something which has been created in the spiritual domain, namely hypotheses, has physical power, which means that the universe "obeys" the mind of man, and more effectively, the more adequate his hypotheses are. The continued existence of man, who has increased his potential population density from, at best, several million in prehistoric times, to about 6 billion people today, is the proof of the not-entropic character of man. If Roman Herzog now thinks, that he must not predict necessary future developments from past events, this reflects, at best, the fact that he has not analyzed the real economic history of man. If we understand "economics" as the creation of the material foundation for the continued existence of man, then every successful development in the economy—as well as in all other aspects of life—lies in the correct anticipation of the future.

Thus the anticipation of the future does not result from the principle of causality, but rather from the formulation of a new hypothesis, which anticipates the necessary, higher,

The audience gives a standing ovation at the historic performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Berlin, on Oct. 2, 1990, honoring the reunification of the German nation (some of the musicians are shown on the facing page).



not-entropic condition of development of mankind as a whole, and in which is expressed the higher degree of mastery of nature. Only in this way can one predict the future from the past. And in this way, the adequate hypothesis of the future determines our actions in the present.

If Roman Herzog considers it “dangerous” to consult history exactly when the need arises and when “the issue is a fundamentally new orientation of politics, in which the need for orientation is especially great and the calculability of the future especially small,” then the German President is merely saying that he did not have, and obviously still does not have, the slightest idea of what a successful “new orientation,” i.e., an adequate hypothesis, is.

To understand the situation in Europe after 1989 and 1991, one must first of all accept the fact that the communist economic system, after 70 years of self-prescribed primitive accumulation, had reduced the industrial, agricultural, and infrastructural potential, to well below the level necessary to guarantee their population density.

Any reasonable and successful economic policy here would begin, in the economy of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, to qualitatively improve the productivity per capita and per hectare. This would only be possible through the appropriate expansion of infrastructure and, at the same time, investments in new, more advanced technologies of production. These were the ideas upon which the “Productive Triangle” program was based, which would have created a

European-wide economic sphere. This would have been the “vision”—the hypothesis on the higher level—which would have given politics the necessary new orientation and perspective for the future.

German sovereignty ‘unnecessary’

Herzog believes it is positive that the fears “in the other states” of a resurgence of German nationalism, have proven to be unfounded. He is happy that Germany “did not move one iota from the position upon which the international community had relied for decades.” How can Herzog speak in general terms about “the other states” after what has happened in the recent years, especially in light of the public attacks of Margaret Thatcher? The perfidy of the British “Fourth Reich” campaign belongs in the category of Goebbels propaganda. Or, did the President share the British view that a reunified Germany poses a threat to the rest of the world? Obviously, what escaped Herzog was that which “the other states” actually had hoped for from Germany: that, in its own interest, it would assist the East and the South with economic development.

And, to speak proudly of the “decades-long” position of Germany, borders on insult. It was the best-kept open secret of the postwar period that Germany, until its reunification, was factually an occupied nation and was not sovereign according to international law. And now we are supposed to rejoice with Roman Herzog, that we have not moved our-



Conductor Kurt Masur with soloists at the Oct. 2, 1990 performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The historic opportunity presented by the collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany, was squandered by small-minded politicians and the pernicious influence of British free-market ideology.

selves from this “one iota”? That this corresponds also to the subjective mentality of Roman Herzog becomes clear when he speaks of how he “represents our nation in foreign countries.” Then he can transmit this self-confidence to his interlocutors, so that Germany can increasingly be seen as “an honest broker in world politics.” However, during his last visit to Africa, Herzog repeated British propaganda lies against Sudan, and at the same time praised the Ugandan dictator Museveni to the skies.

If President Herzog’s speech has already been problematic enough so far, it is his further remarks which make this critique indispensable. If Herzog’s grave historical misjudgments were to become the foundation for future German policies, then a catastrophe for Germany would already be pre-assured. Even worse, if the ideological positions discussed below remain in place, we face the collapse of human civilization as we know it.

At first, the President observes quite correctly, that two great opposing factions appear to be fighting one another: On the one side, the increasing international entanglement, the globalization of the markets and politics; on the other side, what is called in Europe the “Renaissance of the nation-state.” Shockingly, Herzog then cites the situation in the former Yugoslavia as an example of “exaggerated nationalism.” Once again, the British line exactly!

Anybody, who lived through the years of war of aggression and genocide, first against the Croatsians, and then espe-

cially against the Bosnians, can not have the slightest doubt that the Serbs would never have dared to start their war of conquest, had they not been given the green light by Thatcher, Bush, Mitterrand, and Gorbachov. In the historic perspective, the Balkan war is not a result of “exaggerated nationalism,” but is the continuation of a geopolitical destabilization against Germany, which began with the Gulf War. Lord Carrington, Lord Owen, Gen. Sir Michael Rose, or the French General Janvier are all accomplices, with their pro-Serbian attitude, in this genocide. If Roman Herzog now goes on to say that the principle of “isolationism” out of which “in the 19th century the nation-states developed,” is of as little use for the present period of epochal change as “that of expansionism, which is also associated with the nation-state,” then these assertions are based on such fundamentally wrong assumptions, that they can not remain unanswered.

What the sovereign nation-state really is

First of all, the nation-state was created not in the 19th century, but in the 15th century, to be precise, in France, under Louis XI.² The development of the nation-state was closely linked to the image of man of the Italian Renaissance, which conceived of every human being as *imago Dei*, as

2. See Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heydte, *Die Geburtsstunde des souveränen Staates, (The Birth of the Sovereign States)* Regensburg, Germany, 1952.

made in the image of God. This idea had already existed in Christianity earlier, but was not effective politically, because until the Renaissance, in all cultures, about 95% of the population lived in de facto slavery, serfdom, or servitude. Up till the Renaissance, all forms of government were of an oligarchical nature.

With the idea of the nation-state, the concept of government oriented to the general welfare and the system of representative self-government came into being for the first time. For the first time, human rights were taken into account and the participation of the people in a form of self-government was made possible. These achievements were exactly those which marked the beginning of modern times.

And secondly, it is simply not true that nation-states, in this case those of the 19th century, were essentially oriented toward expansion. The fact that British geopolitics was able, first with the "Entente Cordiale" and then with the "Triple Entente," to prepare the chessboard for the outbreak of World War I, was only possible precisely because the powers in question were not nation-states, but empires. This is true for the British Empire, the French Empire, which saw itself as the junior partner of the British Empire, the Russian Empire, the Austro-Hungarian double monarchy of the Hapsburgs, and it is unfortunately also true for the German Kaiserreich, which tried a little belatedly to imitate the other imperial powers.

Now, Herzog finds it necessary to quote Ernest Renan and Ernest Gellner to argue "that the period of the nation-state takes up only a relatively small period of time of world history," and that nations were not "a natural, God-given classification of human beings." We have already seen that Roman Herzog obviously does not know very much about the origins of the nation and the nation-state. On this account, one could respond to him that the nation-state has indeed only existed for the last 500 years, and that it is indeed a God-given classification of man based on natural law, precisely because, not 5%, but all human beings on this planet are made in the image of God. And thereupon are based, ultimately, the inalienable rights of man.

Universal education and the democratic republic

Human rights do not merely mean the right to life, housing, health care, etc., but, above all, the right to develop the creative capabilities inherent in the individual. To this end, the implementation of universal education independent of social rank was the decisive step. Universal education did not exist until the creation of the teaching orders and the commitment of the nation-state to the general welfare. But it is exactly this right, and the necessity of universal education, which is questioned by British oligarchs like Lord Rees-Mogg, in such established newspapers as the London *Times*. Lord Rees-Mogg is of the opinion that in the coming "information age," genuine education will only be needed by 5%

of the population, and therefore an all-encompassing general education is not worthwhile. Thus, Forward! Back into the oligarchical society!

And then Herzog takes out the really big stick: "The nation-state with its associated conceptions of sovereignty has outlived its usefulness"! But what our President so sloppily wishes to throw out the window, are the foundations of the oft-cited liberal-democratic constitutional law. It is exactly the sovereignty of the representative constitutional nation-state, which is the guarantor of freedom for the individual. Because only if the elected representatives of the people are forced, at regular intervals, to account for their actions, and are, if they fail, voted out of their positions, does the individual have a substantial right of participation, and thus take part in determining his government.

Nowhere else does this dangerous nonsense of giving up the right of sovereignty to a supranational institution, become more clear than in the case of the European Union, the EU Commission in Brussels, and the Maastricht Treaty. Appointed bureaucrats, elected by none, make decisions which affect the well-being of whole generations and peoples. These bureaucrats make decisions to dismantle industry and agriculture, as well as social achievements which have taken us over 100 years to develop!

Supranational bureaucracies in action

The only danger that Roman Herzog sees in this, is that the European Union will not be able to sell itself as "close enough to the common people," thereby playing into the hands of those who "wish to go back to the nation-state." It has obviously not yet occurred to Mr. Herzog that the socio-economic tragedies of Vulkanwerft, the VW plants in Saxony, or the Maxhütte in Bavaria are not about "public relations," but rather about jobs and existence for thousands of families!

Finally, Herzog summarizes: "At a time in which the principle of the nation-state has outlived its usefulness, in which there are no longer national economies, national history also no longer has meaning, at least not by itself." We have already spoken of the oligarchical character of supranational institutions vis-à-vis national sovereignty. But if Herzog thinks he can bury "national economy" as well, he is actually thereby demanding that we give up all the economic-political measures which the state can use to overcome the dramatically increasing crisis of the economy in our nation.

The text of the President's speech makes it clear that economics is not exactly his specialty. But, is Herzog really ignorant of the fact that without the use of national economic principles, neither Germany nor any other nation on this planet could have ever become industrialized? We never would have accomplished the reconstruction of Germany from a rubble field, had we not used the economic principles of the tradition of Leibniz, Hamilton, the Careys, and Friedrich List! The continuation of the policy of globalization and the Maastricht Treaty will rapidly transform Germany into a



Germany, the “Land of Poets and Thinkers.” Here, a monument to the poets Goethe and Schiller in Weimar. The modern generations have been cut off from the roots of Germany’s Classical tradition, the source of its greatness as a nation.

new social and economic rubble field. If we ever wish to get out of the present economic crisis, it will only be done with a dirigistic economic policy based on national economic criteria!

History and culture

After declaring universal history to be nonexistent, Roman Herzog now also denies the significance of national history. The reason for the presently observable incapacity of Germans to deal with historic challenges, is that we have been almost completely cut off from our own history, because of two lost world wars, the time of occupation, the reeducation, and finally the Brandt school reforms. The main problem of Germany is exactly that, with some exceptions, all four living generations have been cut off from the spiritual and moral roots which once made our people the “Land of Poets and Thinkers.” In this intellectual amputation lies perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Germans today.

Even as Herzog correctly demands that more historians should study other cultures, it must be pointed out here, that the President manifests exactly that kind of “Eurocentrism,” which is rightly seen in many parts of the world as arrogance. “In the age . . . of globalization . . . cultural individualities come to the surface, which we—because of our view of things—considered to be long settled or at least superseded; I mention only those phenomena such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.” Whoops! But there are about 5 billion people whose convictions, because of “our view of

things,” we considered to be “long settled”! Something like this should not happen to a President who alleges to act as an “honest broker” in international politics.

What Herzog enumerates laconically as “supporting pillars” of European culture, “the value of the individual, freedom, humanity and so forth,” are exactly those values which, as we have seen, he was ready to throw overboard in the name of supranationality and globalization. Guaranteeing these values requires exactly those ideas and institutions which Herzog thinks have “outlived their usefulness.” In characterizing the European way of thinking and lifestyle, he can come up with nothing better than to speak of a “way of life” [English in the original].

As I have already said, it was not my intention here to attack Roman Herzog personally. It is not always possible to comment on the bad political speeches that are given every day in various places. But in the face of the imminent global financial collapse, in the face of the dramatic situation in Russia, in the face of the developments in Belgium, which are only the tip of the iceberg of coming convulsions in Western Europe, thinking about all the challenges which face us, this speech of Roman Herzog demanded a response. Today it is more important than ever, for the entire world, but, above all, for us Germans to learn from history. It is just as important, not to cling to the trends of the *Zeitgeist*, but rather to outline a vision which will guide history toward a more positive path. At the very least, this should apply to those who allege to represent our people.