

inferior—and I resented the idea that man was inferior to anything. . . . If you were to put a title over everything I have written, or ever will write, it would be, ‘To the Glory of Man.’

of Manichaenism in her outlook—not the literal Gnostic religion first preached by Mani, of course, but rather the tendency to see good and evil as essentially separate and opposed principles, and to interpret all human experience in terms of their confrontation.”

This Gnostic philosophy inundated the campuses in the United States in the 1960s. Many students read several times each of Rand’s books and participated in the courses on “Objectivism” which was the name given to this so-called “philosophy.” These courses, were given in more than 80 cities by the late 1960s and tapes were sent to soldiers in Vietnam.

Branden founded the Nathaniel Branden Institute which was responsible for the spread of these ideas. A newsletter, called *The Objectivist* was published regularly, and distributed by subscription and in other ways so that this ideology could be spread rapidly, especially among the younger generation.

Today, the third largest political party in the United States, the Libertarian Party, is based on Ayn Rand’s philosophy, and in recent years it has become a major influence on the thinking of sections of the Republican Party.

A March 24, 1965 *Wall Street Journal* review of the just-published collection of Rand’s writings said, “And it is normally a matter of two decades before the young take over the seats of power in the name of what they learned to believe 20 years ago.” Today, after 20 years have passed, this philosophy has infiltrated the government of the United States.

## Europe, ‘heart’ of tomorrow’s world?

by P. Colombo et E. Grenier

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### **Lignes d’horizon**

by Jacques Attali

Fayard, Paris, 1990

216 pages, paperbound, 75 francs

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If the 20th century will have been characterized by Europe’s decline, America’s triumph, and Soviet might, then the 21st century will be the century of Europe and Japan, or more

precisely that of the two great economic and technological zones at the center of which are Western Europe and Japan. This is the driving idea of the recently published study by Jacques Attali, *Lignes d’horizon* (“Horizon Lines”).

We don’t know whether this book by a man often characterized as French President François Mitterrand’s controversial “idea man,” will soon be available in the English language, but the citizens and elites of America would do well to ponder some of its lessons with respect to the decline of the United States.

Expressing a thinking that is both French and Europeanist, but not Euro-centric, *Lignes d’horizon* is a serious attempt to “rethink the world” at a time when modern history is being shaken by events. Written while revolutions, most of them peaceful, were bringing down totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe which one could have thought were forever frozen in the Stalinist glacié, Jacques Attali’s essay tries to define a universal mission for Europe. One obvious fact seems to say he is right: The history of Europe is not world history, yet the sudden acceleration of contemporary history is taking place in Europe and in relationship to Europe. The international order built up after the Second World War is rapidly dissolving, without an alternative “structure” or order having been put in place.

Frozen in place by the Cold War and the Berlin Wall, and by the incontestable, although contested domination by the United States and the U.S.S.R., the history of Europe suddenly finds itself set free. The Soviet rollback shall inevitably be accompanied by an American rollback tinged with isolationism and centered in the Western Hemisphere. It is in the unaccustomed role of spectator and not actor that the United States witnesses the emergence of the new Europe, which will find itself without a tutor and perhaps without a protector. Aware of her own strength, Europe no longer wants to be controlled, even the dissimulated control that is brought about when one is under someone else’s protection. The decline and fall of communism does not mean “the end of history,” as per the shallow but celebrated Hegelian saying of Francis Fukuyama, who thereby voiced the viewpoint of the spectator. Rather it means the rediscovery of history. The sterile and entirely relative stability of the blocs gives way to the creative instability of new freedoms, which of course will have to be given structure. These ideas give some measure of the intellectual gulf that is inexorably widening between America and the Europe being reborn. If Europe does not seize this historic occasion, then powerful centrifugal forces will engender crisis and crisis, thereby splitting up Europe rather than unifying it.

When Jacques Attali writes that “if Western Europe is able to associate the East to its future, it can lay claim to the title of heart of the world economy, and can become the world’s most populous, rich, and creative area,” he is announcing the end of the American Century—not as easy to foresee as the visible fall of Russian predominance. He is not

announcing the end of America, but the emergence of Europe in the face of declining empires.

Whether he wanted to or not, Jacques Attali—longtime Socialist and adviser to François Mitterrand—has thus vindicated the historical vision of Charles de Gaulle, just as in his own way Régis Debray—former companion of Latin American guerrilla fighter Che Guevara—did some years ago in his book *Les empires contre l'Europe* (“Empires Against Europe”).

*Lignes d'horizon* flows from an undeniable reality, a diagnosis of the deeper tendencies which are moving the world today, that of the relative decline of the two great postwar powers, incapable, for different reasons, of continuing to assume their role as imperial centers. As the bipolar world goes down, new “hearts”—the author’s designation of nerve-centers of civilization in a given era—are emerging, defined by their technological and economic power but also by the power of their democratic ideas: “If Western Europe progresses toward its unity, if Eastern Europe succeeds in its democratization, if the two parts of Europe are able to invent bold ways to reunify, it cannot be ruled out that the ‘European zone’ may become the new heart of the world economy. With a prodigious increase in creative and work effort, the ECU [European Currency Unit] will be able to surpass the yen . . . the values of the Old Continent—freedom and democracy—will end up spreading to the entire planet.”

In Attali’s view, two great geo-economic and geo-strategic zones are in formation in Eurasia and in the Pacific: The first will extend from the Atlantic to the Urals, the second, dominated by the technological dynamism of Japan, will encompass the Pacific. The financial and technical dependency of the United States on Japan will grow, though not without sudden jolts and crises.

### The decline of the two superpowers

The profound causes of the crisis shaking the Soviet Union which are forcing it to withdraw from its western glacis—the first great rollback after centuries of Russian and then Soviet expansionism—have become evident: catastrophic economic situation, lack of productivity, an empire of (military) strength based on an obsolete and decomposing economic and social structure. The power of a state is indeed not measured by its military strength alone, but by its cultural and social power, i.e. by the level of its population’s education and particularly its technological mastery. A society’s ability to assimilate and generalize knowledge, for the good of all (*res publica*) defines its potential for long-term survival. In sum, the capacity of a culture to promote its own future is the measure of its potential strength, of its own living forces rather than dead forces. The bankruptcy of the Soviet system, the “space of force” in the terms chosen by Attali, is obvious. And what could be more natural than for a demographic decline to correspond to the economic decline? Prudently, Attali does not dwell on the Soviet decline and seems

to think that in association with a hyper-industrialized Europe, the U.S.S.R.-Russia is not irretrievably doomed to decline.

So where is the U.S.S.R., the planet’s prime military power, headed? The internal convulsions that accompany great crises of civilization have barely begun. Much blood will flow before Russia’s future becomes clear. When Mikhail Gorbachov, at the time not yet the general secretary of the CPSU, told the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1984 that only “an intensive economy,” based on what the Soviets call the “third technological revolution,” could guarantee that the U.S.S.R. would assume its place as a great power in the next century, it was already too late. Soviet society had become incapable of regenerating itself; it had to choose between being torn apart internally by perestroika, or, economic shipwreck in the end. No more than Churchill had been “named by the King to preside over the downfall of the British Empire,” Gorbachov had not been named to preside over the dismantling of the Empire of the Czars and the Commissars. By becoming more democratic and turning toward a “hyper-industrial” Europe, can the U.S.S.R. regenerate itself? Maybe. Meanwhile, the perils are great and threaten the building of Europe.

Jacques Attali’s thoughts on this problem are, in our view, inadequate. His thoughts, on the other hand, about the decline of America, are long and lucid. It is hard not to share his diagnosis.

### U.S.: drugs, debt and speculation

The dominant phenomenon in the Pacific Zone, writes Attali, “is that of the decline of the United States. Many still refuse to believe it, while counting their 12,000 nuclear warheads, gauging the power of the space program, observing the triumph of the dollar, evaluating their share of the market, dreaming of the riches of Wall Street, being impressed by the size of their banks, envying the strength of their capitalism. . . . When one speaks to them of decline, they reply that the decrease in the U.S. share of the world economy has to do with the restoration of the war-devastated countries, and not with a real weakening of America, which is just as powerful, dynamic, and relatively debt free as ever. Finally, they say that if this eventual decline should one day turn into humiliation, Americans would know how to give the necessary impetus for its recovery.” Such considerations, says Attali, are fallacious: “Not one of these arguments seems convincing to me. *For one, who like myself, considers industry as the only durable basis for a country’s power, the signs of a relative decline of America are in fact converging and irrefutable*” (emphasis added).

What are these signs?

- 1) The decline in the productivity of American industry with respect to Japan and Europe.
- 2) The corresponding decline in American technological competitiveness on the world market. Whence the U.S. trade

deficit, which is permanent, structural, and financed by loans on the international financial market.

3) The resulting fact that America neglects its internal infrastructure, its health care system, education, etc. To pay its debts, America no longer invests, and in so doing, its future debts are growing.

The worst thing is that “we cannot see what could, within the next 10 years, bring about a reversal of this tendency: There are at present no signs in America—short of an unlikely about-face—of a relaunching of the industrial investment effort, nor of an increase in savings rates, nor of the development of new products, nor of a conquering trade mentality.”

Trade with the Pacific dominates American trade, and “everything seems to indicate that in this Pacific Zone, economic power—in its essence, that is the mastery of great investments which structure industry—today finds its home in Japan.”

The U.S. decline can be summed up in three cruel words: drugs, debt, and speculation, Attali stated in a recent interview in the *Wall Street Journal*.

The decline of the two postwar superpowers can only encourage the emergence of new centers of power. We must measure the distance separating the adviser to the French President from a Zbigniew Brzezinski, for example, who was Carter’s national security adviser and today advises the Bush administration, and who declared after the fall of the Berlin Wall: “Now there is only one superpower.” Convinced, by habit or by the idea of “manifest destiny,” of their supremacy and of the rightness of their form of society, the American elites are doing nothing to stop their own decline. This is a matter of stating the obvious and not an expression of an ignorant and misplaced anti-Americanism. The historic friendship between France and the United States, for example, is real and deep, but equally deep tendencies are pushing Europe and the United States apart. Economic warfare between yesterday’s allies is replacing the Cold War and the Iron Curtain. The facts are stubborn: America produces less and less well, products that are less and less competitive. America, which devoted more than 15% of its budget at the outset of the 1960s to infrastructure, today only devotes 4% to it. And it is not by trade war decrees that Washington will be able to reverse that trend.

### **Africa: immense challenge for humanity**

The American crisis reflects the world crisis, “at first delayed by the loans contracted by states and businesses. This indebtedness made the fortune of the bankers and helped to set up financial institutions whose speculative development has culminated today in the most extreme instability,” writes Jacques Attali. There is too much speculative money and “too little to invest, to stabilize the course of raw materials, to fight the drug traffic, to develop the poorest countries or to consolidate the faltering democracies of Eastern Eu-

rope, Asia or Latin America.” Upon coming out of this crisis, the dollar’s primacy will be replaced by three monetary blocs—dollar, yen, and ECU.

And the rest of humanity? Can the emergence of two great hyper-industrialized areas occur without taking into account three-quarters of the world? Once again, it seems worthwhile to quote the author at some length:

“If they know how to think long-term, tomorrow’s powers would keep watch at the *peripheries* at their gates, where billions of people are making a staggering entry into the market society and democracy. Their living standards will be more and more at variance with those of the dominant zones. . . . Spectators to the greatest wealth of all time becoming a daily reality, they will not long accept not receiving their just share of world growth. But the play of the market will not, alone, be able to develop the infrastructure of the great cities of the South, nor save their education or health care systems, nor make their raw materials production solvent. Reducing the gaping gulf between the dominant zones and the rest of the world therefore presupposes some voluntary effort at worldwide organization.

“If this is not done, tomorrow, war is less to be feared between the two dominant zones than between them and the periphery.”

The building of a great, strong, unified, democratic Europe cannot be accomplished without associating the countries of the South. What will be done under the aegis of the European Reconstruction and Development Bank (ERDB) for Eastern Europe must also be done for the “periphery”: “In a certain way, the Oder-Neisse is a North-South border as much as it is East-West.” As soon as the first steps are taken, “continent-wide institutions . . . will enable them to be joined in view of the construction of great networks of communication, of environmental protection, of financing of great industrial projects, of the creation of joint enterprises.” Africa, the immediate periphery of Europe, and an “immense challenge for all of humanity,” must be integrated into the European Zone.

Certain of Jacques Attali’s ideas seem to us to be utopian, such as that of the creation of planetary authorities to have oversight over the proper unfolding of world development, an idea which the author himself does not give much chance of seeing the light of day. Others are to be disputed, like his futuristic vision of “nomadic” men, carrying “nomadic objects,” threatened by alienation.

But as a whole, the world picture which *Lignes d’horizon* paints is realistic. The new Europe is in fact the bearer of hope, the challenges of the world are immense, and a willful effort to organize the planet is more and more needed. Contrary to the dark forecasts of the Club of Rome, imbued with an implicit neo-colonial viewpoint (technology is dangerous for the countries of the South) and a pagan pessimism (cult of nature), *Lignes d’horizon* is an important contribution to today’s thinking.