

Common Market. When French president Charles de Gaulle attacked the pretensions of the unelected European Commission in 1960 and called for a European referendum to legitimize the new structure, the Common Market countries decided instead to transform the European Parliament into a directly elected body. Yet with four elections held since 1979, Wallace and Smith observe, the 626-member parliament, based in Strasbourg, France, still has only weakly engaged the allegiance of the European public.

Signs of popular discontent began appearing with the rejection of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union by the Danes in 1992. Reactions elsewhere were "only slightly more positive," the authors note.

As the 12-member European Union expands, moving toward a "community" of as many as 25 member states, Wallace and Smith say, fostering "a sufficiently strong sense of community to provide popular consent" for a more integrated union will become increasingly difficult. Also, the prods of American leadership and the need to unite against the Soviet threat are gone. If popular consent for further integration is to be obtained, Wallace and Smith believe, the directly elected European Parliament will have to be given "both greater visibility and greater authority."

Above the Fray

Every country requires its politicians to clothe their ambitions in different garb. The French requirements, writes Adam Gopnik in the *New Yorker* (November 13, 1995), are characteristically stylish.

Like all ambitious French politicians, [Prime Minister Alain] Juppé chooses to present himself as a literary man. He has actually written a book of reflections entitled La Tentation de Venise—"The Venetian Temptation." Juppé's Venetian temptation was to retire to a house there, where he could escape from political life, admire Giorgione's "Tempesta," drink Bellinis in the twilight, and think long, deep thoughts. La Tentation was regarded as a fighting campaign manifesto, since it is . . . necessary for an ambitious French politician to write a book explaining why he never likes to think of politics. . . . Juppé, ahead of the pack, had written a book asserting not only that he would rather be doing something else but that he would like to be doing it in a completely different country. . . . Among French politicians, in fact, ostentatious displays of detachment are something of a competitive sport. After being succeeded as president by [Jacques] Chirac, François Mitterrand gave an interview to Christine Ockrent, the editor of L'Express, simply to announce that he was now taking long walks in Paris and looking at the sky. It was understood as his way of keeping his hand in. Not long ago, the former prime minister, Édouard Balladur, who had been so busy looking detached from politics that he forgot to campaign for the presidency this time around, sneaked an item into L'Express announcing that he, too, was taking walks and looking at the sky. It was the start of his comeback.

A New German Exceptionalism?

"Historians and Nation-Building in Germany after Reunification" by Stefan Berger, in *Past and Present* (Aug. 1995), 175 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 7AW, England.

Since reunification in 1990, the world of left-liberal German historians has been in upheaval. Having written off the German nation-state as an aberration and a source of evil, they are now confronted with an uncomfortable reality. Berger, a historian at the University of Wales, fears that his German colleagues may be returning to

"the narrow concern with 'national history' and 'national identity' that long characterized German history writing.

During Germany's only previous existence as a unified nation-state, between 1870 and 1945, history writing was, in the words of the Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt, "imbued with German tri-

umphalism." Although the defeat of Nazi Germany put an end to that, most West German historians came to see Adolf Hitler's National Socialism not as a logical outgrowth of peculiarly German traditions but as a German variant of a larger phenomenon, totalitarianism. Dissenters, notably Fritz Fischer, argued that the longing to dominate Europe and the world had been an enduring feature of German foreign policy, from the reign of Emperor Wilhelm II (1888–1918) to Hitler.

A generation of post-1960s left-liberal "critical historians" built on such dissent. They argued that the history of the unified German nation-state that existed between 1870 and 1945 was an aberration (*ein deutscher Sonderweg*) in the context of Western European history. In Germany, "the overwhelming influence of Prussia [had] strengthened traditions of authoritarianism, illiberalism, and unpredictable aggressiveness in its foreign relations."

Rejecting this disastrous episode of German exceptionalism, later critical historians, Berger notes, turned their attention away from the nation-state and diplomatic and political history. They began to write "social history from below or gender history," focusing on "the experiences of individ-

uals or small groups within local or regional frameworks." Questions of German national identity, these scholars suggested, were not what really mattered in German history.

Then, in 1989, came the fall of the Berlin Wall. Many critical historians, fearful of a revived German nationalism, at first opposed reunification. Now, some critical historians—such as Heinrich August Winkler and Peter Brandt (son of the late chancellor Willy Brandt)—are paying renewed attention to terms such as *nation* and *patriotism*, hoping to reclaim the idea of the nation for the political Left.

With reunification, the critical historians' *Sonderweg* interpretation of German national history has been "severely shaken," Berger notes—and most seem to be slowly abandoning it. They continue to oppose any use of history writing to bolster national identity, Berger says. They look to "a mixture of regionalism and pan-Europeanism [to] prevent destructive nationalism from raising its ugly head again." Lothar Gall, the current chairman of the German Historians' Association, dismisses this danger as a left-wing fantasy. But both the critical historians and their academic critics are at the center of a debate about the meaning of German nationhood that has embroiled all of modern Germany.

India Tunes In

"Transforming Television in India" by Sevanti Ninan, in *Media Studies Journal* (Summer 1995), Columbia Univ., 2950 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Until 1991, channel surfers in India lived desperate lives: there were only two channels, both broadcast by the government-controlled network, Doordarshan. The censored news broadcasts ranged from dull to extremely dull. Today, reports Ninan, television critic for the *Hindu* in New Delhi, viewers can choose from more than a dozen channels (including CNN, the BBC, and MTV). And while Doordarshan news is still dull, there are now three independently produced alternatives (one of them carried on Doordarshan itself).

The transformation, Ninan says, is the result of two major developments: the economic reforms begun by Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao's government in 1991, which opened up India's nominally socialist economy to competition and the outside world; and the advent that same year of

transnational satellite television broadcasting in Asia with the launching of Star TV, a private television network based in Hong Kong and largely owned by Rupert Murdoch. The fare was mostly recycled American programs, Ninan says, "but to Indian television audiences . . . it was like manna from Hollywood, if not heaven."

Satellite television is costly and "still largely an urban middle-class phenomenon." Satellite TV reaches 10 million households, compared with Doordarshan's 40 million. And educated Indians in New Delhi and other cities have long relied on the country's feisty newspapers rather than TV news, Ninan points out. But with the populace 45 percent illiterate, and mostly rural, uncensored television news may eventually make a profound difference in the Indian future.