

IMAGINING EUROPE:

TURNING POINTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF A CONTINENT

AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM



"Es gilt gerade heute: Nur gemeinsam ist Europa stark genug, um im internationalen Umfeld zu bestehen."
Pressemeldung zur deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
MAX KADE CENTER FOR EUROPEAN &
GERMAN STUDIES
NASHVILLE, TN
NOVEMBER 1-4, 2007

EUROPE: WHERE TO NOW?

2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, a turning point in more recent efforts to unify Europe, promote integration, and ensure peace and prosperity on the European continent. Hence, the year 1957 could be a signifier for the start of momentous developments. Other dates could also serve as markers of a new era and the end of an old. While the year 2007 can easily give rise to celebratory self-congratulation on achievements since the European Economic Union, a common foreign and security policy, and a common currency, it would be only part of the narrative. The imagining of a new Europe was by no means straightforward nor was constituting it entirely natural. A fuller account has to consider such unnerving facts as the sound rejection of a common constitution, unease at the rapid enlargement of the EU, the rise

throughout Europe of bias against ethnic minorities, and the postponement of consideration of Turkey's request for membership until 2020.

The Nashville symposium will use the 50th anniversary to reflect critically on the sense of a looming crisis in achieving full integration. Pre-1957 events will be consulted as providing a possible guide to future action. When caught up in the events of the day, it is not always easy to know the best course of action. The past can help. What useful lessons can we draw from missed opportunities in the past to advance the idea of an integrated Europe? Do past turning points (*Wendepunkte*) — whether successes or failures — offer insight into how best to utilize opportunities to promote economic, political, and cultural flourishing on the European continent? Many observers now look to Europe for leadership and as a model for other regions of the globe. Only in concert can Europeans assume an influential global role.



"Innerhalb einer Epoche gibt es keinen Standpunkt, eine Epoche zu betrachten."
Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* #1023

FOCUS ON FLOURISHING

Hence, the Vanderbilt symposium will be structured along the dual axes of theme and history. The thematic

axis is intended to emphasize the idea of Europe as a “flourishing total economy” that negotiates differences in national politics and religious beliefs while advancing over-arching concerns such as energy and monetary policies, trade agreements, cultural development, and social services. The historical axis is intended to draw attention to pivotal events from medieval emperors to Enlightenment utopias, from Napoleonic “unification” to Hitler’s race-based agenda of a German Europe. Historical markers of different configurations of Europe and its shifting center abound.

Experts from several disciplines are invited to revisit such decisive moments and to ask what marks they left on the cultural, economic, and political footprint of Europe and are useful today. Approximately thirty Europeanists will gather at the Vanderbilt symposium in early November, 2007, to query the dynamics of change evident in the history and evolution of the idea of a unified Europe. In keeping with the mission of the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies at Vanderbilt, we welcome papers with a focus on Germany within its European contexts.



Participants are invited to examine a literary movement, cultural event, historical figure, or political upheaval that culminated in a *Wendepunkt* and that represents something potentially useful in responding to contemporary issues of European integration. How did these pivotal moments seek to establish a

framework in which economy, culture, and the individual could flourish? What images define a development as being genuinely significant in a pan-European way?

We envision a number of panels on topics as diverse as the role of law in shaping national and European identities, ethnographic reconfigurations of nationhood, international commerce, the formation of European sensibilities, and conflict and conflict resolution as a remapping of Europe. But other tipping points might be considered, such as those related to technological progress, cultural cross-fertilization, the expulsion of minorities, economic flourishing, the avant-garde and cultural modernism, or religious confrontations.

Moreover, symposium participants will assist the Max Kade Center at Vanderbilt in identifying ideas and forces that are likely to be at the core of European and German Studies in the years to come and that, therefore, will strategically shape the Center’s research and teaching agenda.

WHY NASHVILLE? WHY EUROPE?

To think outside the box, one must step outside the box. Nashville is not one of the traditional Eurocentric centers in North America. In fact, it is caught between North and South, East and West and is an unusual meeting place for different perspectives. Increasingly it is drawing international attention. Vanderbilt University, established in 1873 to heal the wounds of a divisive Civil War, has launched a globalization project that includes partnering with institutions overseas. The Max Kade Center for European and German Studies has been charged with gathering Vanderbilt’s rich resources

into a cogent force for the community and with devising a program to enhance American understanding of Europe. Part of that charge is to explore the changing nature of transatlantic relations. We look to Europe to understand the differences between European and American approaches to forging a union, to serving as a model for international cooperation, and to addressing environmental and energy issues. We seek to understand how Europe is shaped by its diverse geographical, demographic, and cultural landscapes and how our own concepts of cultural and political landscapes are influenced by border-crossing travel and international communication networks.

The symposium does not intend to offer participants a charted map that leads to predetermined conclusions, but rather to provide a forum for reflection on possible underlying impulses of a transcultural, transnational, and perhaps even timeless nature that might help explain why, in our analysis of cultural and historical phenomena, we are drawn to the notion of *Wendepunkte* or pivotal events?



CALL FOR PAPERS

A two-page proposal for a 30-minute presentation should be sent (as an email attachment, if possible) by May 15, 2007, to the symposium organizers at:

**Max Kade Center for European
& German Studies
Vanderbilt University
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VU Station B #351567
Nashville, TN 37235-1567 USA
mkcegs@vanderbilt.edu.**

The symposium organizer is John A. McCarthy (Literature) in collaboration with Florence Faucher-King (Political Science, Sociology), Henning Grunwald (DAAD, History), M. Donald Hancock (Political Science), Thomas A. Schwartz (History), and Helmut Walser Smith (History). The symposium will be a combination of invited and open-competition papers. We plan to publish selected papers in a conference volume.

Please direct inquiries to:

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Dr. Max Kade