

Foreword

« You Europeans... in black and white » was researched during a decade before it was finally published in 2000 when it aroused great interest in certain circles in Europe and in the United States. It gives the reader invaluable information about life in the European Union towards the end of the 20th century with all its difficulties, its hopes and aspirations and the dream of a social Europe which, even today, still remains mostly unfulfilled.

This book predicted the implosion of the European Union in 2003 – this situation indeed became reality when war was declared on Irak during this year by the USA – two member states of the Union joined forces with the Americans in their bombardment of Irak while thirteen refused to do so, which split the Union into two distinct sides, each opposed to the other's ideas and viewpoints on this particular subject. The cracks that showed up almost immediately pointed to the great disunity in European construction and bore witness to the fact that despite all that was being preached about European solidarity in the face of adversity, this was just hot air and could never be taken seriously. Even today, five years later, the scars of this event and its far reaching consequences are still obvious and have certainly left their mark on the European Union, the governments and the populations concerned. They have, as usual, been carefully concealed with the latest high tech fast drying filler but the magic dust that gave lustre to European projects right until the turn of the century has now been totally blown away by the sharp, cold winds of reality.

In the span of just a few short years, major events, many of them totally unforeseen, have impacted on life in the Union and have considerably changed attitudes and opinions on European construction. Many people no longer believe in it at all as they are certainly not better off with spiralling prices of necessities like food, housing and fuel and the numerous relocations by multinationals which have left thousands jobless and without much hope for the future of this continent in the face of rising economic giants like India and China that are beginning to wield increased power over world trade and finance.

The reader should reflect on the unpredictability of life in the Union, at least during the opening years of the third millenium when the social problems that are increasing alarmingly on the European continent have been pushed aside in the face of a new threat, which is global warming. One cannot help wondering however, whether the dramatic images of melting snows and thinning ice in the northern and southern polar regions of the earth are not being used by the authorities to avoid having to deal with the enormous social disparities that still beset Europe and are just as dramatic or perhaps even more so than the polar bears losing their habitat, because this time, it's not the polar bears that are being threatened with extinction – it's human beings who have already lost their habitat and are also being threatened with extinction!

« You Europeans... in black and white » often makes reference to people power which can change any situation for the better – but if the people themselves are demotivated by gigantic events like vicious wars which are not even of their making, people power itself will suffer a tremendous blow that will weaken it and could even annihilate it for ever. Different situations have left their mark on Europe and the world in general and they

are quoted here without any particular chronological order: apart from wars that create refugees and ruin a country's economy for a very long period of time, terrorism is another scourge which began with 9/11 and has only increased its diabolic spread throughout the world to the point where no country can ever say that it is totally safe from a devastating attack by terrorists at any time and without any warning. Africa is in a state of extreme turmoil and the world has beheld assassinations and political killings which are now becoming commonplace. Russia has finally climbed out of the poverty trap and has an annual growth rate of 7 percent – but democracy lags far behind! Many Russians have even been able to buy choice real estate in élite housing complexes in Southern Europe. Kosovo is a very recent self-proclaimed independent state that has broken away from Serbia. The members of the European Union now number 27 in all and Slovenia, a former communist country, will preside the Union for the first half of 2008 on the principle of the rotating EU presidency.

In the light of all these totally unforeseen changes at world and European level, the only advice that this book could now give the citizen is the following: in these very uncertain times, self-protection is an extremely useful guiding principle to adopt. Each individual must look after his own job, his family, his health and find the most efficient way to protect all these elements since no government in Europe will ever again be able to do it for him. The times in which we live are fraught with uncertainty (Northern Rock in the United Kingdom is one example of a solid bank that failed and swallowed up the hard earned life savings of ordinary people in its crash) and experts predict that times will become even more difficult as the years progress and people will wonder whether they are moving into a nightmare situation where even Nature has totally lost her equilibrium!

« You Europeans... in black and white » will certainly inspire the reader with ideas on how to deal with recalcitrant governments and authorities and despite all the gloomy forecasts that are hovering on the economic horizon both in Europe and in the rest of the world at the moment, this book will make living in the European Union a very interesting experience if the ordinary citizen just follows its simple precepts.

The greatest democratic tool that the people have ever held to date is the Internet – freedom of speech is now a total reality and knowledge that empowers the populations is freely available to all in real time. It is also possible to read highly critical articles on governments, ministers and the European authorities which helps the common man to form a very precise idea as regards the plans and projects and their consequences that are being prepared for him by those who are there to serve the people – this book calls politicians « a sneaky lot »: the most recent proof of this slyness that is inherent to this group of persons, is the fact that they have succeeded in imposing « the new European Treaty » on European populations, without any form of prior consultation whatsoever!

Therefore, exchange of ideas among citizens on this subject and any other is vital, with a view to first finding the possible loopholes in this kind of act imposed on us by those whom we have elected to guide us and then we must move on to the solutions. However, this becomes a very interesting exercise as the viewpoints of all the populations within the European Union can now be solicited at the touch of a computer button and with the wealth of information and ideas that will come pouring in, an adequate strategy can be put into place in order to avoid this type of situation from ever recurring again.

As far back as the nineties, this book pointed out the dangers of genetically modified organisms for humans and animals alike. Today, more than a decade later, scientists are categorical in their condemnation of these foods which, according to them are detrimental to human and animal health. Notwithstanding this information, cloned food is now on sale in the United Kingdom – consumers should therefore be very vigilant with regard to the choices they make when shopping for food items if they wish to preserve their health and their families' wellbeing.

The reader should also follow up on the Obama/Clinton race in the general elections scheduled for November 2008 in the United States of America because the outcome will inevitably have repercussions on the European Union, forcing it to modify some of its attitudes and its agreements that have been concluded in the past with its trading partner across the Atlantic.

Another event, closer to home, is the fact that about ten thousand young Africans shouting slogans against Europe, marched to the offices of the European Commission in Brussels in January 2008 to inform Europe's administrators that they were formally opposed to the terms and conditions stipulated in the Economic Partnership Agreement that Europe had recently concluded with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of states because it was totally biased in favour of Europe, and, as always, African countries were the losers. They threatened more of these demonstrations if the agreement was not revised to give African countries a much better trade deal and even hinted that violent actions could be launched if their demands were not met with immediate effect. This book has referred on several occasions to the need for transparency and honesty in all Europe's dealings with other countries... perhaps it's not too late to make a move in the right direction. This is the benefit of living in

the knowledge economy where education and not rote learning opens people's minds to grim realities and also helps them to solve the thorniest problems in record time.

« You Europeans... in black and white » is now waiting for you to discover the wealth of information that it has prepared in anticipation of your desire to learn more about the various facets of life in the European Union...

The cover story

Red, the colour of passion, of vigour, anger and fire, sets the scene against which the contents of this book are played out. Europe should have been proudly raising its voice to defend the universal values for which great men and women have laid down their lives in the past, so that humanity could live in freedom and dignity. Alas! At the very end of the twentieth century, when science and medicine have bounded across seemingly unconquerable barriers, and technology has laughed in the face of the impossible, and still continues to do so with impunity, Europe is bogged down in petty nationalism, and sterile debates which centre essentially around skin colour, making it distinguish sharply between Europeans and non-Europeans: the former have rights, the latter not as yet!

Red is also the colour of blood which flows through the human system and even in this era of technological miracles, man's blood is still exactly the same shade of red, regardless of whether he is Chinese, Asian, African or European. This basic truth, which is almost too simple to state, should have fostered a more enlightened approach on the part of Europe especially in its dealings with other peoples and other continents. Unfortunately, the reverse is true.

Red is the colour of war, of homes set aflame by brutes who still relentlessly pursue the hateful commandment of ethnic cleansing, which then leaves helpless women and children and persons who are old and infirm at the mercy

of winter's heartless, teeth-chattering snow and ice, which threaten to freeze humans into monuments which will forever bear witness to Europe's indifference to the plight of the poorer sections of its populations.

Red is the colour of embarrassment that Western Europe should feel because of the ex-Yugoslav and Kosovar tragedies, which could have been averted if adequate measures had been taken in anticipation of the imminence of these wars.

Red is the colour of unhealed wounds, the haemorrhage of hope and the colour of bloodshot eyes, vainly scanning the horizon in search of work that will bring stability to the unemployed person's dreary existence. Red is certainly the colour of revenge taken by those spirits who are crushed into silence by the hobnailed boots of the rich and powerful.

Red is the colour of scarlet greed and corruption, the same colour, in fact, of the lifeblood that slowly ebbs away in the face of the complete indifference to almost unbearable suffering. Red is the colour of provocation, the proverbial red rag to a bull, goading the desperate into violence.

Red is also the colour of life-giving energy that flows through the human soul and inspires it to revolt against the ugliness of cowardice and conspiratorial silence, which are the cause of all suffering in this world. The younger generation and all those who follow in chronological order, will surely want to wield their paint brushes with skill and humaneness, to paint Europe with that brilliant shade of red that springs directly from the heart.

« You Europeans... » points up to the fact that reflection, analyses and deep thought have been given to the substance of this book and the order of its different chapters. It is harshly critical of the ills that beset the continent and should be regarded as the necessary electroshock that might galvanise the moribund politicians at all levels, into the type of action that could breathe life into Europe's inert structures. Not all politicians are motivated by selfishness and egocentric desire – indeed there are highly intelligent, caring persons in this category who would reverse the situation if they were allowed a free hand – this will never be the case, though, since they are numerically insignificant, and as such, are totally outnumbered by the navel-gazing majority whose only objective is to have clinking pockets and a totally undeserved place in the history books which, regrettably, often neglect to say how many innocent victims were sacrificed in the process that was put in place to bring glory to these pseudo heroes. In fact, the British have an interesting name for this kind of action – they call it the OBE or Other Buggers' Efforts on which vain politicians coast to glory regardless of the fact that they have done nothing to deserve it.

« You Europeans... » is an almost sorrowful reproach which tries to convey the thought, that despite the obvious wealth of all kinds that Europe possesses and could therefore have sincerely utilised to make this continent a revered place of scholarly enrichment and soul-stirring achievement when compared to the rest of the world, it has not exploited even a quarter of its potential and is still turning in circles upon itself.

« The truth hurts, but it cures » and it is hoped that the sharp words that are sometimes used in the text to strip off the façade and present the facts in black and white will

attain the objective, which is to cure the myopia of those in charge of steering the great eurocraft in the right direction, and give them the farsightedness that is an indispensable attribute for those who carry the heavy responsibility as helmsmen, to guide the vessel out of the turbulence, into the waters of social justice and economic abundance.

« You Europeans... » is an outsider's comment which will certainly arouse strong feelings, as it is intended to, and then, when the mask is stripped away and the true face of Europe can be examined in the clear light of reason, perhaps the need for a guiding compass will then be understood and recognised by all, as being the only way to ensure that the continent moves forward, to give a new significance to the words « European Union ».

The mask depicted on the cover represents the four races of the world: with its slanting eyes, its thick black lips, its white face and triangular nose. It portrays not only humanity, but also subtly indicates the impossible task of dividing people into arbitrary blocs of Europeans and non-Europeans. He who tries to play this game, now a completely outdated one in the face of globalisation, will not only betray his ignorance of the sweeping changes that are flooding our planet with an incredible new vision in preparation for the new millennium, but will also expose himself as an ignoramus who is inextricably cemented into the tombstone that has been laid in memory of those whose grey matter died a premature death!

A mask suggests mystery or a desire to hide away from the truth. This should just incite Europeans to probe behind it and discover for themselves what lies beyond the façade. They have the right to know and curiosity can bring inestimable rewards in this particular case, where the