

What are the differences between Britain and continental Europe?

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What are the differences between Britain and continental Europe? The background to the continuing disputes between Britain and the rest of the European Community stretch back over 1500 years. The disagreements reflect a difference of culture which is usually overlooked because of the superficial similarity between modern industrial nations. Yet, on nearly every important issue over the past 1500 years, the British Isles and continental Europe have taken opposing, contrasting, complementary or at least different positions. This shows that British culture is in many important ways different to that on the continent. These differences are usually implicit, and indeed unconscious, with the result that they are often ignored in the attempt to create a unified Europe. This is why for some apparently inexplicable reason, conflict arises as each side finds itself talking a different language and not sharing the same basic presuppositions.

It is important to reflect upon previous attempts to create political unions. The often eminently reasonable attempts to create artificial states and nationalities is increasingly being exposed as a fatal conceit and delusion and very much yesterday's policy. The rupture of Yugoslavia, the breakup of the Soviet Union and maybe the end too of the old Russian empire, the breakdown of bi-lingualism in Canada, the continual disturbances in India (not to mention the violent partition of 1949), and closer to home the resurgence of Scottish nationalism and the calling into question of the Union, should make us to reflect upon the course laid out for us by our politicians. For this reason, the profound and deep differences between Britain and continental Europe have to be understood. Our histories are very different. While Britain undoubtedly has much to contribute to Europe, closer involvement in the EEC will destroy those very qualities which Britain can give as they are suppressed by the culture of the continent. The leaders of our country have blundered "enthusiastically" yet fatally into something we or our descendants may come to regret.

The two main root cultures of modern western Europe are Greco-Rome and the Germanic tribes. They are different yet complementary outlooks on life. The grandeur and civilization of Rome lasted for 2000 years until forces from the Orient brought about the fall of Constantinople in 1493. North of the western Roman empire lived the restless Germanic tribes. Decadent Rome was finally overcome by their boundless energy. But as is often the case, the barbarian invader succumbs to the higher culture of the vanquished. Eventually the Germanic tribes became Romanized. However in the fifth century waves of Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded Britain settling in what later came to be called England. It was in Anglo-Saxon England that the tradition of the Germanic tribes was preserved and developed, becoming the basis of England and an important source of the differences with the rest of Europe which have persisted until today.

Family Structure

The French sociologist Emmanuel Todd has argued persuasively that "the ideological system is everywhere the intellectual embodiment of family structure, a transposition into social relations of the fundamental values which govern elementary human relations." [1] In other words family structure is the most adequate explanation of the values of a society, of its underlying political ideology and ultimately of its institutions. Many conflicts within countries and between them can be explained in terms of the different values embodied in different family types. This thesis has explained better than any other theory why communism took over in some countries, but made little impact in others. All the old world countries which spontaneously produced their own communist revolutions have the same family system.

Sociologists have identified four basic types of family in Europe: the egalitarian nuclear family found in northern France, northern Italy, much of Spain and Portugal, Poland, Romania, Greece and parts of other countries. In this 'family' there is characteristically no cohabitation of married children with their parents and the equality of brothers is laid down by rules of inheritance. Hence the endless subdivision of French peasant farms. The underlying values are liberty and equality which of course are contradictory. This partly explains the political instability in these countries as they oscillate between anarchism and militarism. The authoritarian family of most European countries including Germany, Austria, Sweden,

Scotland, Ireland and Belgium is characterized by the inequality of brothers, which is laid down by rules of inheritance, and the cohabitation of the married heir with his parents. In these families the father is much revered and holds considerable authority over his grown offspring. Here authority is the highest value coexisting with inequality. Societies with such a family type (the list includes Jews, Basques, Catalans, Flemish, Bretons, Scots, Japanese, Koreans, Gypsies, and Quebecois) often have claims to superiority over others and always seem to be involved in ethnic conflicts. The racial ideology of Nazism and the fascist style of government could develop and be accepted in Germany since it was a pathological expression of German family values. The exogamous community family is found in Russia, Yugoslavia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania, all of which succumbed to communism. In these families the underlying values are authority coupled with equality. It is only in these countries that the attempt to liquidate God, fathers, and the family has occurred in large self destructive orgies of violence. Finally, there is the absolute nuclear family of the Anglo-Saxon world, Holland and Denmark to which we will turn.

The Anglo-Saxon absolute nuclear family is characterised by a lack of precise rules of inheritance such that children may be disinherited, no cohabitation of married children with parents, and no marriage of the children of brothers. In fact, the nuclear family can be sadly defined by the separation of parents and children. Children are expected to leave home and set up their own household as soon as they can. The authority of the father in such families is weak compared to other family types. The English are notorious for liking neither their parents nor their children. The former are put into old peoples' homes and the latter packed off to boarding school if possible. The highest value in societies of absolute nuclear families is liberty even when this implies inequality. This is the source of the individualism so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon countries. In part, this is because the Angles and Saxons, the people who established England, tore up ties of family and tribe when they crossed the sea. Their chief loyalty was to the "following" as exemplified in the classic story, Beowulf. The following was individualistic and membership was voluntary. The follower chose his Lord and not vice versa. Loyalty was an act of free will. The people who came to Britain then and in subsequent centuries were those who valued individual freedom and could not stomach living under tyranny. It was also in an Irish-Anglo-Saxon-Viking culture that the "I" form of speech, unknown in the classical world and so individualistic in its use of the capital "I" developed first. This "I" is the centre of consciousness and of action. To be English then is to be free to do as one likes within the law and not have to ask any man's permission or follow any man's orders unless one chooses to.

Since the family is the basic unit of society, it is familial relations which are most fundamental in determining the culture and institutions of a nation. If institutions are imposed or develop which are alien and incompatible with the type of family in that country they will ultimately be rejected. In Poland, one reason why bureaucratic communism was never accepted, was the nuclear structure of Polish families. It is also an explanation of why English history has largely been an odyssey to restore Anglo-Saxon freedoms after the imposition of feudalism during the Norman conquest. It may be an important reason why the democratic institutions bequeathed to former colonies have invariably failed. They have not grown out of the indigenous culture. It explains why there are so many different types of government in Europe and why there has been so much conflict. There is not a common system of government because there is not a common family structure. The attempt to create a federal Europe will also be unsuccessful even if it happens democratically. The result will be its eventual breakup and disintegration. Federal Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union may be the fate of the European Union.

Religion

Religion is one of the deepest sources and expressions of a nation's culture. While the whole of Europe is historically Christian, within that tradition Britain and the continent have often represented contrasting streams.

Hailing from north Africa, Augustine was the church father who had the greatest impression on the Christianity of western Europe. He inaugurated the total Christian society as a compulsory society in which he was prepared to use coercion to impose uniformity of belief and practice. He mobilized and justified the use of the totalitarian state apparatus of late imperial Rome to persecute the heretic Donatists. On the other hand, Augustine's insight into the sinfulness of human nature was quite profound. All, he said, are born completely corrupt, one mass of sin, and all deserving damnation. Without God's grace no man is capable of doing anything good and can only sin. However, God in his mercy, arbitrarily elects a certain number of souls to be saved. Their salvation is completely unmerited and can no more be worked for than it can be resisted. Augustine is ruthlessly predestinarian and although he claims man is free and responsible, in Augustine's world man has no control over his destiny in the next life, and cannot even be allowed to remain a heretic in this life.

This outlook is inherently totalitarian and elitist. It also encourages an unhealthy preoccupation with sin and guilt, and an accompanying feeling of helplessness and dependence on an external agency for salvation, and improvement of one's circumstances. The social implication is that people should not be expected to be responsible but should be dependent on the welfare of the church or in its secular form, the

state. This is why socialism has often been regarded as a Christian heresy. This dependency mentality is particularly prevalent in Catholic countries, and in the case of Latin America, continents. Following Augustine, the Protestant reformers Luther and Calvin emphasised that sinful man is not free and is saved by faith alone. For Luther, the Epistle of James which says that “faith without works is dead”, was an ‘epistle of straw’. This view that right belief was more important than right action is behind the heresy hunting and inquisitions which have been so pervasive on the continent.

Britain’s church father was Augustine’s greatest foe: Pelagius. Even today Pelagianism is regarded as the traditional English heresy reflecting as it does the English attitude to life. Pelagius was a Briton from the vibrant Celtic Church who travelled to decadent Rome to exhort the Christians there to live moral lives in accordance with the Beatitudes. He was uninterested in the then undeveloped notion of original sin. Instead he held that everyone was free to choose virtue by their God-given nature and could take the first steps towards salvation by their own effort apart from God’s grace. The way to salvation was open to all and not just a select few. God’s grace and Christ’s example were an aid on the way to the perfection that all should and could attain. The Beatitudes were to be lived and not just admired. Everyone was free to choose between good and evil. For Pelagius, Christianity was fundamentally a moral force for changing and improving society. How one lived was more important than what one believed. This fresh optimistic outlook from the British Isles contrasted with the fatalistic doom and gloom of the decadent Roman Empire.

It was an unconscious Pelagianism which can be seen in Elizabeth I’s determination not to make “windows into men’s souls” but to allow them to believe what they liked as long as they were loyal subjects. If people had a sense of decency and good manners, what a person believed was his own business. A similar stress on the goal and attainability of perfection is to be found in the teaching of John Wesley and Methodism. For them, as for Pelagius, conversion was merely the beginning of salvation. To be perfected in the love of God and man, and wholly delivered from sin should be the aim of every Christian, thought Wesley. Methodism has also been intimately connected with social welfare done by Christians and not the State. Wesley was critical of State involvement because it undermined personal initiative and responsibility. Instead, he encouraged people instead to help each other. This led to the flowering of an immense voluntary sector of self-help, mutual aid and charitable activity.

Thus, Augustine’s view encourages State interference to protect people from themselves. This reflects the view that given freedom people will misuse it because they are sinful. In contrast, Pelagianism views people as responsible individuals who should be given the freedom to perfect themselves.

Law

A further great divide between England and the rest of Europe is in law. The Common Law tradition has been preserved and developed over an unbroken 1500 year period in England. Roman Law, also 1500 years old was adopted wholesale by all the other European countries in their drive for modernisation in the middle ages.

The Roman Law is regarded as one of the great legacies of Rome. Although like Common Law it had its origins in custom and the decisions of jurists, it was later codified by the Byzantine emperor Justinian who claimed that “what the emperor has determined has the force of law”. He also promulgated new laws to regulate every aspect of his subjects lives. It was this inherently totalitarian version of Roman Law which was eagerly adopted in Europe by medieval kings searching for ways to legitimise, consolidate and expand their power. In this tradition the Emperor was the source of the law. He was the one who made it and gave it authority. It was rational, systematic and its chief value was order, imposed from above. The medieval kings liked to see themselves in the position of the emperor, able to propagate law so that their will might be done. This, mixed up with the idea of the deity of the Roman emperor, soon led to the doctrine of the divine right of kings. With, and indeed preceding, the demise of monarchy, the prestige of the crown was inherited by the State. Thus modern governments regard the law as the tool for the enforcement of political policy. On the continent the law can be suspended so that “justice” may be done or for reasons of political expediency. Hence, for example, the readiness of continental members of the E.E.C. to ignore to fact that legally the Treaty of Maastricht had to be ratified unanimously. They were prepared to implement it without Denmark and Britain had it been necessary.

This also has influenced the continental conceptions of freedom and rights. Roman law stipulates what one may do. If there is no law regulating an activity there is a sense in which that activity is illegal, unofficial and without authority. Thus it is normal on the continent for churches, clubs and associations to be registered or licensed. If something is not sanctioned by the State, it lacks authority and is suspect. Legitimacy comes from the State. One can only do what one has permission to do. One is free to do anything the law says one can do. Rights too are granted and guaranteed by the State. The State grants freedom of religion or speech and thus has the right to take them away. However the law is easily violated by governments for whom political expediency is more important.

Under the inquisitorial system of justice in the courts, the magistrate appointed and employed by the

State, evaluates all the facts of a case and decides whether a person is guilty or not. There is little opportunity for a person to defend himself. The system is weighed in favour of the State and the prosecutor. The judge, representing the State, decides if a person is innocent or guilty. Thus there are few prosecutions against the State, and prosecutors and judges defend the interests of the State. The law which is created by the State exists to impose and maintain order. The police are the instruments of the State charged with this task. The system is easily misused as during the inquisition of heretics where torture, a legitimate technique in the pursuit of truth under Roman law, was freely used. This is also in part why civil liberties have been treated with such scant regard up until very recently.

The common law tradition originated with the Germanic tribes and has survived in England due to various historical quirks. This law is not the creation of the king but of the people. Laws exist because they are observed and not because they are made. Immemorial custom and tradition are the source of authority for common law. The laws exist and are merely discovered and expounded by judges asked to deliberate on particular cases. The king himself was to follow the law and observe the customs which regulated the relationships between members of the community. The king himself was expected to obey these customs and laws. The law protected people's rights and liberties since it established a framework of obligations and expectations. People were free to do anything which was not against the law and were entitled to redress against anyone who broke the law. The law was respected and administered locally by respected members of the community: magistrates and justices of the peace who did not represent the State. Indeed the law was there to protect the people against the king and the State. The king had no right to violate the common law. Such sentiments were behind the Magna Carta and many other revolts and movements to secure the rule of law as opposed to the rule of the man which existed on the continent. Politicians however, like the kings of old, hate to be restricted by the law and have hidden behind the obnoxious doctrine of Crown immunity to protect themselves from prosecution. Policemen in the past were highly respected members of the community who upheld the law, although it was in fact everyone's duty to do so. The police until, recently were not seen as representatives of the State or the government.

In the court there is a presumption of innocence. An accused man is judged by a jury of his peers who decide whether or not he has broken the law. Even if he is found to have broken the law he may be acquitted if the law or accompanying penalties are deemed oppressive by the jury. This was common through the eighteenth century and more recently despite the draconian powers of the Official Secrets Act, it has been notoriously difficult for the government to secure convictions under it.

A man's rights are protected by the law. The State does not have the authority to grant rights since they are an Englishman's birthright. The State can no more grant than take away freedom of religion. It may do so, but in doing so, is exceeding itself and acting unlawfully. Rights evolve from generation to generation as does the law. They are not abstract but real. The law reflects social norms, customs and values, and as such is not a tool for social engineering since it always lags behind social change. There is no notion in common law of registering with the State. People are free to do anything except break the law. Thus the State does not have the right to demand that people register with it. Freedom of association is fundamental. Something which is official is automatically suspect whereas those things which are not are the real centre of loyalties and affection.

Britain has no written constitution. Indeed there is no body with the authority to make one. The unwritten constitution is based on tradition, precedent and custom. This gives it flexibility to change as circumstances change. A constitution only reflects the political culture of those who framed it. If the culture changes but the constitution does not either the government acts against it (as in the USSR and increasingly in the USA) and is thus unlawful, or the constitution is amended or overthrown. What is most important is the maintenance of a good political culture. A piece of paper cannot do this.

Government

This difference in law is also reflected in differences in government. On the continent where by tradition there is the rule of man as opposed to the rule of law, proportional representation is regarded as the most rational and democratic system since they are electing their rulers. In Britain though each constituency elects a representative, to sit in Parliament. M.P.'s are not our rulers, but are supposed to be our representatives. The problem comes when they think they know what is best for people better than the people do themselves. Then they become rulers. An example is the deception perpetrated in the signing of the Treaty of Rome and the willful disregard for popular feeling over the Maastricht issue. Much to the distaste of modern politicians, we do not elect a party to form a government. Nor do we elect a Prime Minister in the manner of presidential systems.

Our tradition goes back to the Anglo-Saxon system of government of hundreds, shires etc. It was compared by the founding fathers of the United States to the Old Testament Law and Hebrew system of government. An M.P. represents not just those who elect him but everyone in that constituency. Indeed the party system and the whips that enforce it distort democracy by trying to force the representatives to vote how the party and not his conscience or constituency tell him. There is thus a far lower quality of debate in Parliament than there was in the past.

The king too used to be elected from the Royal family by the Witengemot, a council of elders in the Germanic tradition, instead of just automatically inheriting the position as in the French system. This changed under the first onslaught on our Anglo-Saxon culture with the Norman invasion.

Another important difference is the way in which the State is perceived. In imperial Rome the emperor was god. He and later the State were the ultimate source of authority and legitimation. The State had the right to expect obedience. Thus in France Louis said 'L'Etat est moi.' The emperor and later the king or the State could do whatever they pleased. They were above the law. This line of thought culminated in Hegel's dictum that the Prussian State was God's spirit manifested on the earth. This political culture in which the State was held in such high esteem easily developed into Fascism and Communism. In Nazi Germany the Fuhrer's command was law. Socialism easily equates the state with society and the public good. Still today considerable prestige accrues to a person who works for the German State. The State on the continent has been extremely competent. It has relatively efficiently run railways, schools etc.

In British political culture the State, where it is thought of at all, is seen as a servant. Civil servants are viewed with suspicion because they are wont to interfere in a person's privacy. Thus, the State in Britain was historically relatively weak and limited. People even today do not regard being a civil servant as a job to be proud of. The king and government officers in Britain were not traditionally as grand as on the continent. The monarch lived in a palace in the city of modest proportions compared to rural Versailles. The Prime Minister lives in a terraced house in what was until recently a public thoroughfare. The divine right of kings as an ideology did not sit very well on the shoulders of an English king. The one who tried it lost his head. The king should be ruled by the law. In England, there was at least in theory if not always in practice the rule of law as opposed to the rule of men. Unfortunately, this too is lost on modern politicians who believe in the absolute sovereignty of parliament, the modern, secular version of the divine right of kings.

Attempts this century to imitate the statist continental tradition have been a disaster. Although the state on the continent is capable of running society quite well, with the caveat that it easily slides into totalitarianism or authoritarianism, or gets taken over by the mafia, in Britain the state cannot run anything successfully apart from the Post Office, and more recently, the armed services. The nationalisation of the health service, schools, much of industry, the railways, buses, underground, utilities and the Bank of England, have been failures. Many were brought to their knees before nationalisation by government interference and regulation. Existing welfare bodies such as the rapidly expanding friendly societies were supplanted by compulsory social insurance. While none were perfect and had many limitations, it is wrong to judge them by today's standard any more than one should judge a biplane by a jumbo jet. Had the government not intervened, the quality and breadth of this sector would have increased, as have other areas of the economy and civil society where there has been no interference. However, in its favour one has to recognize the general lack of corruption in British public life.

And so the concept subsidiarity is understood in a completely different way in Britain and the continent. For most continentals it means that the centre delegates power downwards, the ultimate source of that power and authority being the centre. This is how Jacques Delors talks. For the English, it means that some functions and power are delegated to the centre, the ultimate source of power and authority being the people at the bottom who can of course take back the delegated power.

Citizenship

Arising out of the above are very different notions of citizenship. Because of its essentially unbroken history, in many respects, Britain is still not a modern society including as it does a potentially powerful monarchy and the still significant vestiges of aristocracy. The British are the loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen. It is a personal relationship with feudal overtones. At the same time the old Christian notion that the English are children of God and that their freedoms and rights are God given is still faintly discernible. In the United States it remains more noticeable being embodied in the constitution.

With the growth of secularization and loss of faith in God, the secular notion of citizenship developed. In the modern era it is a product of the atheistic, rationalistic French revolution. Having executed the king and abolished traditional feudal relationships, the State became the source of people's identity and of their rights. Thus the almost universal prevalence of identity cards on the continent. Holland being one of the few exceptions. This is not a personal relationship but a bureaucratic one. How can one be loyal to an abstraction called the State? Why should one lay down one's life for the institution whose main function should be to build and maintain roads and sewers?

This attempt to create European citizens instead of just allowing us to be Europeans is grounded in the political philosophy of the continent. There is no recognition in the Treaties of Rome or Maastricht that there is a God who sits in judgement on the affairs of man, that God created humankind for a purpose and that our purpose is to be fulfilled firstly through our relationship with God. This secular, humanistic, rationalistic approach to European unity will be as unsuccessful as similar attempt to create Soviet

citizens or Yugoslavians. Even after 70 years when the surface was scratched people were found to be Russian, Ukrainian, Croat or whatever. If even the reorganisation of the English counties 20 years ago is still resented, what chance is there of people giving up their sense of nationality as the federalists hope will ultimately happen as the nations are replaced by regions. Indeed why should the vision of a tiny technocratic, arrogant elite be imposed against the wishes of most Europeans?

Theology

Another of the landmark divisions between England and the continent occurred in the middle ages over the debate about universals. The problem was whether universals such as “man” had any existence above and beyond the individuals who were men. On the continent realism as advocated Thomas Aquinas held sway. Universals were thought to have an independent existence apart from the entities which exhibited those qualities. This was the view, derived from Plato, the father of totalitarianism, that universals had a real existence. Thus there really was a “Church” or “State” or “Society” existing over and above its members. In Britain though, nominalism as advocated by Duns Scotus and William of Occam was more popular. The nominalists regarded universals as products of the mind. They did not have any other existence. Only individual entities exist. Only individual people exist. There is no “society” acting over and above these individuals. Again we have a reflection of the difference in culture which, in this case, culminated in the collectivism of the continent and the individualism of Britain.

Philosophy

The enlightenment took different forms in Britain and the continent. During the enlightenment there were two great streams of philosophy: rationalism and empiricism. The former was to be found predominantly on the continent while the latter developed in Britain.

Rationalism is the view that all truth can be discovered through reason. As Descartes said, “I think therefore I am.” From this axiom he set out, based on reason, to reconstruct all reality with mathematical precision. For rationalists truth is a function of reason. Something is true if it is logical. This approach was taken up by Leibnitz and Spinoza who developed elaborate systems explaining everything, including morality and society, using reason. Out of this view came constructivist rationalism, the mistaken belief that society was designed and can thus be redesigned in a more rational way. Many utopias were created based on reason. It was then supposed that they could just be implemented through rational planning by bureaucrats. Therefore the future can be planned, designed and implemented. Out of this worldview came the French revolution, socialism and communism. Today’s EEC and many of its proposals are also the fruit of this kind of thinking. The plan for currency union with dates and procedures is a child of the 5 year plans of other visionaries.

British empiricism seeks for truth in experience. But experience is far messier than reason can account for. Did something work? was the litmus test. This led empiricism into scepticism, a outlook guaranteed not to stir man’s heart to revolutionary fervour. This approach to history and society led to the realisation that no one designed or invented the great institutions of society. They just evolved over countless generations. “The rules of morality,” as Hume pointed out, “are not the conclusions of our reason.” They come from experience, trial and error. They are learnt and then passed on to succeeding generations. Hence the importance of tradition and custom. They are seldom understood rationally, but they work. Thus the British constitution is a ramshackle illogical affair which no one would design. It has many problems and has evolved to meet them but it works. When it does not it can be reformed in a piecemeal way in the same manner as it developed. Hence the great scepticism in Britain towards social revolutionaries and the great conservatism of the working classes. What is old is good. Knowledge comes from experience and can thus only be known after the event.

These two philosophies are reflected in different notions of education. While on the continent formal qualifications are treated with great respect, in Britain experience counts for more. To call a Frenchman an intellectual is to highly compliment him. An Englishman who is called an intellectual feels mildly insulted. Professors at English universities used to pride themselves on how few letters they had after their names. Many still do not have Ph.D.’s. The number of successful men who leave school with no formal qualifications is unprecedented in other countries. One has to look no further than the present Prime Minister for examples.

Thus there are two very different approaches to European integration. The rationalists approach it as an ideal to be imposed, or at least a blueprint to be designed and implemented, while the empiricists regard it as a possible outcome, but one to be allowed to evolve by itself through piecemeal adaptation. E.F.T.A. and the Council of Europe are expressions of this approach. They are not so glamorous, pretentious or expensive but they are useful. The same can be said of the difference between the U.N. and G.A.T.T. The former is expensive, glamorous and pretends to contribute to making the world more peaceful. The latter by contrast while little understood and known (until recently) has done far more for world trade and hence prosperity and ultimately peace. However it is not glamorous and its intricacies hold little appeal for politicians who like to pose on the world stage.

Welfare

These different world views (if you can call empiricism a worldview), have different implications. On the continent the State as God is omniscient, omniscient and even omnipotent. It plans and imposes order on society. People expect it to and it does. Thus developed socialism, of the national and international brands, and the welfare State. In Britain the State was not regarded as competent, nor as having the duty to undertake such activity. Instead there developed, especially under the influence of Methodism, self-help, mutual aid, charities, cooperatives etc. Mortgage societies, for example, originated as a working class response to the terrible back-to-back houses built by unscrupulous capitalists. Thirty or so working men would get together and pool their resources to build first one house, and then another, and another, until all had a decent place to live. The modern equivalent to the back-to-back houses are housing estates built by local government. Philanthropists and others founded schools, hospitals, colleges, housing developments, libraries etc. The whole community through the Scouts, Rotary club, Woman's Institute etc. would be involved in raising money to do all manner of things. Everything was self governed. It might be irrational and muddled but it worked and it was the peoples'.

However, much of this was swept away with the adoption of foreign ideas and practices. The Liberal Government started the welfare state by consciously imitating Bismarck's Germany. This led to the undercutting and undermining of the extensive working class culture and institutions that had developed. Thriving friendly societies etc. became marginalised. Dependency came to replace self-reliance and helping others. The British educational system which is a collection of historically different bodies is also being changed. Imposed comprehensive schools and the National Curriculum seem modelled on Napoleonic system in France. In France since every school child studies exactly the same subjects at the same time of the day even, the sum total of the nations' knowledge at a particular age is enclosed in the mind of any pupil. Everyone knows the same things. In England though, there were many different curriculums covering the same subjects in different ways, and many different exams that could be sat. Thus the total knowledge of the nation is far greater and more devolved. This makes for a more creative and interesting society.

Britain has countless voluntary organisations, clubs and societies and religions. All (apart from the C. of E.) are outside the control of the State and fiercely independent. It is inconceivable for a Hitler Youth or Komsomol to have developed here. Such a type of organisation is totally foreign to the British spirit.

The Economy

The suspicion about the State also extended to the economy. The free market is a very British institution. Corporatism and the partnership between State and industry has rightly been regarded with suspicion: a conspiracy against the people. The Common Agricultural Policy bears a strong resemblance to the obnoxious Corn Laws which Britain abolished in the mid-nineteenth century. This is why within the EEC Britain is almost alone in arguing for free as opposed to managed trade. Free trade benefits everyone in the long term even if one suffers oneself in the short term. Managed trade however is concerned to protect one's own economy even if this harms other nations.

On the continent though State involvement is the norm. Sometimes it takes the form of State ownership, at other times corporatism, but at the very least the social market or managed economy. For the above mentioned cultural reasons it works there. Here it has proven to be a disaster. Worse, the protectionism so much a part of many continental countries culture, will lead once more to trade wars and possibly hot wars. The selfish preservation of EEC industry and agriculture by shutting the doors to eastern Europe is immoral and strategically dangerous.

Conclusion

As can be seen, there are very fundamental differences between Britain and the continent. The EEC is founded on the continental, rationalist tradition. It is thus dirigiste, statist and suffers from delusions of grandeur. The avowed aim is to make the EEC a political economic and military superpower to be able to compete on equal terms with the United States and Japan. This mentality is the worst form of nationalism and protectionism but on a continental level. If Britain gets too involved in this kind of Europe it will find imposed upon it an edifice very different to its roots. This will lead to great tension and either the violation of the nation's spiritual constitution and destruction of British culture and genius or another bloody war of independence and self-determination. Britain will either no longer be Britain or it will once more seek to leave the false domination of Europe as it did under Henry VIII. Britain will no longer have the qualities for which it has been admired in the past and which have time and again enabled her to rescue the other Europeans from themselves.

[1] Emmanuel Todd *The Explanation of Ideology: Family Structures and Social Systems*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.