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An alarming message: Are the Europeans mature enough for sustainable together-living?

(Please circulate, display and disseminate. Photocopying of this message is encouraged)

Dear readers,

We are glad to send you herewith the 6th issue of the Journal of the Hellenic Community of Goettingen. The long delay, that we have experienced should be attributed to severe economic shortcomings: the city of Goettingen has drastically reduced the grants for the Non Governmental Organizations and apart from that it has privatized the “49%” of its buildings. Of course, we have found no sufficient alternative resources. Due to this “liberalization”, our Association has found a provisional quarter in a member’s house. However, the social and cultural activity has been going on in the last 2 years even under these conditions, but there is no guarantee that it can be further sustained.

This Journal includes articles of scientific, cultural, social and historical character as well as interviews, reports and notifications. They have been written in German or Greek language. Some of them are lifeworks and can be useful for further scientific or journalistic discussion. It is posted to more than 200 addressees in more than 29 countries and regions (UK, Australia, Canada, USA, Greece, Armenia, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Romania, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Brasilia, Ireland, Italia, Germany etc). For this reason this accompanying letter has been written in English. These addressees are universities, research institutes, libraries, consulates, political parties, mass media and individuals.

This issue is dedicated to all Europeans, which everyday try to overcome the historical complexes and the cultural heterogeneity of Europe, so as to learn from each other and to achieve an effective and sustainable together-living. We would like to lay emphasis on this point: **Sustainable together-living means mutual learning among the people and not merely “equal economic chances” in a “single market with a single currency” like the European Union (EU) and the EURO.**

Although the Hellenic Community of Goettingen, like many other Communities abroad, appreciates and in general shares the objections of the largest part of the Greek people against the USA world policy, we can only recognize that the American society (in the USA and much more in Canada) presents a very illustrative example of such a sustainable together-living: Except for a civil war and a restricted number of racial conflicts in particular regions, the Americans –which were in a large part former Europeans and their descendants- decided to live together, speaking a common language and learning from each other. The former Chinese learned from the former German, the former German from the former Turk, the former Turk from the former Spaniard etc. So they did not repeat the mistakes of the Europeans and they worked together achieving a power-effective knowledge synergy, which has found in this century -and especially today- its highlight in the world-dominance of America in almost any sector. (The most obvious example of American knowledge synergy was that **America had finished the II World War in triumph and so became super power of the world thank to scientists, that had been persecuted in Europe and escaped in America.**)

Specifically, many European countries and especially Germany –which is (or wants to represent itself as) a steering force of the EU- adopt steadily American elements and decisions: From the party music and every day life-style, over the university system and American words in German language up to strategic-political decisions. So, the German state plays with pleasure the assistant of the American “world-sheriff” without any serious protest by the German people. In contrast, the most Germans enjoy their collective culture: Carefree family walking in the forests, speaking steadily of “sustainability” (“Nachhaltigkeit”), sophisticated nature-educational programs for the children, waste-separation and other “environmental projects”. **So they maintain the impression that they have the perfect system and “environmental awareness”, which should be exemplary for the other countries too. From many Germans –especially of middle or higher status- one hears often: “In Germany we do this...” or similar expressions in a proud style. Some of them want also to come in contact with foreigners but only in order to “teach” their own culture to them and they are reluctant to adopt any serious cultural elements of them. Many of them recognize only the most powerful actor of the world (USA) as a better one.** Even in German public buildings (e.g. city hall or university), one can still see big posters, which advertise the American lottery of the “Green Cards” (a characteristic blond German girl appears on the advertisement and says enthusiastically: “Tomorrow I will be a Californian”). Of course, the (natural and social) environment, which the German state simultaneously destroys somewhere on the world under the “legitimate” guidance of the American “world-sheriff” interests only a few people, and everybody continues to work harmonically for and loyally to this system. The most Germans believe easily the German mass media and are convinced that Germany executes a “duty” to the humanity obeying simply the currently powerful world actor. This is until today the USA- if tomorrow China becomes first super power on the world, the German state will follow China. **And this is exactly the main difference between Germany and Greece: Germany follows always the powerful actor, while the Greek people criticize it always** (even in their

classical comedies, they satirized always caustically their own democratic governors). Such a caustic attitude towards each currently powerful actor is the ultimate indication of education and democracy. The question, which of these two extremities is less disadvantageous, cannot be answered now. We can however accent that the first way assures much more material development but also reduces the perspicacity and makes future dangers invisible. The second one has been until now straining enough and has led Greece to outside-imposed dictatorships, civil war, occupations, and frictions with Turkey as well as to immigration and scattering of many Greeks abroad, which in the best case have enough university qualifications. So, Greece could never be an effective peace actor in Balkan and remained a good client of the powerful actors, importing from them weapons and other products without being allowed to utilize its rich resources. All these external frictions are naturally motivated or rather "stage-managed" by these actors, so that Greece continues to need their weapons. Today Germany exports cars (and also weapons), while Greece exports "qualified personell". **There has dominated unfortunately the belief that if a country produces "good cars", it is exactly so effective and good in all respects.** However, Greece has managed to maintain an autonomous identity and mentality, thank to which it has now no political or social complexes.

We have heard from Germans: "*Why is Germany in the European Union? It is the most developed of all member states. It cannot profit by them... it only offers...*".

It must be clarified, that this is not a favour of Germany to the other countries. Inversely!!! **Germany has the chance to be socialized through the EU in the international community so as to export its products -and of course unfortunately also tanks and other weapons- to many standardized markets in foreign countries without needing to use them in a not so peaceful way like in the past.** So, it has spent the last 50 years peacefully. Otherwise it would have already caused meanwhile perhaps more than one more World War in order to use its industrial overproduction and it would have been destroyed more than once again until today. **And the German people should feel no "collective guilt" for that.** This is only guilt of the liberal industrial system, which has to "justify" in any possible way its overproduction in order to survive. Has anyone asked him/herself, how many of the German "developmental projects" abroad offer really developmental help and how many of them are related to weapons trade and people exploitation?

As a familiar example, we mention that a quite large part of the Greek budget is invested on the army, and the weapons have been fabricated or designed in Germany. Regarding the new airport built by a big German company in Spata (a little bit away from Athens), it will be exploited by this company for many years, and afterwards... the city will be eventually expanded up to this point (due to the migration into cities), so for this (or other reasons) Greece will need a new airport etc. The migration into cities is a well-known phenomenon in a not industrialized land like Greece.

The Hellenic Community is a Non Governmental Organization, and its constitution has nothing to do with Marxism. But even if the Greeks had never heard of Marxism, they would be able to realize all these things using their everyday experience and their deep and long historical tradition. Don't forget that **Thucydides was the first historic-materialist** and so the first scientific historian, whose texts are intensively taught in the Greek schools. So, if one has acquired a Greek education today, he/she is at least able to (try to) differentiate the **real causes** from the **superficial occasions** and to listen to the t.v. news with many reserves. And if one (even politically right-oriented) has lived in a developing and strongly dependent country but with such a sound education system and tradition for a long time, then he/she does not need much of Marxism in order to be aware of the above described reality. Everything is everyday experience and common logic: If a country has a liberal "heavy" industry and army, then it has to use it somehow in order to "justify" its existence (and who knows what else will happen in the future with the implementation of the Euro army). **That's why, Germany is still involved in wars every once a while:** Before some years in Yugoslavia and recently in Aугanistan. And that's why the underdeveloped countries are the most susceptible to war conflicts: They are the best weapon-clients for the developed countries and good future markets for building projects, cars etc after bombing. Sometimes they are rich in natural resources (e.g. petroleum) or eventually they are of great geographic-strategic importance like Aугanistan, Greece, Cyprus etc. Namely, the powerful actors want to station there their own military facilities in order to control them and other countries nearby (even in Germany there are until today such American military facilities). These are some real causes of war today, and not for example to "conquer" high-rise buildings, undergrounds or other infrastructure, which is at any rate bombed (one can hear such superficial approaches in Germany even from academics of social sciences!!!). Everything else, like "military intervention for the human rights in Yugoslavia" or "fair revenge in Aугanistan" are only superficial pretexts or constructions of media. One can find or construct such pretexts against any country (even against Germany, if it was not so obedient to the current powerful actor). Naturally, most Germans have been brought up with the impression that they live in the perfect, central country, to which they should be loyal in any case and which "has learned democracy" after the last World War and fights nowadays for human rights or "environmental ethics". From the kindergarten, they learn to lead a really frugal private life, while the saved money is -to a large extent- invested by their state on the military industry, which -as explained- opens up new markets for the liberal and uncontrolled overproduction etc. **One can hardly find a German with a different opinion on important issues related to international politics:** Almost all have a collective positive opinion about their state and what it practises in the name of the Americans, and only rarely a strike or demonstration against the powerful actor take place (in contrast to

Greece). That's why there is in Germany such a material development (of course, the war compensation, which Germany did not pay to Greece and eventually to other states and harmed milieus because of prescription is a short detail in comparison to everything above).

At the same time, a very large part of German stakeholders, which usually belong to "higher" social classes and milieus and learn also to play some Wagner-music on the piano or to cite some words of Thomas Mann and Herman Hesse, insist steadily to claim that they have an "eminent middle-European culture" while the Americans have none. These "educated" Germans say at the next moment: "... *and why should I learn Greek only for 10 millions Greeks or Danish for 3 millions Danes*" etc. Is this really an attitude of cultural-educated people at all???

The Hellenic Community has offered until today numerous and various cultural products to the society of Goettingen, which were really educational and not propaganda-driven (lectures, information and discussion meetings, classical and modern concerts, expositions, editions etc and other classical and modern cultural products of Greece and also of other lands). **Many of them were carried out also in German language and they were addressed to German public too, but the participation was as a rule extremely disappointing.** This was also the general attitude of the German academics, though Goettingen is rather a University than a normal city, while the few Germans that appeared, had come rather due to personal contacts to particular members of the Hellenic Community than to their general interest in culture and to the public communication of the Community. Of course, many "high-society" Germans, which have missed these cultural products in order to enjoy one more weekend in the forest, have still the opinion that the "*immigrants have nothing useful to offer*" and insist that "*Germany is no immigrants-land*". And how do they come to these standpoints? They compare the foreign "guest-workers", which sometimes have not finished even the school, with themselves (professors, school directors etc). This is really unthinkable!!! If they want to make a reasonable cross-cultural comparison, they have to compare themselves with homologous colleagues of the other nations and of similar status.

There are many more examples of **immigrants-isolation tactics**, which are practised in Germany and simply show that despite the single currency, the Europeans are still quite unwilling and immature for substantial together-living, and therefore they will still inevitably follow the united Americans. The Hellenic Community has received for example several reports from foreign scientists working in Germany (being paid sometimes by their countries –e.g. with scholarships), that their articles are not accepted in some German-language scientific journals "*because of language shortcomings*". This is of course only a superficial pretext of certain editors and not a real problem, because previously these articles have been corrected by educated German native speakers. Some other times, the editors allege vague problems of "text form" and "structure", which they cannot clarify even themselves. These journals take over however with pleasure the correction of texts of foreign authors, if the latter are from particular lands, to which they want to maintain good relations for further extension of their academic activity (academic imperialism in former socialistic countries). It is also not surprising if a German counsel –that wants to prevent further immigration in Germany- tries to discourage students to go to Germany for studies, claiming that their level of German is insufficient, and some days later, the particular German university –which eventually suffers lack of students- is totally satisfied with their language competence. According to similar reports, the German education and research system follows a strictly practical-oriented and applied research strategy without favouring any innovations that could open up new sustainable ways for future scientific discussion (this is also the current strategy of the EU). In contrast, there is a stable strategy to reject any basic and innovative knowledge product (which can have been usually based on foreign cultures and mentalities) and to reduce the theory pluralism. Independent of any impressive advertising and propaganda about "innovation", in Germany, if the editors find an article really innovative and therefore awakening and dangerous for the established and "productive" thinking way, they have no hesitation to reject it even some weeks or months after the appointment of the publication date, disdaining the external positive reviews and any other formalities!!! Apart from that, one can find today in Germany academics (even in the recently appointed generation) that cannot communicate in English and have no international academic experience. Of course, one can claim that "the German-language literature is enough", and Germany offers "enough chances", so the Germans don't need so much to study or make a career abroad like many Greeks. But on the other hand, this isolationism converts the academic activity into a national-personal affair and leads up to dogmatism. **Even these things happen in a European land, which represents itself worldwide as an example of meritocracy, progressiveness, order, democracy and reliability.**

In this framework, it is normal to reject an innovative work only because it is not easily conceivable by the collective, strongly normative and practical-oriented way of thinking (which has nothing to do with the tradition of famous German philosophers). Of course, this fact has deeper routes in the German production system: In simple words, **Germany is an industrial land, and so it needs rather "good" workers than scientists and "everyday philosophers"**. If everybody could create his/her own opinion and be innovative, then nobody would follow "*loyally and reliably*" the provided social, political and market norms. If one dares to be innovative or "everyday philosopher" from the school time in a personal and straightforward way, then he/she can easily land up to quite bad work places (like these in fast-food restaurants). It is sometimes noticeable that discussions, which in Greece are everyday chats even among lower milieus are regarded by many educated Germans as high-philosophical –and not always desirable- debates (while certain immigrants and Germans of lower milieus enjoy

sometimes better such chances of association and mental development, when they appear, and they are more willing to learn from each other). The German school tactic comes also in accordance with this collectivism and innovation suppression: As a rule, in the German schools –in contrast to the Greek schools, where the opposite strategy that was practised for a long time at least until some years before, led to other kind of problems- the teachers do not encourage the children to become scientists, because Germany –as an industrial land- needs a lot of workers, which should work always “more effectively” (and of course cheaper and with less demands, as long as they gradually proliferate). We have been already familiar with cases, in which the German parents (or their children) reacted against the discouraging advise of the “expert”-teacher and the “not so efficient” pupils became doctors, professors etc (and these are not merely exceptions). Which human model is the most “advantageous” (collective worker or educated immigrant), it is a very complicated -and perhaps personal- question, which can only remain open in this text.

Apart from that, we mention the **radical nationalistic parties**, which at times experience surprising electoral success in the EU that at least formally expects to become gradually more “unified”. At this point, we would like to address specifically to the **east-German radical-nationalistic groups**, which proliferate nowadays. We would like only to clarify them that they should have thought much better of the unemployment and future uncertainty, which are always induced by the liberal market, before they had decided to demonstrate against the “iron curtain” in the 80s in order to enjoy the western material development. If the former socialistic regimes were regarded as “dictatorships” because they did not allow the emigration of their people to western countries, then one should be prepared to “enjoy” the global mobility of working forces, which is imposed by the economic and social coercions (and delusions) of liberalism. In other words, one must be prepared to tolerate immigrants or also to become an immigrant. Addressing to the Greeks, who recently have also presented nationalistic behaviour against people immigrating in Greece from Albany, Afghanistan, Kurdistan and other lands, we would like to make them clear that many millions of Greeks were scattered a long time now all over the world, when the imperialism wave, which is now destroying these countries, had also destroyed Greece. Although “xenophobia” is a Greek word, it should not possess any place in the Greek culture, which was and is really a universal one. **We call these Greeks to regard these immigrants as fellow-citizens and also to try to learn from them**, even if they must “try hard” to find out positive things on them. Everyone possesses plenty of positive things.

We have not developed such a straining discourse, in order to demand a radical change of the situation, or the adoption of a common language, or to offend the German host-society. Far from it!!! **We are grateful to the German society for every advantage until now, and it would be also an unpardonable omission on our part if we don't mention that the local representative of the party SPD was present in our main activities until very recently. This was only an awakening letter, which argues**

- a) **that Germany –as any other land- has no perfect system, as many believe, and**
- b) **that the immigrants have a lot to offer and they DO offer a lot which can make Germany and any other country much better from every viewpoint.**

But it is exclusively up to the German stakeholders and the host-stakeholders of any other country (employers, professors, school teachers etc) to abandon their eventual egoism or short-range profit and to combine the foreign cultures so as to achieve a sustainable knowledge synergy like the Americans. (Some of them practise it but it is really a very restricted number, and not only the number is important but also the positions they possess.) This can be achieved only on their own efforts, which should be practised much deeper than the superficial and ineffective “integration” legislations, which serve only the “democratic” image and the opportunistic popularity of some politicians. **All these naturally necessitate that the regional Communities of foreigners will be financed enough so as to survive the market liberalization. If not, then any other political program, which will be evaluated, supported, carried out and controlled only centrally (in Berlin) has no sense.**

Finally, we would like to thank the Germans (or the host-citizens in any country), who experience the cultural products of foreigners, make reasonable cross-cultural comparisons and try to see the foreigners as fellow-citizens. Furthermore, we would like to congratulate them to the extent they have already achieved a knowledge synergy (which automatically means long-term **power** and **sustainability**). Much more we would like to congratulate those, who have learned –or at least tried to learn- foreign languages and customs independent of the number of the native speakers on the world. The European Union has still to go a long way until to achieve sustainable together-living, and **sustainable together-living means first of all mutual learning.**

**If you want to support us, our account is:
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With consideration,

The Editor
Hellenic Community of Goettingen