

Conference

“ European integration without Europe ”

Tuesday April 24th 2012

At 6 :00pm

Amphitheater Simone Weil
5 allée Jacques Berque, Nantes

By Franciszek Draus

Historian of political ideas

Biographical elements

Franciszek Draus, historian of political ideas, author of numerous essays on French and German political thought, author of "Historical criticism of the European idea" in three volumes:

1. Untraceable precursors: story of a mythology of the Middle Ages in the late nineteenth century (Paris, François-Xavier de Guibert, 2009);
2. The uncertain identity, undermined power: the idea of united Europe in the inter-war period (forthcoming 2012);
3. The < european integration > without Europe (forthcoming in 2012).

Theme of the conference

“ Can we make “European policy” without knowing what is Europe? Can we make « European policy” without thought and consciousness really European? Basically, what is the relationship between the political and institutional process that takes place over the last fifty years under the name of European integration and Europe, a civilization that for centuries had been a remarkable development and who had presided in the nineteenth century, the development of humanity, only to collapse politically and spiritually in the twentieth century? Can Europe still have a future?

To start thinking about these questions, we must rediscover the authentic European thought, that is to say the thought that had Europe as the only object and horizon, a thought why the word “Europe” had meaning and significance. We must learn to think of Europe in terms of identity and power.

The idea postulating the formation of a union of European states arose in the nineteenth century, and this not as a vision but as a concrete conclusion empirically based on the political evolution of the world, including the rapid development of U.S. and Russia, and - towards the end of this century, of Japan and China also. Strongly present in the European consciousness in the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly after the First World War, this idea might well have rescued a Europe devastated by the Second, but - in the ideological and strategic realities of the world since 1945 - it has lost its politics relevance. It went too far against the American and Soviet interests. This idea could have regained its political relevance after 1989, after the fall of communism. Alas, the Europeans proved unable to adapt this idea again.

Today, we commonly confuse the European Union and Europe. Isn't it time for a defense of Europe against or in spite of “European integration?”

Franciszek Draus