REJECTED DESIGNS FOR THE EUROPEAN FLAG What do discarded European flags tell us about the present state

of the "old continent"? In December 1955, when the Council





European flag consisting of twelve yellow stars arranged in a circle on a blue background, it simultaneously rejected over 150 designs that had been submitted since founding of the Council of Europe in 1949. The design drafts came from all over the world; however, most of them were submitted by men from West Germany and France. All the proposals were based on the assumption that European unity was the model for the future, though opinions differed as to which symbols might best

another war.

of Europe selected the design for the

unite Europe. The proposals ranged from the Swiss cross (Switzerland serving as a model for Europe here due to its



reference), all the way to the abstract map (an attempt to situate Europe territorially). The proposals are not without their share of imperialist fantasies: in many cases – as evidenced by the letters accompanying the design drafts — the flag becomes a symbol of the continent's cultural superiority over the rest of the world, and thus a testimony to the colonialist society of Europe of that time. The angles and motives for pursuing the idea of a united Europe differed drastically from one another: it was to be found both in the socialist-dominated resistance movements in fascist Italy, as well as in conservative and decidedly Eurocentric circles of the time. While the former had the liberation of the working classes in mind, the latter were concerned about the dwindling importance of Europe in world affairs. The only point on which they agreed was that European nationalisms could only be kept in check by joining

together to form a union, and that this was the only way to prevent

The European flag was therefore both a project of continental

peaceful multilingualism), to Strasbourg's coat of arms (a symbol

of Franco-German reconciliation and European post-war

achievements), to the star (a popular flag symbol and US

peace and a means of establishing a boundary to the outside world – an aspect also characteristic of Europe today, where the dismantling of internal borders goes hand in hand with an increasing number of barricades against foreigners and migrants. On a symbolic level too, the flag is used to delineate: as an early form of branding "Europe", it made the idea of a united Europe visually distinguishable and competitive vis-à-vis a national order for the first time, marking the beginning of a campaign of persuasion and advertising for its own cause that continues to this day. The rejected designs for the European flag will be published for the first time this October by the Berlin-based publishing house Wirklichkeit Books. The book features an essay by the poet and

writer Marie Rotkopf alongside the flag drawings and rather than

being a bourgeois hymn of praise for Europe, it is intended above

all to reveal the ambivalences and continuities of so-called European unity. Finally, the heterogeneous archive material illustrates the historical constructedness of the present situation and highlights the potential to participate in shaping it.

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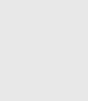
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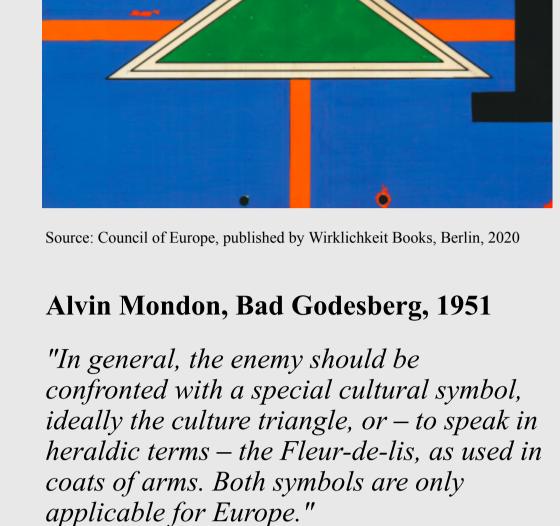
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Sep 09 2020

Jonas Von Lenthe

curating and research. His latest book "Responding to Particular Needs at a Precise Moment" (Spector Books 2018) is a photographic research about the interplay of formal and informal building practices in Tirana, Albania. He is founder of the Berlin-based publishing house Wirklichkeit Books and editor of its upcoming publication "Rejected. Designs for the European Flag".



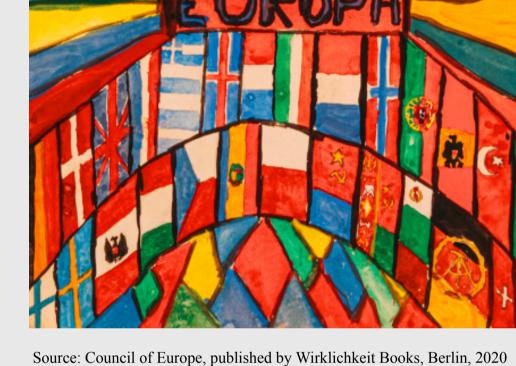


Skinge der Europraflagge



Hellas and Rome 2) the communality and equality of the United States of Europe 3) the affinity to the flag of the United States of America – here the number of sun rays, there the number of stars."





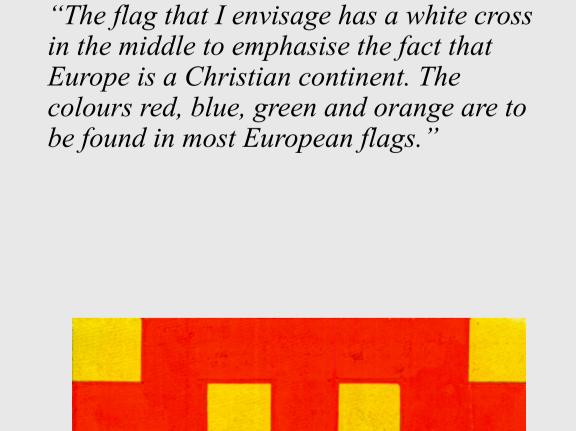
Unidentified, Undated

Source: Council of Europe, published by Wirklichkeit

Salvador de Madariaga, Oxford, 1952

Books, Berlin, 2020

"It should both express the unity and the variety of the continent... On a blue background, the European nations that were fully sovereign in 1938 will be represented each by a golden star on the spot occupied by its capital city on the map. Strasbourg will also be represented by a slightly bigger golden star."



Source: Council of Europe, published by Wirklichkeit Books, Berlin, 2020

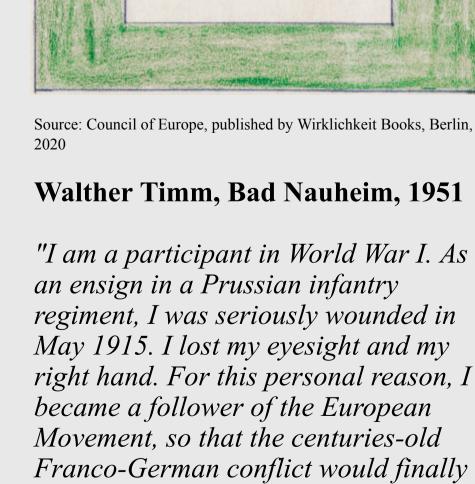
August Vincent, Monte Carlo, 1950

Source: Council of Europe, published by Wirklichkeit Books, Berlin, 2020 Wolfram Neue, Bad Ems, 1951 "I hereby take the liberty of

presenting you with some colorful

frats for a European flag. Since I am

doing this of my own volition, I do not lay claim to any fee."





Source: Council of Europe, published by Wirklichkeit Books, Berlin, 2020

Hanno F Konopath, Hamburg, 1952

"After all, I have been working on this wonderful task for many years, I came up with this artistic idea, which I continue to take great pleasure in, as does everyone I talk to about it, and now I would like this copyright to be recognized and protected just like any other."

"Rejected. Designs for the European Flag" was published in print

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