Jan SOWA

Jan Sowa (born 1976) is a dialectical materialist cultural theorist. He studied literature, philosophy and psychology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and University of Paris VIII in Saint-Denis, France. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology and a habilitation in cultural studies. He is Associate Professor in Anthropology of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Jagiellonian University and is also affiliated with Free University of Warsaw. He has edited and authored several books and published around one hundred articles in Poland and abroad (in France, United States, Mexico, Czech Republic and others). He co-edited a collection entitled *A Joy Forever: Political Economy of Social Creativity*, including essays by Luc Boltanski, Massimiliano Tomba, Isabelle Graw and Gigi Roggero, which appeared with MayFly Books (London) in 2015. Jan Sowa is currently Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Legislators, Interpreters and the Peripheries. Revisiting the European Divide

A longitudinal look at European history reveals a deep and enduring cultural and social split between the East and the West following more or less the river Elbe in present-day Germany and the Czech Republic (it flows along the line linking Hamburg with Prague). This line marked the final limit of expansion of the Roman Empire in late antiquity, the borders of the Carolingian empire in the Middle Ages (and, with it, of Western feudalism with its social, political and economic organization), the dividing line between the areas where serfdom gradually disappeared (the West) and where it was reinforced (the East) in early modern times, the boundary of Western absolutism, the split between urbanization and industrialization (the West) and underdevelopment and poverty (the East) at the birth of fully grown capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and – last but not least – the division between the Western world and the Soviet empire in the twentieth century. There is, of course, nothing metaphysical or natural about this cleavage. It stems from the original event that was the failure of Ancient Rome to include Central and Eastern Europe within its empire.