

Queries

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THE EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE MAGAZINE

FACING DEMOCRATIC MALAISE

A challenge for a political union

+ CONTRIBUTIONS

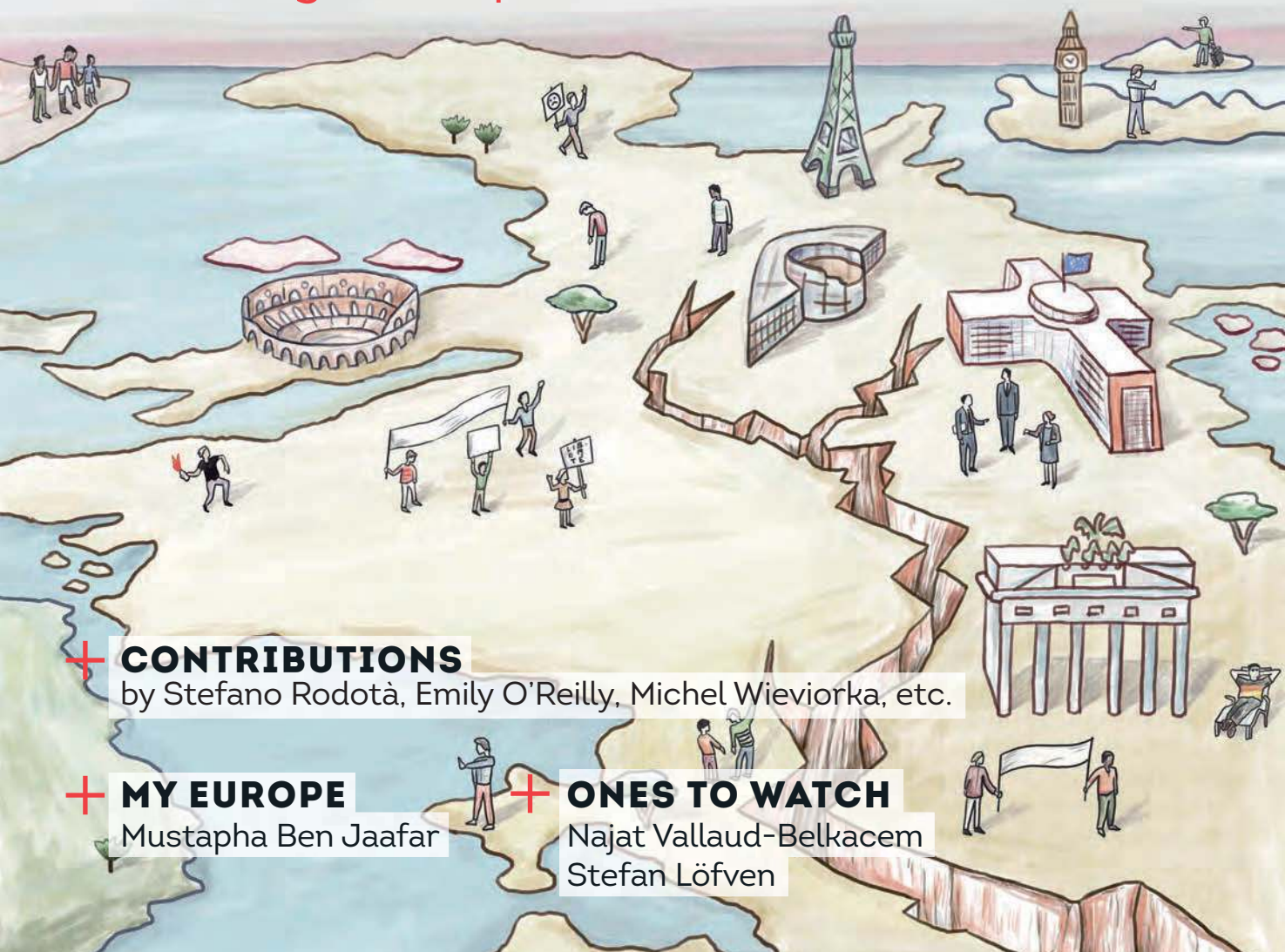
by Stefano Rodotà, Emily O'Reilly, Michel Wieviorka, etc.

+ MY EUROPE

Mustapha Ben Jaafar

+ ONES TO WATCH

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem
Stefan Löfven



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
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About Queries

*Isaac Newton's famous book "Opticks" concludes with a set of "Queries."
These "Queries" are not questions in the ordinary sense, but rather
rhetorical questions intended to stimulate thinking.
This was Newton's mode of explaining "by query."*



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Queries

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BEYOND TECHNOCRACY

a democratic agenda

by Massimo D'Alema,
FEPS President, former Prime Minister of Italy

In Europe, over the last three decades, we have witnessed a complex decline of the mass parties, albeit in different ways. In some countries, this decline has led to a significant systemic crisis and this process has been accompanied by a radical critique of traditional party politics. The Italian case, which I know better than any other for obvious reasons, is probably one of the best examples of both trends. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to rebuild the political system, and more recently, the development of Beppe Grillo's 5-Star Movement has demonstrated outright hostility toward the entire party political system.

The traditional fault lines around which political parties developed in the twentieth century no longer serve as the key to understanding society. I am referring to the conflicts between Church and State, between centre and periphery, to the major social conflicts and, in particular, that between labour and capital. We are in the midst of an era of political transformation, with increasing personalisation and media influence, and of the interference of unaccountable economic and financial actors. There have been attempts to address this at EU level and the Europarties have provided such an example over the past three decades. Yet they have not yet fulfilled their potential, even if the recent crisis has seen the PES become bolder in terms of policies and stronger due to their consequent consolidation*. But, beyond these latest developments, we cannot fully understand the crisis of political parties without taking into account the growing supremacy of economics over politics, which has considerably weakened political parties, transforming them and eroding their grassroots base, social ties and identity.

DEMOCRACY VS TECHNOCRACY

The weakening of national politics amid the tumultuous onslaught of economic globalisation has heralded a shift of real power to increasingly unaccountable and unapproachable groups bound to the economic paradigm of what has been called *pensée unique* (one-track thinking). This idea that "There Is No Alternative" has gradually nar-

rowed the space for free political debate. To some, it has rendered democratic participation meaningless, in terms of a citizens' capacity to choose between different options and to really influence their society's economy. Politics that lacks alternatives is reduced to performing the tasks required of it by the economic world and its army of loyal European Union civil servants.

"Do your homework." No expression better defines the phase we are going through: European technocracy sets the agenda and politics must limit itself to implementing the directives imposed by the dominant neoliberal paradigm. At the European level, this has also hampered progress toward integration, which has been lacking in the pursuit of social cohesion and democratic legitimacy. It is no coincidence that European integration is a major target of populist mobilisation. While populists tend to pit the people against the elites in national politics, at the European level they invoke the national ethnos against globalisation and technocratic outsiders. The neoliberal agenda pursued at European level has denied opportunities for growth and development and undermined social inclusion, which was once so central to European integration.

RECOVERY FROM A EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC MALAISE

The political parties, and with them democracy, can escape the stranglehold if they take action through both an upward and a downward shift. Upward because, clearly, Europe's national political parties can go back to having a function only if they have a supranational future; downward, with the aim of re-establishing a relationship with society, which of course requires the capacity to act on and implement various instruments of participation and joint decision-making. I am referring to the ability, which the large traditional parties have lacked so far, to use the web as a tool for participation and dialogue. If we want to prevent politics from building a separate elite that communicates with civil society over the web and through primaries, political parties themselves must also go back to being a community that operates on the basis of common convictions, bound by a sense of belonging.

*In the name of Political Union – Europarties on the rise, FEPS, Brussels 2014.

#03

Contents

Facing democratic malaise

A challenge for a political union

Page 33

INPUT

P. 9 MY VIEW

Pierre Kroll

“Ceci n'est pas une crise”



P. 12 ONES TO WATCH

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem

Stefan Löfven



P. 20 ANALYSIS

Christian Deubner on the EMU Reactions

by Christophe Caresche & Roberto Gualtieri



P. 24 COLUMN

Robert Kuttner & Lori Wallach

on new trade agreements



P. 26 VISION

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele

on climate change



P. 30 INSIGHT

Mojca Kleva Kekuš

on fairer taxation



www.queries-feps.eu

FOCUS

P. 34 FOREWORD

David Kitching



P. 36 ESSAY

Stefano Rodotà on the meaning of “populism”



P. 42 IN NUMBERS

Fabrice Pozzoli-Montenay & Christophe Sente on the media crisis



P. 46 OPINION

Emily O'Reilly on the challenges of European citizenship



P. 50 EUROPE WATCH

Doru Frantescu on populism in the EP



P. 52 INQUIRY

Democratic Malaise & Neoliberalism



P. 60 ESSAY

Sofia Vasilopoulou & Daphne Halikiopoulou on the Greek case



P. 66 COLUMN

Sunder Katwala on integration



P. 68 ESSAY

Usama Hasan & Charles Cooper on Islam and democracy



P. 74 CLOSEUP

Michel Wieviorka on French populism



P. 78 INTERVIEW

Andrea Peto on female populism



P. 82 ESSAY

Young Academics Network on youth and populism



P. 88 BEYOND EUROPE

Populism outside Europe



INSPIRATION

P. 96 MY EUROPE

What does Europe mean to Mustapha Ben Jaafar?



P. 100 PORTFOLIO

Carlos Spottorno & Vincent Marcilhacy on the PIGS



P. 110 MEET THE PRESS

Revolt in Ukraine



P. 114 REPORT

The FEPS Young Academics Network



P. 119 ZOOM

Kalevi Sorsa Säätiö



P. 120 DIARY

FEPS & Members



P. 124 PUBLICATIONS

Critiques by Christophe Bourseiller & Ernst Stetter



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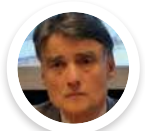
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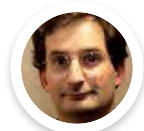
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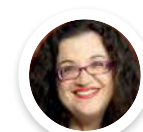
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INPUT

MY VIEW

Pierre Kroll

P. 9



ONES TO WATCH

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem

P. 12



ONES TO WATCH

Stefan Löfven

P. 16



ANALYSIS

Christian Deubner
Roberto Gualtieri
Christophe Caresche
P. 20



COLUMN

Robert Kuttner & Lori Wallach
P. 24



VISION

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele
P. 26



INSIGHT

Mojca Kleva Kekuš
P. 30



EUROPE

“Ceci n’est pas une crise”



© Patricia Mathieu

We have to educate people and fight the nationalistic knee-jerk reactions that make rich and poor alike believe they have something to gain by pushing others away. We can—we must—take our task seriously, but not too seriously, and more importantly, we have to laugh at our own misfortunes.



by Pierre Kroll

People sometimes cross paths. They may be heading directly where their fellow travellers came from. Sometimes no one really knows where anyone else is headed. Some are convinced the others are going the wrong direction and want to turn round, grab them and lead them on the right path. We are living in a time when a constant feeling of crisis, upheaval and deep-seated change looms large, giving rise to a widespread tendency to mourn the past and fantasise about a “comforting” return to rigid values, closed borders and simplistic rhetoric. Those who know that this “crisis” is not really a crisis, that the world will never revert to what it was before (and thankfully so!), must make these people understand that we need more Europe and not less, that instead of avoiding each other we must learn to live together, that we have to be optimistic and determined.

Europe is not popular. Nowadays it is no longer enough to show that the European Union has brought peace to its founding members and those who have joined since the Second World War. Not everything has been as advertised. We were promised unrealistic economic growth, endless opportunities and newfound freedoms. What is more, in a cowardly betrayal, many of the people who built the EU constantly denigrated it while doing so. Many politicians repeatedly blamed “Brussels” for everything that is unpopular while at the same time taking credit for the more popular decisions, even though they are made by the same Europe. The anti-European groups that have always existed in the founding member countries are now being joined, as neighbouring states come on board, by hordes of nationalist politicians going after European seats in an attempt to bring down the institution from within.

I am Belgian. I live in a country often described as Europe in miniature, where several different cultures coexist. I can clearly see how the idea of cutting ties—breaking things up and reas-

sembling them in smaller, autonomous entities, advocating the “every man for himself” approach in all its permutations—could be electorally advantageous.

As a cartoonist, I know first-hand that it takes a lot of imagination to talk about Europe without poking fun at the complexity of its institutions or the absurdity of certain decisions, without criticising the influence of lobbyists, the salaries of MEPs and civil servants, and the divide between citizens and the organs of power. And because humour loses much of its punch when it chooses cheerfulness over sarcasm, I use my drawings to emphasise the more negative aspects and, in my modest way, console people by helping them laugh at their misfortunes.

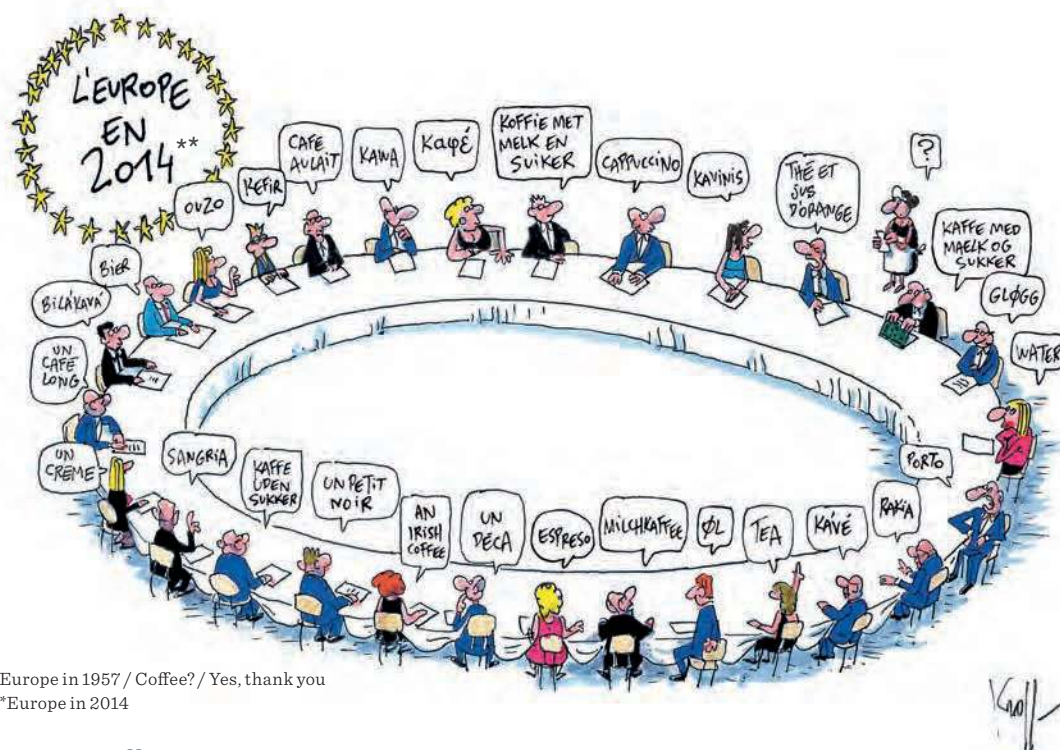
Another point I try to make whenever possible is that, while no opinion should be censored, we must not be taken in by the allure of the more simplistic among them.

**“WHILE NO OPINION
SHOULD BE CENSORED,
WE MUST NOT BE TAKEN
IN BY THE ALLURE OF THE
MORE SIMPLISTIC AMONG
THEM.”**

It may seem strange that writers, politicians and sociologists came up with the idea of asking me, a cartoonist, to join them in setting up a foundation that we have decided to call “Ceci n’est pas une crise” (“This is not a crisis”), a name

which, straight out of the box, invites us to think more deeply about the times in which we are living. For my country, Europe and indeed the world, experiencing an economic crisis is not like going through a short-lived bout of depression or indigestion. Like in the famous painting by my fellow countryman Magritte, “This is not a pipe”, what we see is not necessarily what we are told we are seeing. The foundation will seek to bring about a wide-scale shift in attitudes, so that we move towards a society committed to living together, to exploring new ideas and discussing ways to dispel the fears aroused by the changes. We have to prevent situations that compel communities to react react by turning in on themselves, and help build a post-national, European society.

Having said that, the experience will be so dreadfully serious that I’ll want to draw again!



*Europe in 1957 / Coffee? / Yes, thank you

**Europe in 2014

Pierre Kroll, born in 1958, is a press cartoonist and a household name in Belgium, where he publishes daily in the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* and in various magazines. Every Sunday he illustrates political debates live on Belgian public television. He is a member of the international association *Cartooning for Peace*. www.kroll.be



© Razak

NAJAT VALLAUD-BELKACEM TAKING ON THE FIGHT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

From an early childhood in the Moroccan countryside, to the post of France's Minister for Women's Rights, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem has already completed a remarkable journey. However, there is more to come from a 36-year-old who is determined to bring true equality for women in her adopted country.



by Trevor Huggins



s France's Minister for Women's Rights, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem has an agenda for change in a country where much has been achieved in

gender equality – but a great deal remains to be done. A cursory look at the vitriolic comments posted by members of the public on her website (www.najat-vallaud-belkacem.com) suggests the road ahead may be a rocky one. Fortunately, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem is no stranger to change, or to challenges where the odds were stacked against her. More importantly, she's a winner. Elected at city and regional level in Lyon and the Rhône before taking up her current role, her gender equality bill was passed by a crushing majority at its first reading in the National Assembly in January. With 359 votes for and only 24 against, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem seems determined to change French attitudes towards women. The one certainty is that she needs no lessons in coping with change herself – having had plenty of experience, and not all of it painless.

Born into a large extended family in rural Morocco, her childhood was turned upside down

when the Belkacems moved to France, where her father was a construction worker. The suburbs of the northern city of Amiens provided a sharp contrast to her previous life and, not surprisingly, the youngster fled. Not by leaving home, but by seeking escape in books and study. "The experience of exile and integration in a new country is obviously something that marks you very deeply, even though I was only four at the time," she told Queries. "School and books soon became a refuge and a means of emancipation and independence. I enjoyed learning straight away and, even today, I've kept a positive sense of curiosity when it comes to the new or unusual, or an opportunity that opens up." Her love of learning did not go unrequited. Having graduated with a law degree from Amiens University, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem gained a diploma from the prestigious Sciences-Po university in Paris before joining a legal practice. However, despite three years spent working on behalf of France's Conseil d'État, law was not destined to become her career. Jean-Marie Le Pen would see to that on April 21, 2002. By finishing second behind Jacques Chirac in the first round of the presidential poll, the extreme right-wing leader sent shockwaves through

Key Points

- She joined the Socialist Party after the extreme right reached the 2nd round of the 2002 presidential election.
- She believes that French women have gained certain rights, but that true equality has yet to be achieved.
- Her parliamentary bill aims to deliver gender equality in France by 2025.

France. "It's what made me become involved in politics and join the Socialist Party," the minister recalls. "I certainly had no idea at the time of standing for election. I just wanted to campaign, to live up to my duties as a citizen, to fight for the ideas, values and vision of society I believe in – and to combat the far-right."

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

The chance to put her politics into action arrived in 2003, via personal contacts, with a post in the cabinet of Lyon mayor, Gérard Collomb. Given a brief to promote citizens' rights and fight discrimination, she soon established herself as a hard working, capable and likeable politician. Elected as a regional councillor on the list of Jean-Jacques Queyranne, she quickly moved through the ranks to become a member of the Socialist Party's National Council. Her profile rose further in 2007 when a chance meeting with Ségolène Royal led to her becoming a spokeswoman for the presidential candidate. It proved to be a year of setbacks, with Ségolène Royal's unsuccessful

"EQUALITY NEEDS TO BE A PRINCIPLE THAT'S ENSHRINED **IN EVERY ORGANISATION**, AND BECOMES A NATURAL PART OF THE WAY PEOPLE THINK."

campaign being coupled with Najat Valaud-Belkacem's defeat in the legislative elections. However, she rebounded the following year by taking a former right-wing stronghold in Lyon's cantonal elections, and winning in municipal polls. "The challenge was to take a canton that had been held by the right for decades," she says. "Winning an election under your own name, in those conditions, obviously gives you confidence – and also makes you face up to your responsibilities." Those responsibilities increased when her political career really took off during 2012. Chosen as a spokeswoman for François Hol-



© Razak

lande's presidential campaign, her reward after his victory was a twin role as minister and government spokeswoman. However, bearing two responsibilities has been a recurring theme in her life. Dual nationality, a double-barrelled married name and political roles in both Paris and Lyon, it's perhaps not surprising that she is also the mother of twins.

CHANGING MENTALITIES

This does not mean, though, that Najat Vallaud-Belkacem lacks focus. The challenge ahead will demand single-mindedness in a nation where the ministerial post for women's rights had been abandoned for 26 years before her appointment. Her bill aims to make gender equality a reality in France by 2025, a target that she accepts is ambitious. "Major advances have been made over the past few decades, but I'd say the most important steps are still to be taken; steps to inspire a profound change in people's mentalities so that equality becomes a reflex in every aspect of life," she says. "It's what I call the third generation of women's rights; after the law first ended discrimination against women - by giving them the vote and the right to work - and then gave them specific rights to do with their gender - such as contraception and abortion. Equality needs to be a principle that's enshrined in every organisation, and becomes a natural part of the way people think. And that's the aim of this bill. I also think that equality should bring people together. Men, in particular, should embrace a change that will benefit them too." Clearly, this is not an issue only for the French. With the European Parliament elections looming, progressives need to deliver a proactive message about Europe - in all aspects of our society. "We have to reawaken people's desire for a Europe that's strong, sure of its values and represents an ideal in the world," declared Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. "And promoting women's rights and equality certainly has its place within that."

"I THINK THAT **EQUALITY SHOULD BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. MEN SHOULD EMBRACE A CHANGE THAT WILL BENEFIT THEM TOO.**"



© Razak

ABOUT

*Born in 1977 in northern Morocco's Rif region, **Najat Vallaud-Belkacem** moved to France aged four. She achieved academic success and left an early career as a jurist to move into politics in France's second city, Lyon. A member of the Rhone Regional Council since 2008, she was a spokeswoman for François Hollande in 2012, becoming minister and government spokeswoman after he was elected president.*



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STEFAN LÖFVEN, FROM WELDER TO PROGRESSIVE LEADER

From 1925 to 2006, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) had five different leaders, a position that always came with a second job: prime minister. After eight turbulent years in opposition that have seen two party leaders come and go, 2014 offers new hopes, with both European and national elections. It can be the SAP's 'comeback year' and it is largely up to Stefan Löfven: a foster child who went from welder to major trade unionist to party leader – and soon prime minister?



by Eric Sundström

Stefan Löfven's office at the Swedish parliament – the Riksdag – is as formal as you would expect. But ask him why the welder became a trade

unionist and his story will take you back to the environment of a machine shop.

At Löfven's first job as a welder, labourers had to sit along the wall on toolboxes while the clerks had tables and chairs. "A simple screen was supposed to separate the machine shop from where we ate, so you had to cover your food from the metal shavings flying around", Löfven recalls.

He knew there were spare chairs and tables at the company's educational centre, and asked if he could borrow them for his workmates. "That's how everything started," he says. If you ask him to motivate his practical action in political lingo, you will get a credo that also inspired his step into politics: all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. "If there's one thing that makes me upset, that's when a human being is treated badly – or when a group of people are treated worse than others. That goes right here," he says, pointing at his heart.

The paradox of Löfven's office at the Riksdag is that he is not one of its members. When he was elected as party leader in January 2012, he was still holding the position where his long journey as a trade unionist brought him: president of IF Metall, the union of metal workers. "Everything tended to be more direct in the union," he says when asked about his entry into politics. Indeed, Swedish parliamentary life has become more complex since the Sweden Democrats – a xenophobic populist party with roots linked to neo-Nazism – became part of the Riksdag in 2010.

The Moderates, the conservative party turned centrist by current Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, led a majority government with three smaller centre-right parties from 2006 to 2010. His coalition was re-elected in 2010, beating a red-green alliance led by Mona Sahlin. But the entry of the Sweden Democrats meant that Reinfeldt's government had to carry on as a minority government. As a result, Reinfeldt's second term has been lacklustre at best – something that Löfven would like to avoid. "We have seen how the political right, both in Sweden and in other European countries, has undermined the welfare

Key Points

→ After starting his career as a welder, Stefan Löfven became the president of IF Metall and then the leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

→ He hopes for a score of at least 35% in the next national elections, so that the SAP does not need an alliance to govern.

→ Contrary to most Swedish left-wing leaders, he embraces globalisation and trade.

state. The growth of both xenophobic and populist parties is the result," he observes, regarding the challenge ahead.

BACK TO BASICS

The main task for Löfven in 2014 is therefore to win in a way that would enable him to govern – and win again in 2018. Therefore, the SAP will not enter a formal alliance before the election, hoping to regain its position as the sun around which the other parties turn. Löfven states that he is then ready to cooperate with his natural allies – the Greens and the Left party – but also with the Liberals and the agrarian Centre party that are part of the current government.

The key in such a scenario is the SAP's election score, recently set by the party at a minimum of 35% of the votes. Löfven has also set another ambitious goal for its return to power: Sweden shall have the lowest unemployment rate in the EU by 2020. Currently nine EU-countries have lower unemployment than Sweden, where youth unemployment, which reaches 25%, is a major problem. In addition to the focus on jobs, the

SAP has managed to regain trust in its educational policy, fuelled by reports of Sweden's free-fall in the global Pisa education rankings. Among the policy proposals, reducing the size of school classes by five pupils and a 90-day guarantee for unemployed youth have earned praise. "If you become unemployed, you will get help from day one, and within 90 days you will be in educational training, practicing at a workplace, in a regular job – or in a combination of these," Löfven explains.

The SAP has accepted most of the huge tax cuts made by the current government, but fixing the nowadays-hollow welfare system will be costly. It is not yet sure if the election will be framed as "reforms vs. tax cuts", yet Löfven has

"THE POLITICAL RIGHT HAS UNDERMINED THE WELFARE STATE, RESULTING IN THE GROWTH OF BOTH XENOPHOBIC AND POPULIST PARTIES."



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“WE HAVE A LOT OF NEW REFORMS, **BUT ALSO ACTIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICIES** TO MAKE THE ECONOMY GROW SO THAT WE CAN PAY FOR THEM.”

one important friend: the general urge for change. After eight years, many voters seem to have had enough of tax cuts. The attention is turning to what The Economist has called “the silent revolution” – the deregulation of the welfare state, where private companies now run schools as well as elderly homes and nurseries. An additional concern is the growing inequality. According to a survey of its members by the OECD, Sweden is the country where income inequality has increased the most during the last two decades. Löfven turns directly to equality when asked about his basic political values. He quotes the guiding clause of the SAP party program and underlines the most important words by gently knocking on the table in front him. “It’s all in here. Democracy before the market, equality and solidarity going hand in hand, the creation of a good life for citizens.”

THE WELDER’S APPROACH

A life at the Swedish Metal Workers’ Union implies – maybe surprisingly for some – that Löfven embraces globalisation and trade, and he regards the EU as a possibility as long as workers’ rights are improved, not threatened. He impresses business people on a regular basis, both home and abroad, with his knowledge of innovation policy, the rebirth of industry and its integration to the service sector, and the need for venture capital. Contrary to many left-wing politicians, he seems to prefer talking about what he calls the “obligatory program” (a growing economy), compared to the easy part of spending money on reforms. “We have come a long way,” he says. “We have a lot of new reforms, but also active industrial policies to make the economy grow

so that we can pay for them.” To underline the modern touch that the SAP tries to add after the turbulent years in opposition, the old party of the industrial age now labels itself “the party of the future.”

If the likeable welder can continue his on-going transformation to a statesman who enjoys political conflict over trade union consensus, Löfven might very well get the second job that leaders of the SAP used to have: prime minister. But a welder being on the brink of reaching the highest political office can provoke both curiosity and scepticism. Can a worker really become prime minister?

“History has proven that it is possible,” says Löfven, recalling how Lula started as a shoe-cleaner in the ABC region outside São Paulo. Lula then became an industrial worker, a trade union leader, and finally the president of Brazil on his fourth attempt. “But I promise to win right from the first try,” Löfven’s quickly adds with a smile.

ABOUT

Stefan Löfven was born in Stockholm in 1957, and arrived in Sunnersta in northern Sweden as a foster child, at only ten months old. He played ice hockey while growing up and formed a social democratic youth club inspired by Olof Palme’s internationalism. He briefly went to university in Umeå but became a welder instead and worked at Hägglunds (a combat and all terrain vehicles company) from 1979 to 1995. He got his first trade union commitment in 1981 and ended up as the president of IF Metall (2006-2012). Löfven has been a member of the Executive Committee of the SAP since 2005, and was elected party leader in January 2012.

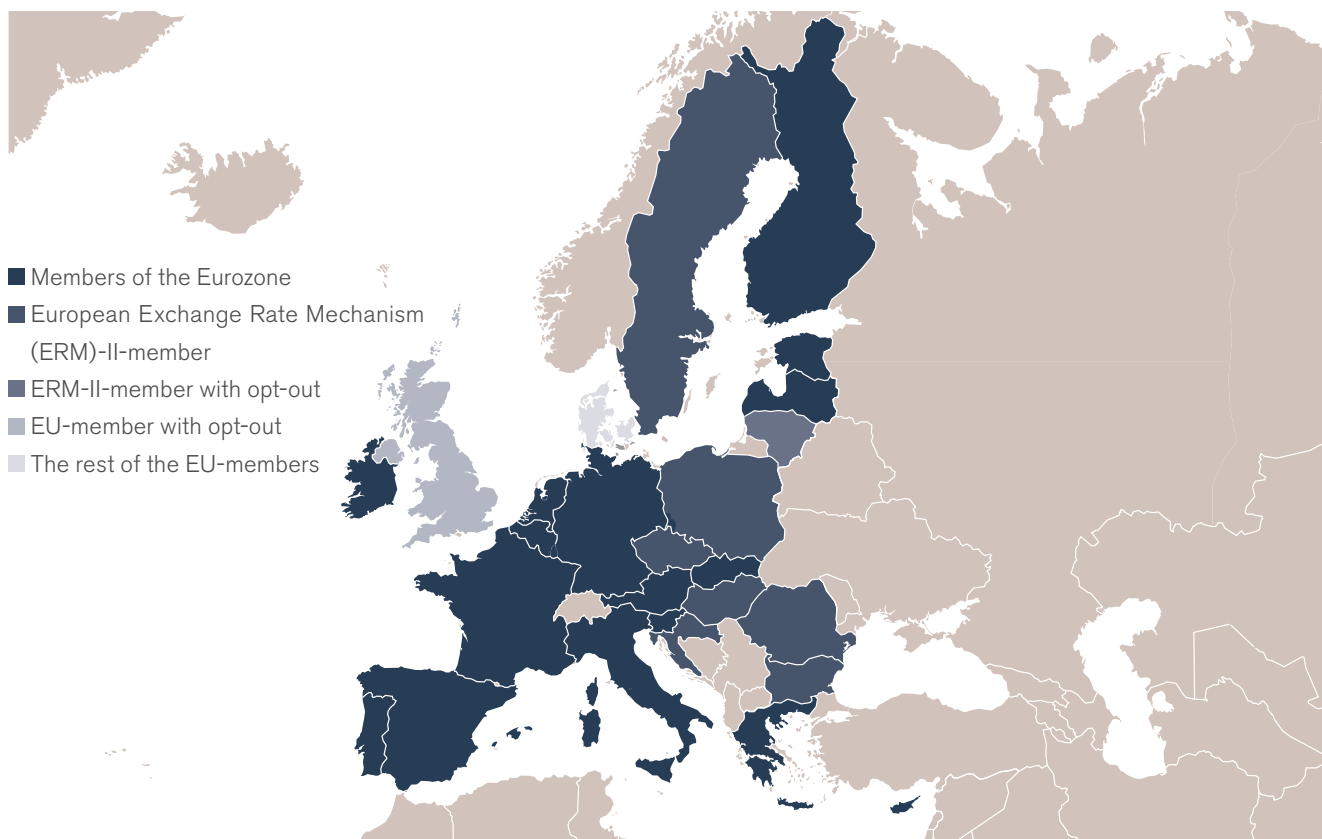
PARLIAMENTS AND THE EMU

a crossroads for Europe?

Parliaments clearly have a significant role to play in the reformed governance of the European Monetary Union (EMU). However, that involvement is not without its dilemmas.



by Christian Deubner



“CAN EMU WITHIN THE 28 MEMBER STATES **HOLD TOGETHER ON MAJOR POLICY ISSUES?**”

The reformed governance of EMU has brought with it difficulties for parliaments that are ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ in

nature. The vertical challenge is that budgetary, fiscal and economic policies will all remain within the national competence – with EMU limited to a coordinating functioning. However, at the same time, EU institutions such as the Commission, European Court of Justice and European Parliament were given major roles in the creation and application of the new governance roles – and will intervene significantly in EMU-Member States policymaking. Faced with this, national parliaments cannot carry on as before – as they will have to vote on draft legislation that originated in Brussels – and the European Parliament cannot take their place.

The medium-term prospects for Euro governance from this vertical view are two-fold. Firstly, intergovernmental decision-making for EMU looks set to continue, with a restricted Euro group forming part of a larger Union. Secondly, the extension of the Euro to the whole of the EU appears illusory.

As a result, the task ahead is not to design an Economic and Monetary Community,

but to find ways of improving parliamentary collaboration for an inter-governmental EMU. It will be a challenging, if not to say thankless, task.

RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A key point to be made about Euro governance is the need to intervene in two areas: the creation and implementation of new norms, and the involvement of two actors, national parliaments and the European Parliament. The new legislation issue has been resolved, with the European Parliament having full co-decision rights on the new secondary law and national parliaments ratifying the TSCG fiscal pact. However, there is still work to be done in implementation.

The ‘horizontal’ dilemma is two-fold too; that not all Member States belong to the Eurozone – and yet the EU’s institutions make decisions about Euro matters with all of its members as a matter of principle. The first statement begs the question whether EMU within the 28 Member States can hold together on major policy issues. The second raises the question whether the Commission and Parliament’s participation can still be justified, given the

Key Points

- Treaty structures of EMU must be preserved
- Frameworks of enhanced cooperation must be rejected
- Treaty praxis must be adapted to treaty reality
- The EP must find a durable and credible procedure which concedes voting right on operational Eurogroup affairs only to MEPs of this group.

ever-deeper interference in matters of national competence in only a limited number of Member States. By way of response, I would propose:

- on the one hand to preserve the Treaty structures of EMU, and to reject a framework of enhanced cooperation;
- but on the other hand, to adapt treaty praxis more to treaty reality and find, inside the EP, a durable and credible procedure which concedes voting right on operational Euro group affairs only to MEPs of this group.

VOTING RIGHTS ON EURO ISSUES

However, returning to the earlier question of the vertical dilemma, what kind of measures should the European Parliament have the power to exert? The short answer is fixing the annual economic and budgetary parameters for the EMU Member States to follow, such as the Annual Growth Reviews and the Autumn Forecasts. Initially, these could be decided in full plenary session. However, if the European Parliament gained a degree of co-decision about executive measures that concerned just the Euro group, then a restriction of the vote to Euro group MEPs would appear in order. By contrast, any national declarations of intent or political decisions, such as national reform programs, or stability and convergence programs, need to be excluded from the European Parliament and remain the preserve of national parliaments.

My recommendation is that the EP does not receive any new competences of co-deliberation or co-decision – at least until the relevant policy fields and budgets are transferred to Community competence. Such an eventuality is possible; that EMU governance becomes even more Community-led

“THE EP SHALL NOT RECEIVE ANY NEW COMPETENCES OF CO-DELIBERATION OR CO-DECISION.”

and the EP has a more significant role to play as a result. However, as the likes of the German Constitutional Court and the Institut Schuman in Paris have regularly highlighted, the European Parliament needs to be more representative if it is to have greater legitimacy vis-à-vis European citizens – especially as decisions taken at EMU level increasingly affect their daily lives. This report predicts only small, short-term advances for the EP, notably towards more parliamentary intervention into an executive-dominated intergovernmental process. Progress may have to be achieved by individual inter-institutional arrangements rather than by a generalized attribution of competence.

DISAPPOINTMENT IN VILNIUS

This report takes note of research on the national parliaments' re-empowerment regarding the massive intrusions of the reformed EMU governance. Of particular interest here is the aspect which links the national parliaments directly to the EP, i.e. the much-discussed Interparliamentary Conference introduced by the TSCG Art.13. Despite the high expectations, the conference's inaugural session in Vilnius in October was a considerable disappointment. However, the divergence of interest and declared positions between the European Parliament and certain national parliaments had been clear since the spring of 2013. The EP was supported by the large majority of national parliaments in

only seeking a very modest role for the IPC, while a few national parliaments, especially the French Assembly, advocated a strong IPC, especially on the sensitive issues of stability policies. The result was a let-down for the French-led initiative, and the session reached neither a consensus on the mission, composition or organisation of this new assembly. And it now begs the question – ‘where do we go from here’?



ABOUT

Christian Deubner is a German political scientist and economist. A member of the FEPS Scientific Council, he is an expert in European integration and Franco-German relations. He also teaches the politics of the European Union at the Berlin campus of the New York University.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: A VOTE FOR THE EURO

by Christophe Caresche

I agree with Christian Deubner's idea of according European Parliament voting rights only to MEPs representing euro zone economies - when it's an EMU issue. I think we're increasingly seeing two concentric circles in the EU – an inner circle of countries using a common currency and, around this, a group of countries who are part of a common market. I also believe that EMU states should be allowed to create their own economic instruments – for example, a budgetary capacity – because I believe that the very future of the euro is at stake. And I don't think that's something that can be settled by 28 countries.

As for the question of new competences, I think that the Strasbourg parliament could express itself more forcefully than it currently does on the Annual Growth Survey. Given that this macro-economic debate concerns all EMU countries, the European Parliament could, for example, subject the document to a vote. However, I'm completely hostile to the idea that it could issue recommendations – either for the euro zone as a whole or for individual countries – since these are subjects for discussion between governments and national parliaments, and the Commission and the Council of Europe.

I deeply regret the failure of the Vilnius conference because I believe that, rather than being in opposition to each other, Strasbourg and the national parliaments should try to be complementary. It's just a question of finding the right methods and means. At Vilnius, the position taken by MEPs was a very closed one – in my opinion because their parliament is concerned about its true role and also its legitimacy vis-à-vis national parliaments. But I believe this fear on their part is exaggerated and that the failure will prove to be a temporary one. We have to re-start these discussions about Article 13, once the European elections are over in May.

Christophe Caresche has been a Socialist Party deputy of France's National Assembly since 1997. A Paris city councillor since 1995 and a former regional councillor of the Ile-de-France, he is the secretary of the Assembly's commission on European affairs.

THE PRIMACY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

by Roberto Gualtieri

The kind of asymmetry we saw with Article 136, where regulation was voted on solely by eurozone members of the Council of Ministers - but by the whole European Parliament, only strengthens rather limits democratic legitimacy. Given that most MEPs are from the eurozone, it's only right that those who have excluded themselves from it are taken into consideration – since they too are affected by eurozone decisions. The Lisbon Treaty states that MEPs represent all European citizens, and not those of Member States. We shouldn't turn back from this.

I agree that inter-parliamentary cooperation should be strengthened – in terms of their roles at their respective levels; i.e. the European Parliament for EU affairs and national parliaments for Member States. But I don't think such cooperation should lead to organisations or conferences with a direct political role – that's the job of the European Parliament. Cooperation should be about sharing best practices and information, taking a European perspective on national issues, and strengthening ties among Europe's political families. It's a hugely important task.

I wouldn't say Vilnius was a failure; it didn't agree a definition of the regulations of the conference but we're in uncharted territory. Also, there are two principles here: that such conferences should discuss issues, not decide or vote on them – and that conferences must be jointly agreed between national parliaments and the European Parliament. Neither element was present in Vilnius, so a period of further reflection was decided. I'm sure the problem can be resolved, but the European Parliament would never accept a conference going beyond the limits I've outlined.

Roberto Gualtieri has been a Democratic Party MEP since 2009. He leads the Socialist and Democratic (S&D) group in the Constitutional Affairs Commission and is on the European Parliament's negotiating team for EMU reform.

NEW TRADE AGREEMENTS

a threat to democracy?

by Robert Kuttner & Lori Wallach



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Robert Kuttner is the co-editor of *The American Prospect*, a professor at Brandeis University and a senior fellow at Demos. He is also the author of *“Debtors Prison: the Politics of Austerity Versus Possibility.”*

Lori Wallach is an American lawyer, social activist, and director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch, which monitors the World Trade Organization and other trade agreements, such as NAFTA and CAFTA.

The proposed new trade agreements, the TPP for the Pacific region and the proposed T-TIP for the US and the EU, have little to do with trade and a lot to do with dismantling the capacity of governments to regulate markets in a broad public interest.

In this, they are extending a path already well-trodden by the World Trade Organization. Though T-TIP is a government-to-government exercise, the agendas have been set primarily by private industry and finance. The negotiating process is closed and non-transparent, with the agendas set mainly by corporations. There is bias in who is deemed an expert advisor to the official negotiators, with an insider role being given to corporate elites. There are more than 600 official U.S. corporate trade advisors with security clearance to see draft agreement texts. NGOs, trade unions and environmentalists are largely excluded.

When the WTO was established in 1994, few were aware of the expansive obligations contained in the 900 pages of non-tariff rules. Since then, many WTO requirements and outcomes have surprised governments, the press and the public. Of the 186 completed disputes, a government policy was ruled to violate WTO rules in 92 percent of cases. Of these, 53 involved public interest policies from food safety to medicine patent policies, and environmental standards to development policy. The WTO ruled against 98 percent of these policies.

Building on the WTO, a Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) has been a long-standing project of the Transatlantic Business

Council. The TBC provides a forum for the largest U.S. and EU corporations to coordinate a joint attack on the best consumer, environmental, climate, and other public interest policies on both sides of the Atlantic. Among the goals for T-TIP-TAFTA are roll-backs of EU consumer data privacy protections, limits on Internet freedom and new pharmaceutical firm rights to contest nation-

“THE GOAL FOR T-TIP-TAFTA IS TO ELIMINATE ‘TRADE IRRITANTS’.”

al healthcare drug reimbursement list approvals and prices. The stated goal for T-TIP-TAFTA is to eliminate what they call “trade irritants” that limit their ability to move a product between the U.S. and EU or to operate as service providers, investors or manufacturers in both zones under the same rules without government interference. These supposed trade irritants are in fact the fundamental food safety, environmental, health and other policies comprising the social compact on which we all rely. They also call for T-TIP to impose a ceiling on such safeguards by replacing domestic U.S. and EU policies with trans-Atlantic standards that are better for business.

AN ATTACK ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Corporations would be empowered to direct-

ly attack domestic health, financial, environmental and other public interest policies that they view as undermining their new foreign investor rights by dragging the U.S. and EU governments before extrajudicial tribunals. These tribunals organised under World Bank and UN rules would be authorized to order unlimited taxpayer compensation for domestic policies or government actions seen as undermining corporations’ “expected future profits.” The tribunals are comprised of three private sector attorneys, unaccountable to any electorate, many of whom rotate between serving as “judges” and bringing cases as private attorneys on behalf of corporations against governments. In the normal democratic process, this would be rejected as a flagrant conflict of interest and an assault on the independence of the judiciary.

So what lessons can be learned from 20 years of WTO and bilateral deals? How can consciousness be raised about the true goals and consequences of T-TIP and similar agreements? There is also a more fundamental question to be asked – about whether trade agreements could or should be a force for raising standards in social, labour and environmental matters, among others. We propose a joint project of European and U.S. progressive leaders to discuss how awareness might be raised about the consequences of TTIP, how such trade agreements might be used to raise rather than lower social standards, and how coordination among European and American critics could be improved.



On the way
to COP 21
Paris 2015

HAVE WE ACCURATELY ASSESSED *the challenge of climate change?*

Vice-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and professor of climatology at Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium, **Jean-Pascal van Ypersele** offers a reminder of what should be an obvious fact: if we want to protect the climate as decided in Copenhagen, instead of “reducing” CO₂ emissions, we need to achieve zero—or even negative—global emissions well before the end of the century! There are solutions but we need to act fast: the higher emissions rise, the more drastically they will need to be cut.



Interview by Yves de Saint Jacob



queries: The European Union is in the process of drawing up its 2030 roadmap to combat climate

change, which will set more far-reaching goals than the 2020 targets introduced in 2008. This comes just a few weeks after publication of the first part of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, which is a key milestone, given that the previous report dates back to 2007. As a result, we have updates on two fronts. Would you say the ambitions of European politicians reflect the concerns of the world's scientific experts?

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele: As vice-chair of the IPCC, I cannot comment on Europe's new targets. The IPCC is extremely careful in this regard. Our reports aim to provide relevant scientific information to help draw up climate policies: IPCC reports are policy-relevant, not policy-prescriptive.

I will make one thing clear, however, from a simple, mathematical standpoint: if the European "package" is the only solution on the table, then no, it will not be enough. First, because Europe represents just 15% of the world's total emissions. If the 85% of greenhouse gases emitted every year around the globe are not reined in, then there is no solution; even if the EU targeted a 100% reduction in emissions, it would not be enough.

On the eve of the publication of the European Commission's proposals, I tweeted a quick reminder of the overall context because I knew I would be asked to comment on the matter. If we are to meet the target set by world leaders—and not by the IPCC—at the Copenhagen summit (i.e. limit the average global temperature increase to 2°C above the pre-industrial value), we will need to achieve zero global emissions well before the

"WE WILL HAVE TO MOVE TOWARDS NEGATIVE GLOBAL EMISSIONS, WHICH MEANS WE WILL NEED TO ABSORB MORE CO₂ THAN WE EMIT!"

end of the century. Somewhere between 2060 and 2100. We will then have to move towards negative global emissions, which means we will need to absorb more CO₂ than we emit! That is a real challenge, and one that the IPCC identified back in 2007. It does not get enough exposure.

Q.: Are the leaders of the world aware of the challenge?

J.P.v.Y.: I think very few decision-makers have grasped the real implications of such a goal. At the Copenhagen summit, some even suggested limiting the temperature rise to 1.5°C, even though the IPCC scenario I am talking about—the first scenario, the most demanding—would still leave us just over the 2°C mark by 2100, not under. One thing is certain, though: if we stick to the business-as-usual scenario, we will pass the 2°C limit shortly before 2050.

Q.: So are we expected to stop breathing and prevent cows from grazing?

J.P.v.Y.: Of course not. But we will need to capture the carbon from big power plants that are still producing CO₂ before it is released into the atmosphere. And we will need to adopt the kind of proactive approach summed up by the acronym BECCS, which stands for "Bio-Energy with Carbon Capture and Storage". The only known way of achieving that goal on a large scale today is through the use of biomass plants coupled with carbon capture and storage. The organic matter is used

to "hold" the CO₂; the biomass is burned to provide energy; then the CO₂ is captured and sequestered underground.

There are, of course, a whole array of related issues, including how to produce the biomass in a sustainable manner and how to determine the impact on the environment and on food production. BECCS is the theory, on paper. However, we cannot rule out future innovations or other energy sources such as renewables and nuclear. The IPCC refuses to fall into that trap. As I said earlier, our job is to objectively assess the scientific research available around the world, not to make recommendations.

Q.: To come back to Europe, even if it has a relatively small quantitative impact, couldn't its initiatives still serve as an example or model?

J.P.v.Y.: Yes, but there is still the matter of historical responsibility. All studies show that only part of the planet has been responsible for the large majority of total emissions since 1750. Those who have most enjoyed the benefits of the Industrial Revolution—first England, then Europe, then North America, then other industrialised countries—are not spread evenly around Earth.

That is a fact acknowledged in the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The historical responsibility of developed countries outweighs that of developing countries. As a



José Manuel Barroso at the Copenhagen Summit, which pointed out the weak results of the EU in terms of actions against climate change.

Key Points

→ The historical responsibility of developed countries outweighs that of developing countries. As a result, it falls to the former to take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.

→ Copenhagen was not a huge success but there has been one very positive outcome in the decision to limit the maximum increase in global temperature to 2°C. That is a decision that has taken 17 years to mature.

→ If we aim to meet the target set by world leaders—and not by the IPCC—at the Copenhagen summit, we will need to achieve zero global emissions somewhere between 2060 and 2100.

→ Many manufacturers are willing but let us refrain from changing the rules every six months and make sure there is a level playing field.

result, it falls to the former to “take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.”

Political science teaches us that any international agreement can only be effective if the vast majority—preferably all—parties at the table perceive the agreement as fair.

The notion of historical responsibility must therefore be explicitly or implicitly taken into account to ensure that the agreement sought at the 2015 summit in Paris can come into effect. Those who have emitted very little CO₂ will refuse to be party to an uneven accord. Conversely, it is hard to believe that half the world—the developing world—could pretend it is not affected and expect to do whatever it wants on the pretext that it has been responsible for very few emissions in the past. On a sinking ship, you wouldn't see half of the crew bailing out while the others stand idly by and watch the water pour in.

Q.: Do you think there has been progress in terms of the international consensus on the need to take action?

J.P.v.Y.: People are more aware of the fact that climate change is a problem. That awareness is also widespread. If it weren't, there would not have been so many heads of state at the Copenhagen conference.

The media labelled Copenhagen a failure. I am not saying that it was a huge success—I am not naïve—but there has been one very positive outcome in the decision to set a limit of 2°C for the maximum increase in global temperature. In the past, we would vaguely talk about avoiding any dangerous anthropogenic interference. It has taken 17 years for a clear decision to emerge. As a result, the IPCC can now explore ways of achieving that target. Naturally, this must now lead to measures that will have a tangible impact. Since the 1992 Convention, anthropogenic emissions have increased by 50% in 20 years. Contrast that with the fact that we need to get those emissions down to zero in a little over 50 years—then make them negative—if we are to achieve the objectives set by elected officials. Let me reiterate, this is not an IPCC objective, it is the target set by the politicians. We cannot change everything overnight; but bearing in mind that we are aiming to bring emissions below zero, if levels rise another 30% or 40%, then we will only be widening the rift! The longer levels continue to rise, the lower they will have to be brought below zero, since it is the total emissions that count. The sooner we start lowering emissions, the less drastically they will need to be cut.

Q.: Has the global financial crisis had a negative impact in this regard?

J.P.v.Y.: The financial crisis began at roughly the same time as the Copenhagen conference and undoubtedly put the issue of climate change on the back burner, so to speak. Nowadays, politicians have a lot of short-term priorities, which means the more-long-term problems, such as climate change, have been somewhat overshadowed.

Do not forget, every tonne added to unchecked emissions leads to a rise in temperature. Every year we fail to tackle the problem makes the solution even tougher. We are running out of room to manoeuvre.

Q.: Who are the key players in the fight against climate change? Countries? International organisations? Citizens? Companies?

J.P.v.Y.: The big question is: "Are we moving swiftly enough towards the goal?" But, yes, of course, that does involve determining who "we" are.

International organisations—let's say the "United Nations machinery"—is vital in tackling such a global problem. Without international agreement, with only sporadic efforts here and there, we will never be able to implement initiatives on the kind of scale needed to have sufficient impact.

The seven billion people on the planet—soon to be nine or ten billion—all have a share of the responsibility to a certain extent. However, as the 1992 UN Framework Convention acknowledges, although there are common responsibilities, they are differentiated according to when the various parties began to take up the tools of the Industrial Revolution.

I must also underscore the role of companies. There comes a point when citizens cannot be expected to build cities that no longer require heating, or to go and scoop

CO₂ from the atmosphere with a teaspoon! We need machines, heavy equipment and investments. That means we need companies, large and small.

Q.: But are they ready to cooperate?

J.P.v.Y.: For nearly 20 years, I have chaired the Energy & Climate working group for Belgium's Federal Council for Sustainable Development, which comprises representatives from across the board. I have been working with industry for a long time.

Those in industry really loathe uncertainty, and especially unexpected rule changes. They are willing to invest but only if they are given a clear, stable framework—even if that framework evolves over time. For instance, we could announce progressively more stringent standards in the next 25 years. Provided things are made clear in advance, industry can do its sums.

Industry also hates an uneven playing field. If manufacturers are required to respect a rule, they expect their main competitors to be made to do the same.

We must take these two expectations into account and set far-reaching targets. Many manufacturers are willing to say: "Tomorrow, I will sell you cars and machines that reduce emissions, but don't change the rules on me every six months and make sure there is a level playing field."

Q.: All of these efforts have a financial impact. What is the cost of combating global warming? And what is the price of inaction?

J.P.v.Y.: In its 2007 report, the IPCC calculated the cost of measures to be taken by 2030, and even by 2050. Those costs are not enormous: they correspond to slowing average annual global GDP growth by some 0.12 percentage points. They are quite easy to calculate: we know how much it costs to

build a zero-energy home, to renovate ageing homes, to replace outdated bulbs with LEDs and to develop public transport.

In contrast, it is extremely hard to assess the potential global cost of doing nothing; the price of inaction. What will come of climate change and other anthropogenic impacts? The IPCC will attempt to provide a clearer answer to this question in the other parts of its Fifth Assessment Report, which are due for release in March and April, but that is no easy task.



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ABOUT

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele,

Vice-chair of the IPCC, is a physicist and a climatologist. He is a professor in climate and environmental sciences at the Université Catholique de Louvain. He has been involved in the IPCC as delegate (since 1995), author (for the 2001 IPCC report), Bureau member (since 2002), and Vice-chair (since 2008).

FAIRER TAXATION

for a fairer society

by Mojca Kleva Kekuš

An estimated one trillion euros are lost every year due to tax fraud and tax avoidance. Every year, the tax gap of European countries is practically equal to the EU seven-year budget. This amount is higher than what is spent on healthcare by all member states. This has become a major European issue.



After months of negotiations, the European Parliament eventually voted to adopt my report on the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance. It lists more than thirty concrete actions to fight these scourges, and received strong majority support from all political groups.

A KEY CAMPAIGN TOPIC

I was happy to see European ministers finally addressing the issue of tax fraud, secrecy of information and exchange of banking information **after having avoided these topics for the last five years.**

They had vowed to unblock and adopt the Savings Taxation Directive before the end of 2013. **It is now 2014** and nothing has changed on that front.

The S&D Group managed to put this topic back onto the EU agenda, after it had been avoided by member states for years. We succeeded in pushing the European Commission to think about the importance of the tax gap and even to discuss tax havens at Council level.

I cannot imagine a campaign for the next European elections that does not put an emphasis on fair taxation. If we want to talk about fairness, justice and democracy, then fair taxation must become one of the top priorities for the upcoming elections. As a true Euro-

pean political family, we can only benefit from such debates.

When we discuss the actions that need to be taken, we must start with a **concrete and coordinated strategy** that would put an end to this scandalous issue at national, European and international levels.



“I WOULD ADVOCATE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE CONCRETE HEADLINE TARGET OF **HALVING THE TAX GAP BY 2020.**”

BEYOND WISHFUL THINKING

The negotiations around this report took place in the aftermath of the Commission's non-binding action plan, at a time when two recommendations to member states had just been made on good tax governance and aggressive tax planning. It happened just as the OECD was launching its base erosion and profit shifting project. And also right at the time when the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists uncovered the size of corporate networks and individual offshore accounts. It then became woefully clear that **our political leaders respond much better when they are put under pressure by journalists** than when looking at the actual scale and consequences of the problem. EU heads of state and government were among the first to rush to the media after the offshore scandals were revealed, promising quick solutions, tighter rules and reduced loopholes.

And they have made those same vows at the level of the G8, G20 and OECD. But in reality these leaders' very own ministers are **perpetually blocking tax-related legislative proposals in Brussels**, such as the Savings Taxation Directive, the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB), and the energy taxation directive. I am well aware that **member states maintain competency** over their fiscal systems and that action at national level is certainly important. But in today's glo-

balised economy, unilateral national measures alone simply **cannot deliver the desired effect**, especially with the cross-border nature of tax fraud.

PRECISE TARGETS AND ACTIONS

I would advocate for the adoption of the concrete headline target of halving the tax gap by 2020. If we paired this target with a set of tangible national indicators for member states to follow, including the latter in the European Semester, I think we would be heading in the right direction.

I would like to see the licenses of the financial institutions that assist their clientele in tax fraud revoked. It is important that we focus not only on very rich individuals and multinationals, but also on banking institutions that are clearly abetting in fraud.

Another concrete measure that should be introduced is **country-by-country reporting for cross-border companies in all sectors**. That means that big multinationals would have to clearly report and pay their fair share of taxes in every country where they do business. If all our citizens are obliged to pay taxes, we should make sure that multinationals do exactly the same.

In conclusion, ensuring fair taxation among all income classes is not only a moral imperative, but an idea of utmost economic sense, which would guarantee that owed taxes are collected and used to their full

potential. In the current times of crisis, as taxpayers are already carrying the heavy burden of austerity measures, we need to close loopholes and collect these much-needed taxes from big players as well, as this would allow for new investments in job creation, growth programs and infrastructure, without having to levy new taxes.



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ABOUT

Mojca Kleva Kekuš became a Member of the European Parliament on 9 May 2011 (Europe Day). She primarily focuses on legislative proposals on economic and monetary affairs, regional development and gender equality.

FOCUS

FOREWORD

David Kitching
P. 34
◇◇

DECODING

Christophe Sente
P. 45
◇◇

INQUIRY

Democratic Malaise &
Neoliberalism
P. 52
◇◇

ESSAY

Usama Hasan
P. 68
◇◇

ESSAY

Young Academics Network
P. 82
◇◇

ESSAY

Stefano Rodotà
P. 36
◇◇

OPINION

Emily O'Reilly
P. 46
◇◇

ESSAY

Sofia Vasilopoulou
Daphne Halikiopoulou
P. 60
◇◇

CLOSEUP

Michel Wieviorka
P. 74
◇◇

BEYOND EUROPE

P. 88
◇◇

IN NUMBERS

Fabrice Pozzoli-Montenay
P. 42
◇◇

EUROPE WATCH

What does populism in the
European Parliament look like?
P. 50
◇◇

INTERVIEW

Sunder Katwala
P. 66
◇◇

INTERVIEW

Andrea Peto
P. 78
◇◇

FACING DEMOCRATIC MALAISE: *a challenge for a political union*

The upcoming European elections could have been an incredible opportunity to unite citizens around shared ideals and values. Instead, it is a climate of tension that is currently settling across the Union.

Exhausted by the crisis, its collateral damages, and the austerity it has been dealt with, European citizens are holding traditional parties and elites responsible for their misfortune, leading to the enlargement of a triple gap between the European people, their national elites, and those in place in the European institutions.

It led to an in-draught for marginal parties that draw sympathy by proposing simplistic answers to complex issues. Yet, we all know these answers only sugarcoat even more dangerous ideas: the rejection of others, nationalist reflexes, and the undermining of the European ideal.

Thus, this issue of Queries focuses on the highly heterogeneous manifestations of this European democratic malaise, and on the actions that must be undertaken by traditional parties before Europe ends up facing with an irrevocable individualistic retreat from its own people.



UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING

democratic malaise

The world changes and it has ever been thus. With change comes panic and fear of social, cultural and political degeneration as different interests and perspectives seek the last word in its interpretation. There is a palpable sense of distress at the ongoing financial crisis and its consequences. But even before the crash, there had been a growing sense of disenchantment with the institutions of governance at national, European and international level. This edition of Queries seeks to address some of the aspects of this “democratic malaise”.



by David Kitching

The common narrative is that the onslaught of globalisation heralded an era of post-industrial economies. The nature of political engagement changed and newly organised forces of post-materialist politics challenged mainstream mass party dominance. This coincided with an increase in identity politics as cultural identifiers gained greater political currency in everyday democratic discourse. Thus, since the 1970s there has been a significant increase in nationalist voting tendencies (both regionalist and populist radical right) and in mobilisation around specific ethnic and religious interests.

SHIFTING LANDSCAPES

To explain this, many sociologists and political scientists refer to a division between

“modernisation winners and losers”, where in the former are cosmopolitan, confident beneficiaries of globalisation while the latter have been largely sidelined by the workings of the service economy and liberal social norms. Some progressives approach this from a perspective of well meaning “modernisation winners” who want to free so-called “losers” from the shackles of anti-modernity.

Unfortunately, this is often tinged with a tone of *bien pensant* condescension, which underlies the elitist assumption of having all the answers if only people would listen. Furthermore, assessments of the ‘forces of reaction’ are often based on past experience rather than their current, more challenging, manifestations. This volume of *Queries* examines the shifting methods and perspectives of right wing populists and others who challenge

liberal democracy, raising serious questions about our collective response.

CHANGING MANIFESTATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC MALAISE

Much of the current commentary on right wing populists describes a very narrow demographic of angry, uneducated men who refuse to accept the realities of modernity and changing social norms. Yet even extremists like Jobbik in Hungary confound stereotypes. Research by the FEPS Young Academics Network has shown Jobbik supporters to be young, university educated and IT literate. The party has been very successful in using 21st century tools to mobilise around their hateful and xenophobic agenda.

While a significant proportion of the far right uphold a traditionalist worldview when

it comes to gender and LGBT issues, others actually place themselves as protectors of socially liberal values. Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen have been very adept at utilising quasi-feminist discourse as a weapon for Islamophobic public commentary. Thus, they pose as the real defenders of women's rights while those on the left acquiesce in the oppression of women amid the oppressive communalism that came with multiculturalism.

And what of Islamic politics in Europe? Usama Hasan and Charlie Cooper's essay shows that, as an oppositional force, Islamism has also changed in its thinking and approach. Islamists' narrative has significantly changed from the theocratic idea that democracy is wrong because "God told us" to a more political one that democracy is inherently unjust. Changing narratives and ongoing marginalisation have helped such versions of anti-modernist emancipation to gain a foothold.

A EUROPE THAT EATS ITS YOUNG

Most assume that higher levels of education can protect our societies from the onslaught the worst effects of democratic malaise. Yet throughout Europe, the most politically disaffected demographic has been educated young people. Their level of trust in the ability of politics to improve their lives has plummeted. As youth unemployment rocketed amid the financial crisis, the pathetic dithering of many of our governments and institutions has done little to restore faith. It would be a mistake, however, to link this malaise solely to the financial crisis. Much depends on the pre-existing health of liberal democratic institutions and civic engagement.

Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou's article on Greece addresses the rise of

the extremist Golden Dawn in the historical context of long-term polarisation in Greek politics. By comparison, discontent in other Troika "programme countries" such as Spain, Portugal and Ireland has not been expressed in as violent a manner while "AAA" Austria, Finland and the Netherlands have significant populist radical right parties. This should remind us of the deep folly of short-term thinking when addressing more deep-rooted problems.

THE PROBLEMS OF INSTITUTIONS

Matt Browne observed in the USA that suspicion of politics has been accompanied by a parallel suspicion of the apparatus of the state. The "revolving door" phenomenon wherein high-level officials secure cushy private sector positions after their tenure in public office exacerbates this. For Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly, this creates the feeling that politicians make decisions based on the whims of private masters and not the public's best interest.

At European level, the culture of technocracy and the reductionist vision of EU politics as between those who are "for or against Europe" have been detrimental to democracy. Griselda Pastor and Mikael Caperlan address the neoliberal surge that has benefited from this trend as democracy is uprooted and the European social consensus is gradually broken. Economics has become depoliticised and politics has been reduced to discourse around cultural identity, disproportionately benefiting reactionary nationalists.

This presents particular problems for progressives, who seek to improve the lives of citizens through the use of an economically active state. As long as people are so distrustful of the state and the people who represent its institutions, the left faces an acute

challenge. One sees similar trends in attitudes towards other large institutions. Our "In Numbers" survey shows that the most traditional pillar of the public sphere, the newspaper, is the least trusted among the mass media. So it seems the deficit of trust is shared by the Third and Fourth Estates.

REINVIGORATING POLITICAL LIFE

It would be unjust, however, to imply that there have been no efforts to ameliorate the situation. The institution of the Ombudsman represents a significant pragmatic effort to bring transparency and accountability to the workings of our institutions. The problem, as identified by Stefano Rodotà is that too often responses have been "fanciful and ambiguous". There is a dire need for a connection in people's minds between democratic politics in Europe and the decisions that affect their lives.

Pastor and Caperlan's essay recounts a story of an Athenian women's exhortations to decision makers in Brussels: "Tell them not to forget that we are human beings, not statistics!" No one should ever have to say this in a civilised society, let alone the birthplace of democracy! The sad reality is that the institutions of European democracy have come to be seen as links in the chains that bind our destinies to the interests of unidentified political and financial elites. We now face the grand task of making them the building blocks for a more equitable and empowered existence, where those with power seek democratic legitimacy at every turn.

David Kitching is a policy advisor at the Foundation for European Progressive Studies.

POPULISM

The tree that hides the forest

The broad-ranging, polysemic category of “populism” is too often used as an umbrella term for describing and interpreting very different situations. This inevitably tends to simplify complex realities and create inappropriate groupings. Instead, what we ought to do is become more analytical; identify the specific characteristics of each situation, and from there single out any unifying elements that might lead to greater insight.



by Stefano Rodotà

Today, Europeans are keeping a close watch on the spread of movements characterised by a rejection of representative democracy, distrust of organized forms of political participation such as political parties, a marked tendency to take refuge inside the traditional confines of national borders, negation of the Other, rising inequalities, and the presence of “fear-mongers” who set in motion forms of “penal populism” that transform social problems into matters of public policy. This means that we can interpret populism on the one hand as a regressive movement that casts doubt on the cornerstones of the legacy of modernity, and on the other as a kind of uncompromising urge to escape from the undesirable effects of globalization now shaping the world we live in.

A DISINTERMEDIATED RELATIONSHIP

Precisely because the foundations of populist pressure are so radical, this pressure is morphing

into directed “insurgencies” with messianic undertones that are calling for complete transformation of society. 19th century Italian poet Goffredo Mameli expresses the situation well: “What if the people awoke/and God got it into His head/to give them a thunderbolt.” This sort of primal force emanates from the lower reaches of society. So is populism, with these near religious connotations, simply a dimension of political theology?

As we move deeper into this territory, we should ask ourselves a further question: When and how do “the people” awaken and who encourages and supports this awakening? Genuinely insurgent populist movements can of course appear completely spontaneously. But we also know that populism is a technique of government, whereby getting rid of a country’s elites and all their political or bureaucratic procedures operates as a manoeuvre that enables other elites to emerge and consolidate, building their own legitimacy on the disintermediated relationship between institutions and citizens. **Disintermediation, then, would in this analysis be**



Referenda can be organized that give the impression of a genuine transfer of sovereignty to the people.

“WHAT IS REALLY AT STAKE HERE IS NOT SO MUCH THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE BUT THE POWER THAT DETERMINES **WHO ASKS THE QUESTIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE.**”

both the identifying and (to some extent) unifying characteristic of various sorts of populism, which raises doubts about their origin at the bottom of the social ladder.

There is also a type of top-down populism that manifests itself as a form of discipline in a society that discredits existing institutions because they have flouted social norms. At this point, however, different forms of populism produce their own institutions and it is hardly paradoxical or contradictory that populist movements give rise in turn to populist political parties and new forms of mediation.

DEMOCRATIC LURES

This is why the underlying techniques and modalities of these dynamics are so crucial. Simplifying enormously and relying on just two examples, we can see immediately that referenda can be organized that give the impression of a genuine transfer of sovereignty to the people.

In reality, however, what is really at stake here is not so much the people’s response but the power that determines who asks

the questions in the first place and establishes when and how the response is to be given.

This so-called consensual form of democracy is characterised by the concentration of power rather than its dissipation.

The second example is the web, which is now part of every facet of political debate. What is known as “electronic democracy” has in fact been deemed as its opposite and is now considered as a step towards new forms of socialism pointing toward “digital fascism.” But, in this long, ongoing debate, it is worth mentioning the early emergence of the theory that e-democracy is a form of third-millennium populism, as found in such Italian expressions as telepopulismo and cyberpopulismo which, alas, are too often simply a way of eliminating a problem by inventing a new word. Once again, these terms skirt around proper analysis of the phenomena for what they really are, instead buying into a highly negative version of the term “populism”. This ignores or at the least results in a reductive reading of all the events in which direct action by citizens has

Key Points

- Populism can be interpreted as the rejection of both the legacy of modernity and the effects of globalization now shaping the world we live in.
- The word “populism” should not be used carelessly, and must not overshadow the demands of people calling for a better distribution of powers.
- The Web and referenda were two opportunities for better democratic practices that eventually failed to give sovereignty back to the people.

been an essential factor in democratic change, such as the so-called “Arab Spring” movements and other forms of civic mobilization, including the public anti-war demonstrations on February 15, 2003, which inspired Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida and The New York Times to talk about a new form of global public opinion—a new “people.” Without passing judgment on this specific conclusion, it goes without saying that a new form of civic activism has been rendered possible by internet resources, and up to this point it has in no way proved to be a negative development.

There is clearly a set of technologies that are turning into a form of technopolitics, in the sense that they shape the very mode of political action, and broaden the range of people who may be involved directly in the process. This in turn has led to the creation of a new public space—the largest that mankind has ever known. If, as we have said, various forms of populism tend to shape the space between society and political

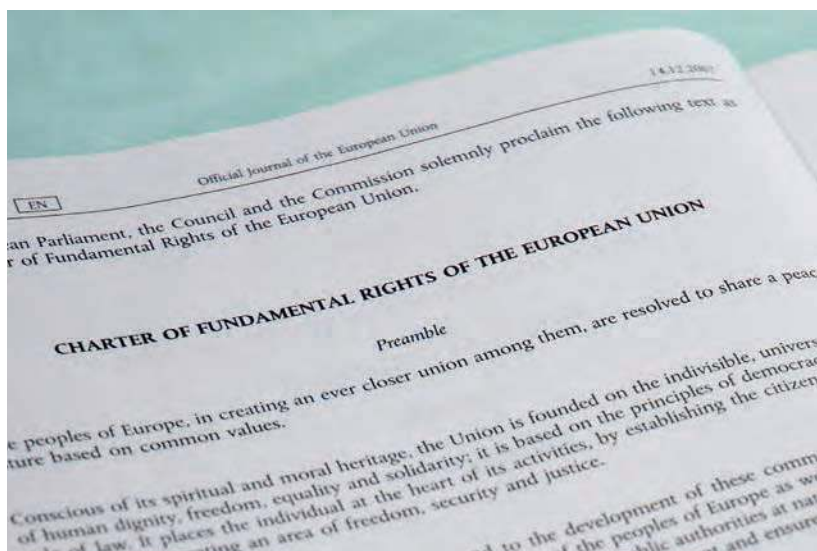
institutions, this space has expanded remarkably in size, quality and number of participants, and all this must obviously be taken into account.

This restructuring has not only affected the public space as we traditionally understand the term, but also the relationship between public and private spaces themselves (the use of the plural is intentional). **This change occurred with the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0.**

The advent of social media caused these two spaces to overlap, making it possible to transfer to the specifically political sphere a set of attitudes—often fortuitous—that are broadened and connected in such a way as to accentuate not only the absence of any mediation, but also the emergence of a multiplicity of forms of refusal and revolt, as well as new proposals which influence the entire political system in real time.

A DEMOCRACY OF EMOTIONS

We are now in the presence of what could be described as the populism of everyday life—both



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“THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF POPULISM HAVE BEEN ACCENTUATED IN AN ATTEMPT TO OVERSHADOW THOSE WHO DEMAND A DISTRIBUTION OF POWER DIFFERENT THAN THE CURRENT SITUATION.”

mobile and contradictory—that requires political institutions to continuously adjust their reactions. In other words, to be sure that we have the right tools to deal with a deeply-changed situation involving multiple “insurgencies” associated with the use of social media, there is ongoing reflection on the distinction between social media and civic media, and between social networks and civic networks. These civic networks are being constructed in such a way as to allow structured presence and involvement, first by spurring discussion and selecting issues, followed by a cooling down period, loosely based on an approach that can be traced back to those who inspired and still form the basis of representative democracy and party organizations.

These reflections raise questions about the relationship between populism and direct democracy, without simply making the latter into the latest event in the decision-making process. A proper analysis requires us to consider the growing possibilities for intervening in the decision-making processes at an early stage. We can therefore identify a version of populism based on “dinner table democracy” and “instant referenda”, which would abolish representative assemblies and transfer the entire legislative function to the people. **So rather than returning to face the spectre of referenda, we are moving towards a democracy of “emotions”, devoid of its cognitive and critical dimension, with a reductive reading of the possibilities offered by the Web as a place of discourse among peers, a space for building knowl-**

edge and programs. And because it is argued that in time, unrelenting technological innovation will erase traces of the historical forms of politics, this technological determinism cannot be impeded entirely by ideological manoeuvring, as this denies the reality of technopolitics while protecting institutions from behind a smokescreen of innovation.

POPULAR VS. POPULIST

The description of this reality raises anew the vital issue of the relationship between people and populism. **Even if we consider extreme the theory that since World War II the systematic use of the term “populism” has edged out the use of the term “people”, the negative aspects of populism have no doubt been accentuated in an attempt to overshadow those who demand a distribution of power different than the current situation, which has been increasingly defined by economic and financial and not just political oligarchies.** Rather than quote Machiavelli, as is often the case in this area of research, let us turn to Francesco Guicciardini: “Often there is such a dense fog, or thick wall, between the government palace and the piazza outside that men can’t see through it. This means that the people know as much about what their rulers actually do and why they do it as they know about what goes on in India.” Typically read as a call for transparency, the quote identifies the space between institutions and people and as we have said, it identifies the specific issue of populism, which cannot be addressed without dissolving the “fog” that often surrounds it.

It is precisely in that public square—always a symbolic site for democracy—that we need to start over. This square was emptied most recently by the oligarchic closure of political parties and the transfer of public debate to television. But it has filled back up thanks to the opportunities offered by the Web. This is a fact that cannot be brushed aside by an out-of-hand rejection of a “crowd” portrayed in a negative light. To understand how and why this crowd has reappeared, one must avoid such simplifications as the triangle of populism, anti-politicalism, and anti-Europeanism. Only in this way it is possible to try to identify strategies that will not lead to a democracy stripped of its people.

BACK TO THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Existing anti-political feelings are also used to summarily release us from our obligation to recognise that there is another form of politics that has emerged from oligarchic politics in recent years, and to recognize that this is a precondition for the resumption of organized politics. Today's anti-Europeanism cannot be used to conceal the roots of this new form of politics, in an ever more conspicuous divergence from the political government of the EU to a purely economic approach to governance, which exacerbates inequalities and dissolves all ties of solidarity between member states. The required response to populism today, then, is not a fanciful, ambiguous reassertion of European policy, but one that clarifies what it means to aim for a more political Europe: should it develop an even more compelling economic approach or should it return to the path of the European social model? This is not just harking back to the past; it is an indication of the crucial need to rebuild a European constitutional policy, which has been cut off from its own Charter of Fundamental Rights. The charter has the same legal value as the treaties and is the essential reference to follow if we wish to return to the path of equality and solidarity—two values inextricably linked to the survival of

socialist thought and its ability to provide needed structure for the people of Europe.

If we overcome this purely oppositional attitude, the discussion of populism will arrive at the crossroads where different issues concerning the distribution of power converge. You could almost say that while there are virulent and destructive forms of populism, a more thorough examination of European populism shows how it can generate antibodies, provided that policy is moving rapidly towards eliminating existing asymmetries, and giving a voice to the issues and set of procedures necessary for democracy. This brings us back to Guicciardini, because we can cut through the fog, and the accompanying mistrust, simply by taking seriously a conflict that has been highlighted by populist uprisings, which has its roots in the gap between those who govern and those who are governed, which has grown to such an extent that the governed have become insignificant.

To return to the mediation question, we need to include a longer-term perspective in Articles 10 and 11 of the Treaty of Lisbon—which link representative and participatory democracy—in order to look past the illusory differences between representative democracy and direct democracy.

Elections are no longer the only date on the democratic calendar when the voice of the people can play a formative role. **Today, we have to come to terms with continuous democracy, which consists in relations between forms of participation that involve constant dialogue between institutions and citizens,** including structured political parties and a vast range of people, along with widespread forms of direct intervention and control that offer the best possible antidote against the degenerative processes currently causing disquiet in Europe.



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ABOUT

Stefano Rodotà is Professor of Law at the Università di Roma “La Sapienza” and at the Institute for Human Sciences in Firenze. He is chair of the Scientific Committee of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union and of the Internet Governance Forum Italy. He is one of the authors of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.



Toute l'Europe décrypte le fonctionnement de l'UE et l'**actualité** à travers plus de 10 000 articles, des **fiches pratiques**, une **revue de presse** européenne quotidienne, des **cartes comparatives**, des **infographies** pédagogiques, des **interviews filmées**, des synthèses, des **dossiers spéciaux**, des rubriques d'information sur les institutions, les politiques et les Etats membres de l'UE, des **débats vidéo**, des **chats** en ligne, une **newsletter** hebdomadaire, un **agenda** de la société civile, un **réseau** de partenaires, le **blog** eToile, l'animation de réseaux sociaux, ...



THE NUMBERS ARE IN

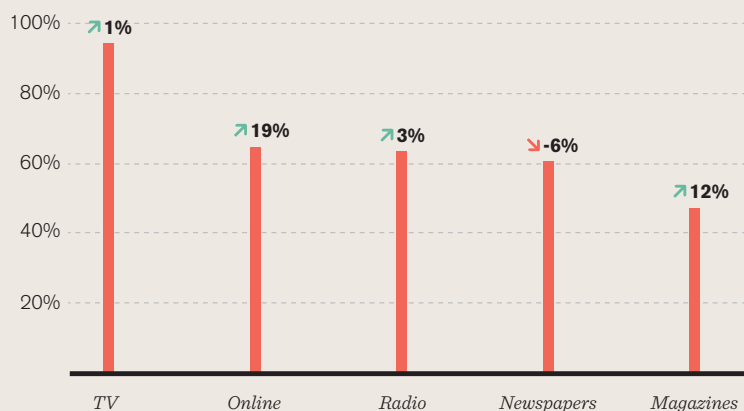
The “media crisis” in Europe has hit the written press hardest, and it is losing its influence fast. It has the lowest level of trust among users and is rapidly losing ground to internet platforms. And, with European elections approaching, there is an alarmingly low level of information on European affairs. To avoid further alienating citizens, it is appropriate assess the EU media consumption landscape.



by Fabrice Pozzoli-Montenay

TELEVISION STILL REIGNS SUPREME

PENETRATION RATES / EVOLUTION BETWEEN 2010 & 2012



TV is by far the most used source of information in the EU, with 95% of the population using it regularly. While internet use steadily increases (65%), it does so at the expense of the written press, and particularly the newspapers (62%), which lose readers and see their penetration diminishing year after year (-6% between 2010 and 2012).

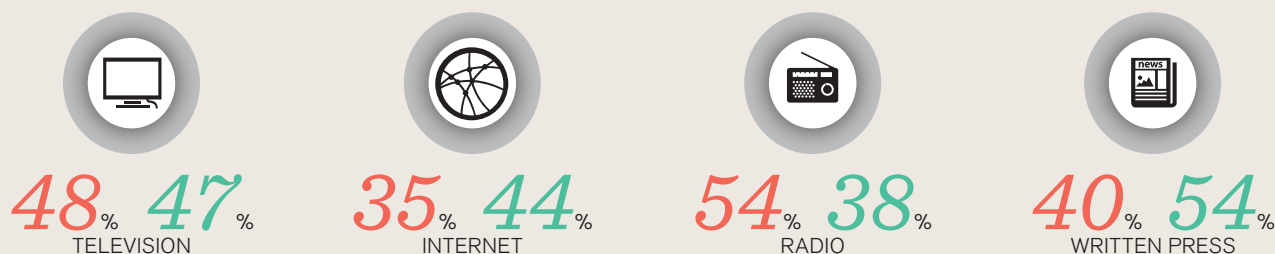
Source: Mediascope

PRESS IN A CRISIS OF TRUST

PERCENTAGE OF EUROPEANS WHO DISTRUST THE MEDIA

Distrust

Trust

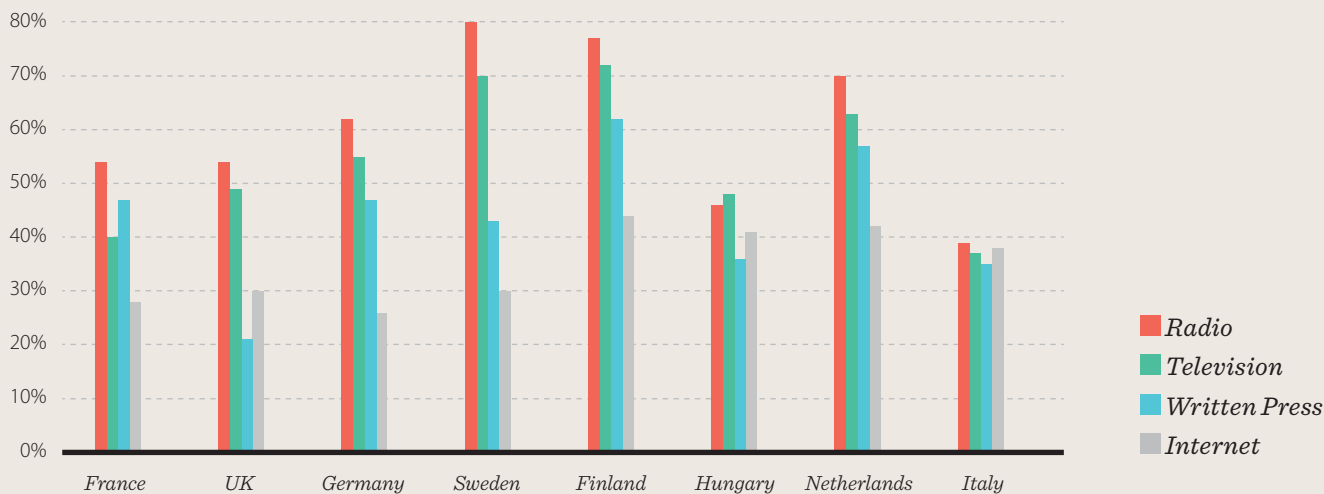


At 54%, radio is the most trusted medium of communication in the EU, ahead of television on 48%; while written press is the most distrusted, with 54% of readers expressing a lack of confidence in it.

Source: Eurobarometer 2012

MORE COUNTRIES, MORE CONTRASTS

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE BY COUNTRY WHO DISTRUST THE FOLLOWING MEDIA



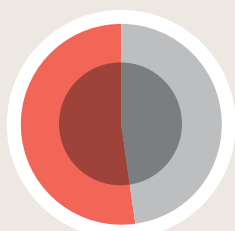
At member state level, the written press clearly face the widest gap in perceptions of trustworthiness. Only 21% of Britons trust their written press, while 62% of Finns do. Only a minority of citizens now trusts the written press in France (47%), Germany (47%), Sweden (43%), Hungary (36%), and Italy (35%).

Source: Eurobarometer 2012

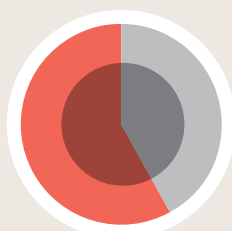
A LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPE

DO YOU FEEL WELL INFORMED ON EUROPEAN MATTERS OR NOT?

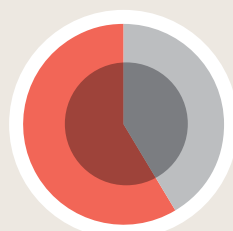
● No



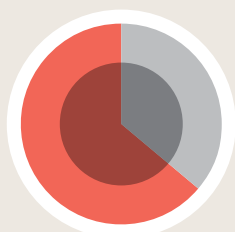
● 52%



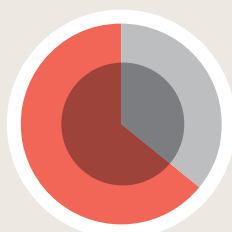
● 58%



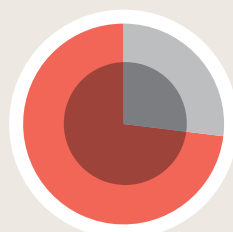
● 58%



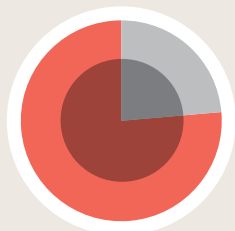
● 63%



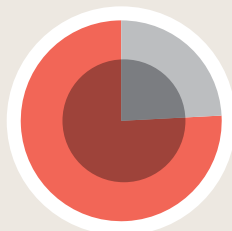
● 64%



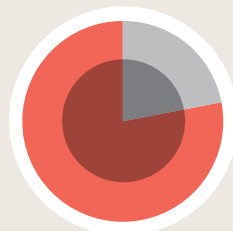
● 73%



● 74%



● 75%



● 78%

75% citizens of the European Union consider themselves ill informed about European issues. In the UK, 63% of respondents consider themselves ill informed. Intriguingly, this is lower than in several more traditionally pro-European countries. In France and Italy this percentage stands at 75% and 74% respectively.

Source: Eurobarometer 2012

Journalist : one job, many realities

In a time of global information flows, as standardisation is in vogue in Europe, journalists make a curious tribe. There is no common definition for this profession. In Finland only trade union members are recognised as journalists, while in many other European countries the definition is quite wide and encompasses "media workers" as a whole. Some countries deliver a press pass, while it does not exist in others. Some countries consider that you can be journalist by working in a newspaper run by a public service, or in the free internal magazine of a company, managed by the communication department. A large number of freelancers have to work simultaneously for press, PR businesses and advertising, creating confusion and weakening their credibility. The sudden entrance of bloggers, and the multiplication of "copy-paste" websites also have an impact public confidence.

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Journalists), and also works for
ParisBerlin and OTR Global.

MEDIA CRISIS

or shift in democracy?

An assortment of statistical indicators point to a media crisis generated by competition between print and visual media, as well as a growing divide between the media and public opinion. Have voters lost their taste for the printed page?

Do Europeans now view the media with the same distrust they have of political leaders?



by Christophe Sente

Of the indicators pointing to a media crisis, those easiest to interpret are economic: the national press in EU countries is suffering a decline in sales that often results in a smaller selection on the market. Even the Sunday papers in the UK—a national institution—are seeing sinking sales figures: between 2008 and 2009 alone, sales of Sunday editions fell by 4%. In France, the 2.4% drop in sales of national newspapers in 2008 hit advertising revenues, which have become crucial to their business model. In Germany, despite a dynamic publishing industry, the penetration rate of the daily press in homes dropped from 79.1% to 72.4% over the same period.

A look at the figures confirms that technological advances are in large part responsible for this trend. Television is now present in 95% of homes in Europe and the penetration rate has increased by a further 1% since 2010. What is more, Europeans spend a total of over 40 hours a week on the Internet, watching television and listening to the radio, compared with less than 5 hours reading the daily papers.

However, other data indicate that the shift in the public's relationship with the media does not merely point to a preference for information from free or inexpensive media—it is also political in nature. To take one example, a

recent Eurobarometer survey shows a decline in the public's trust in the media. This assessment is corroborated by a UK opinion survey which found that only the banks held a lower level of public trust in Britain.

**“IN EUROPE,
THE POPULIST
UPSURGE
OCCURRED MUCH
LATER THAN THE
WIDESPREAD
EXPANSION
OF RADIO AND
TELEVISION.”**

These indicators can only give cause for concern in a political environment where some parties are winning over voters with simplistic rhetoric on issues such as European construction, immigration and Islam. The long-standing success of democracy in Europe clearly reflects the vital importance of the interaction between the three pillars represented by public education; political socialisation via “intermediate societies” formed by the political parties and

labour unions; and finally, the popularity of professional, independent journalism.

In an interview with the Jean-Jaurès Foundation, Alain Bergounioux recently stated that the widespread expansion of radio and television from the 1950s onwards had not weakened either democracy or the left, and that the populist upsurge in Europe occurred far later. On the other hand, the current combination of underinvestment in education reform, citizens' waning interest in the traditional forms of political participation and a media crisis could prove a source of concern.

There is, however, a silver lining to the results of the Eurobarometer. While the majority of citizens polled by Eurostat considered that media coverage of EU current affairs was sufficient in quantitative terms, they also admitted to being poorly informed on European issues. These survey results are not necessarily contradictory but, in today's changing world, could indicate that people are expecting more from the media.

Christophe Sente holds a PhD in Political Science from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, and is a member of the Gauche Réformiste Européenne think tank and the FEPS Scientific Council.



EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ITS CHALLENGES

When the concept of EU citizenship was formalised in the Maastricht Treaty just over 20 years ago, one of the key objectives, quite unashamedly, was to encourage the people of Europe to feel a stronger and deeper attachment to the EU. Within that treaty was the idea that “EU Citizenship is destined to be the fundamental status of nationals of the Member States”, as the Court of Justice put it some years ago. However, this vision has yet to become a reality.



by Emily O'Reilly



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For the vast majority of us, our primary identity continues to be based on national or ethnic considerations. EU citizenship, for most of us, takes second place. In my own country, a member state of the European Union for over forty years, Europe is frequently referred to as “over there”. Indeed, when I return to Dublin now in my new role, I am often asked, “How’s Europe?” as though I were returning from a strange and distant planet.

EU citizenship is not, of course, intended to displace or undermine our national citizenship but rather to foster the same notions of rights, responsibilities, values and civic and political engagement which are, or ought to be, features of our national citizenship. And at a time when active citizenship is in decline in many member states, it becomes even more challenging to promote the idea of EU citizenship.

Indeed we must confront the reality, as expressed by the European Year of Citizens Alliance, that “EU citizenship is now in crisis”.

A DUAL CRISIS

The EU has been going through not only an economic crisis but also an identity and legitimacy crisis over the past few years.

This is a time therefore when we need to keep foremost in our minds those values and principles on which the EU was founded: not just the economic ones but also, and more importantly, respect for fundamental rights, the notion of freedom, solidarity, the protection of minorities and respect for cultural and language diversity.

The Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, has referred to “Human Europe” and when people struggle to describe what is felt to be missing from the current make-up of our Union perhaps this precisely is it, the sense of the heartbeat pulsating away and not just the sterile and silent ebbs and flows of the stock market.

In my brief experience, since I took office as European Ombudsman last October, I can see that the EU institutions are remote from ordinary people despite the many and genuine efforts being made by the institutions themselves to bridge that gap. Yes, the public can be lethargic and apathetic but the primary initiative to change this must continue to be taken by the institutions themselves.

In very many cases, they do take action, often prompted by the results of inquiries conducted by my own office. Fairness, transparency, prompt dealing with complaints, and effective measures on potential conflicts of interest—all principles of good administration and defence of citi-

“OUR EU INSTITUTIONS MUST BEHAVE IMPECCABLY AND BE SEEN TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TOWARDS ARROGANCE AND SELF-SERVING BEHAVIOUR. **TERMS, OF A DIFFERENT SCALE TO WHAT WE IN EUROPE HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN THE PAST.**”

Key Points

→ The EU is not only going through an economic crisis but also an identity and legitimacy crisis, because of a perceived remoteness that jeopardises the sense of EU citizenship.

→ Public suspicion arises from the lack of transparency in EU legislation, insufficient Freedom of Information measures and the suspicion of an overly cosy relationship between institutional officials and certain business interests.

→ The achievements of the European project must not be diminished by unethical behaviour. The crisis is surmountable and will be overcome through courage and solidarity.

zens' rights—have been exemplified in the handling of some of the cases brought before me. They demonstrate that the European Union's institutions can be responsive to the concerns of citizens and that there are effective remedies, through the work of my own office, amongst others.

Next year's elections to the European Parliament provide us with a real opportunity for citizens to make their voices heard and to exert real influence on the shape of government within the EU. Millions of voters will elect the MEPs of their choice and, through their newly elected MEPs, help determine the election of the next Commission President.

The perceived remoteness and complexity of the institutions make it difficult for people to understand how they work, how power is divided between them. This in turn leads to a suspicion that they have become too comfortable and too powerful, a self-governing elite communicating in a language often so impenetrable that it appears to be deliberately designed to keep the public in ignorance.

SEVERAL LAYERS OF SUSPICION

Transparency—the cure for ignorance—is lacking. Our existing EU legislation on access to documents is inadequate and lacks

an effective enforcement mechanism. The EU legislative regime falls far short of the Freedom of Information laws in force in some of the member states, when Europe should be leading the way. Why should the EU institutions be less transparent and less accountable than are the governing institutions in the member states?

The institutions need to do much more to counter the suspicion that some senior officials and office holders are far too close to certain business interests. There is public suspicion that the lobbying strength of these insider business interests is disproportionate and insufficiently regulated.

I doubt that anyone really believes that a voluntary registration system for lobbyists—which we have at present—is particularly useful.

The public questions the extent to which individuals known to be employed by, or linked to, major business interests find themselves occupying positions of real influence on advisory bodies and working groups in areas such as pharmaceuticals, banking and the environment. And, in what is now referred to as the “revolving door” phenomenon, there are real concerns that too many senior people are leaving EU positions and taking up lucrative employ-

ment advising private interests on areas in which they have specialist insider knowledge and contacts.

Our EU institutions must behave impeccably and be seen to resist the temptation towards arrogance and self-serving behaviour. Given the perceived lack of political legitimacy, the EU itself must be seen to be the “gold standard” in these areas.

Some of the suspicions I have just mentioned have been raised by way of complaints made to my Office and I'm not saying that they are all necessarily well founded. But what I can say, at this stage, is that the very fact that these suspicions exist, whatever the ultimate truth, is damaging to how the EU institutions are perceived by ordinary people. As European Ombudsman I will continue to support and encourage the institutions to live to their own best selves, to live up to the obligations placed upon them by the Treaties and by the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and to embrace fully the principles of public service.

SOLIDARITY WILL BE KEY

Because the existence of the EU is a wonderful achievement, it is important always to remind ourselves that it is not perfect. It is always a work in progress but its achievements should nonetheless not be forgotten or diminished by poor or unethical behaviour.

Commission Vice-President Šefčovič has been blogging in the course of the last year in an attempt to counteract negative perceptions of the EU. He worries that “we have been running ourselves down for too long” and failing to see what outsiders see more easily. This present crisis is, in relative terms, of a different scale to what we in Europe have encountered in the past. As

“SOLIDARITY MUST NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS CHARITY BUT AS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE COMMON GOOD.”

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk put it: “Today’s crisis is an important challenge, but it is not an insurmountable one, and does not bear comparison with the one from which we emerged thanks to the solidarity shown by the whole of Europe.”

Saying this carries the risk of offending and alienating those EU citizens—in Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Ireland and others—who are suffering hugely at present. This alienation can be resolved only by action based on solidarity. And solidarity must not be understood as charity but as working together in the common good.

In next year’s European Parliament elections I hope the candidates will give that kind of leadership; that they will be courageous enough to challenge EU citizens to look beyond their personal and their national interests. As someone who has been an observer of politics for quite some time, I have no illusions as to how difficult this can be.

We will have a new Commission and a new Parliament later this year and it is vital that, whatever the pressures, these bodies should have a clear mandate from the citizens—a mandate to continue to act, and indeed to act more vigorously, on the basis of the fundamental values of the European Union.



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ABOUT

Emily O'Reilly has been European Ombudsman since 1 October, 2013. She was Ireland's first female Ombudsman, holding office from 2003 to 2013. Prior to this she had an acclaimed career as a journalist, political editor and author.

WHAT DOES POPULISM in the European parliament look like?

As the May 2014 European elections draw closer, more and more people suspect that the next European Parliament will be populated with a significant number of populist MEPs from the left and the right of the political spectrum to oppose Brussels’s powers over the member states. What does their voting record tell us about how they might use their newfound influence?






by Doru Frantescu

There are three main areas in which the behaviour of the Eurosceptic MEPs is most evident: civil liberties, constitutional affairs and budget. Firstly, populist politicians generally oppose the intervention of public and European institutions, and in particular when it comes to creating equal opportunities for migrants and ethnic minorities.

RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP




For example, on 10 December 2013, the EP adopted a legislative document, establishing the “Rights and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020”. This is an instrument through which the Union will streamline its efforts to support the fundamental values set out in the Stockholm programme, such as freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The act was passed with a comfortable majority in the EP plenary, with 430 votes in favour, 34 against, and 38

abstentions. On this occasion, a number of MEPs, primarily from the EFD group (consisting mainly of British UKIP and Italian Lega Nord) voted against the programme. Some non-attached members, (such as French Front National, Dutch PVV, Belgian Vlaams Belang, Austrian FPÖ and Hungarian Jobbik Members), were also among them. The abstentions came from the ECR MEPs.

Votes against the document:		
	EFD:	16
	GUE-NGL:	3
	NI:	15
	Other groups:	0

Integration of RomaSomething similar happened during the vote on the “EU strategy for Roma inclusion”. This document, adopted on 9 March 2011, called for both the EU and its Member States to encourage affirmative action, in order to ensure

equal treatment of Roma people - particularly in areas such as employment, education and political participation. The Parliament’s resolution also deplored the stigmatisation of the Roma in the political discourse of some EU member states. Just like in the first vote, while the overwhelming majority of Members welcomed the plan, most of the MEPs from the EFD group and most non-attached MEPs voted against it.





Votes against the document:		
	ECR:	1
	EFD:	19
	NI:	12
	Other groups:	0

EUROPEAN SPENDING

The same national parties regularly vote against an increase of EU powers, as well as its budget. Moreover, this behaviour expands to all spending from the EU

budget. This includes some of the areas that are usually consensual between the centre-left and the centre-right, such as the allocation of funding to poorer regions, or funding to workers who have become unemployed as a result of the relocation of factories and industrial production (the "European Globalisation Adjustment Fund").

A recent vote in this area was cast on 10 December 2013, when the EP adopted **a resolution allowing the EU to pay just over 6 million euros to support reintegration into the labour market of 611 workers who were fired from the Vestas Group in Denmark.** On this occasion, half of the EFD and non-attached MEPs, along with the ECR group, voted against the approval of the Danish Government's request for the mobilisation of EU funds to support the workers.









Votes against the resolution:		
	ECR:	44
	EFD:	12
	Greens/EFA:	1
	NI:	10
	Other groups:	0

A special note has to be added with respect to the voting behaviour of the radical-left, GUE-NGL group. While this group voted in favour of the items mentioned above, it regularly votes against any increase of the EU budget, or of EU powers, as well as against some of the rules that would allow easier access to the labour market to migrants from other Member States, or third-party nationals.

THE IMPACT OF THE POPULISTS IN THE EP

There are three main factors that influence the power of a political faction (or factions sharing the same ideology) in the European Parliament: its size, cohesion, and participation. Firstly, the size of the radical delegations in the 2009-2014 Parliament has been relatively small, with just a few dozen members. However, as the polls predict, this may change substantially after the May 2014 elections.

As for cohesion and participation, Vote-Watch Europe's statistics show something very interesting: **the MEPs at the far-right are rarely united, and participate less in the votes in the EP plenary**, compared to the other groups (second from the bottom is the radical left, GUE-NGL group, but they are still way ahead of the EFD).

Average participation in roll-call votes:		
	Greens/EFA:	86.54%
	EPP:	85.87%
	S&D:	85.16%
	ALDE/ADLE:	84.16%
	GUE-NGL:	82.85%
	ECR:	81.26%
	EFD:	79.24%
	NI:	77.29%

This makes it even more difficult for these MEPs to effectively influence EU legislation. EFD is the group that has been on the winning side the least in the EP plenary, close-

ly followed by the GUE-NGL, but far behind the centrist groups. Similarly, the data shows that EFD and GUE have rarely been able to pass amendments in the EP plenary, as their positions are too radical to receive the backing of the main groups.

However, the public perception of the populists' activities and influence in the EP is somewhat different, and this can be attributed to the high levels of emphasis that these MEPs put on their political positions in the House: non-attached MEPs, along with those from the EFD and GUE-NGL groups speak much more often in the EP plenary, than their colleagues. Even though most of these speeches are explanations of votes or one-minute interventions held at times when there's hardly anybody left in the room, they are used to back up their public image in the national media.

On this point, the populists take advantage of the relative weakness with which the politicians from the mainstream groups communicate their work in the EP, and it will be interesting to see if these groups are able to cope with such an issue during this crucial electoral campaign.

ABOUT

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DEMOCRATIC MALAISE AND NEOLIBERALISM

by Griselda Pastor & Mikael Carpelan



Exhausted after five years of crisis, Europe needs to take stock – and the reckoning is tough: the promised economic growth is not even half that of America, where the crisis began. There is no real debate about economic alternatives and it is even asserted that there are none... all of which only serves to increase the “populist threat”. Greece is the obvious example. The failure of common policies should lead us to an honest analysis, because today the words that accompany the actions of the Union are no longer very credible.



On 11 September 2013, in Strasbourg, José Manuel Durao Barroso, President of the European

Commission, presented his annual State of the Union speech to the European Parliament. This time he was clearly seeking common cause with the MEPs. The next European elections are in May. “In eight months”, he said, “what we have achieved together in the past five years, will be judged by all the countries of the Union. And when I say “we,” he underlined, “I really mean “we.””

THE BARROSO LEGACY

The President of the European Commission summed up the response of the Union to the crisis in three points: a fundamental reform of the financial sector; giving governments the tools to clean up their own finances and modernise their economies; and mobilising €700 billion to “pull the worst hit countries back from the brink”.

Having made these points, Barroso turned on his audience: “What matters now is what

we make of this progress. Do we talk it up, or talk it down?” Was it a question, or a threat? What is the President of the European Commission afraid of? He knows that during his last mandate “the economic crisis has degenerated into a social crisis, with dramatic consequences for a large number of our citizens”. According to him, three major problems remain to be resolved: debt, unemployment, and the constraints on the activities both of enterprises and households. These issues are at the heart of a grassroots rejection of current governance, which capitals in the north as well as the south of Europe are coming to see as a grave threat to the political and social system.

“In Finland, 56 % of those who vote for populists are afraid that their personal economic situation is on the point of collapse. The same sense of insecurity is only registered by less than a third of the rest of the population.” explains Johanna Korhonen, Finnish journalist and author of “Ten paths to populism. How silent Finland became a playing ground for loud populism”.

A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE ANTI-POPULIST POSITION

Europe feels weakened. After years in

Key Points

- Three major problems remain to be solved: debt, unemployment, and the constraints on the activities both of enterprises and households.
- Major parties are currently paying the price of their support to austerity policies.
- The shift of real power to increasingly unaccountable and unapproachable groups has gradually shrunk the space of freedom of politics.



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“THE INSTITUTIONS
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which populism was stigmatised as a movement belonging to an extremist ideology, after years in which the Front National of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Vlaams Belang in Belgium were kept within a cordon sanitaire, and in which the Austrian right was isolated and forced to pay a heavy price for its deal with Jörg Haider, - after all this, the problem is still growing.

Five years ago, openly anti-european parties won 47 out of 754 (There were 754 in the last elections there will be 751 this time) seats in the European elections, with 12% of the votes. Next May the polls suggest they are set to receive between 16% and 25% of the vote! However the institutions of Europe seem to think they can block the populists’ way to the Parliament with a simplistic message: either you are for Europe or you are against it.

It is an “intellectual falsehood” says Philippe Lamberts, Green MEP head of the list for his party group in Belgium. “The question is not “for or against Europe”. The question is “for or against the policies adopted by Europe,” he told us. And he is not the only one! Alfredo Saad-Filho, professor of political economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, considers that what is going on is a “complete monopolisation of the European project, as if any other interpretation would lead to chaos, which, in any case, is false”. He considers that it is unacceptable to frame the question in such black and white terms. The European project has developed in different phases, has changed over time, has not always been the same. Everyone has to look inside themselves, and go to the polls to defend their understanding of the project. Even if the elites want to protect themselves, says



THE EURO WILL SURVIVE

Saad-Filho, "the for or against approach is a desperate tactic". It is the approach of those who have nothing more to offer.

THE SYRIZA APPROACH

On the 10th of January in Athens, speaking to a little group of European correspondents in the bright sunshine, Alexis Tsipras presented his two messages for the coming election campaign. The president of Syriza, candidate chosen by the United European Left as its top representative in May, wants an immediate end to the programme imposed on Greece by the Troika. He also calls for a "European Convention" to cancel debt throughout the Mediterranean. Above all he has Germany in his sights with this idea, because Mr Tsipras is demanding a second "London conference". It was in the British capital in 1953, that, after two years of tough negotiations, Hermann Josef Abs, Chancellor Adenauer's banker was able to confirm that his efforts had paid off. Germany's debt of 30 billion old Deutschmarks had been halved, and brought down to 14 billion. This agreement was the basis of the German economic recovery. So why is only Syriza proposing this approach?

During the years of the crisis, Greece has lost 40% of its wealth, according to the government. More than a quarter of its population is unemployed. The return to growth is always put off to the following year and official calculations estimate that in 2021, debt will still represent 124% of GNI. Nearly a fifth of 2012 expenditure went towards paying the bill for this. And that is after the debt conditions were softened last year, in an agreement imposed by the IMF, which still fears that payments will be suspended.

Interview with Sixten Korkman, professor of economics at the University of Helsinki and former director general of Ecofin in the Council of the EU

While Latvia became the 18th member of the euro zone on the first of January this year, Sixten Korkman distances himself from the official line, which claims this new member as a sign that the project is unshakeable despite fears for its disintegration. This line comes from the same people who claim that without the single currency, the crisis would have been even tougher. Rather, he asserts that the currency he helped to create is a mistake, and that the southern Member States are the first casualties.

Question: Do you share the current optimism?

Sixten Korkman: Ireland seems to be pulling round. That is good news. There are glimmers in Portugal too. The worrying case is Spain. Exports are going well, but property prices still seem to be falling, and that makes the banks' situation more and more precarious, even if nobody wants to admit it. We will probably soon be talking about a new recapitalisation of the Spanish banks.

Q: Would Spain become the main problem?

S.K.: I fear that the worst of the crisis is still not visible. I am speaking about Italy. It is a question of when, rather than if. What surprised me as well is that we haven't seen major revolts. Where, today, are the Indignados?

Q: Do you feel guilty? For example about Greece?

S.K.: In the case of Greece, no one saw it coming. It wasn't on our radar screens. Since it had taxation powers, we assumed logically, that it could meet its responsibilities. And when the crisis speeded up, it was necessary to stop it spreading like bush fire.

Q: Since the Greek case, the debate on what to do has divided opinion ...

S.K.: Most economists south of Brussels agree we need a deeper political and fiscal union. Nearly all the economists north of Brussels have the opposite opinion, and they are all, north and south, highly qualified. Odd, isn't it? I am from the north. The banking union is a good thing, but anything beyond that is an illusion and a mirage. This kind of solidarity just doesn't exist. You can deplore the fact, but it won't change anything.

Q: So what should be done?

S.K.: We have to continue working to correct the errors in the construction of the single currency. But that doesn't mean that the euro is a panacea.

Q: Is the euro the problem?

S.K.: The euro was probably a bad idea. What is clear is that the crisis countries would have coped better without the single currency. Economic and monetary union will survive, not because it is a good project, but because it is too difficult to undo it now. There is also a strong political will to continue, and the refusal to recognise that it was probably a mistake.



ONE PRIORITY: REINFORCE THE COMMON INSTITUTIONS OF EUROPE

Interview with Peter Friedrich, European Affairs minister of the Land of Baden-Württemberg

The Euro crisis has played out very differently in the countries of the Eurozone. While the cost of the interest on German debt has risen by 0,4%, the cost of the Spanish debt has soared by 68,4%. "European crisis policy was unbalanced" admits Peter Friedrich, European affairs minister of Baden-Württemberg, the third richest Land in Germany, with an unemployment rate of barely 4% and a green/red administration. Friedrich, a social-democrat, gave us his view of the institutional imbalances which open the way to populism.

"THE QUESTION OF POPULISM GOES HAND IN HAND WITH THE RENATIONALISATION OF THE ECONOMIC DEBATE. THE COUNCIL HAS PLAYED TOO BIG A ROLE AND NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE GIVEN TOO MUCH WEIGHT COMPARED TO COMMON EUROPEAN STRATEGIES."

Question: Another lesson of the crisis could be that we need strong European institutions to stand up to national powers. Is that a task for those who will be elected in May?

Peter Friedrich: We are facing a structural problem in European politics. The question of populism goes hand in hand with the re-nationalisation of the economic debate. The Council has played too big a role and national interests are given too much weight compared to common European strategies. This means that the European

institutions that are there to formulate common policies are too weak confronting those who fight for their own national interests. Unfortunately.

Q.: Instead of a pact with the EPP, could the European socialists envisage an alliance bringing together the parties of the radical left, the Liberals and the Greens?

P.F.: At European level, the party system doesn't function yet the way it does in member countries. We have a different culture in Germany. It's not a basis to say if a coalition is possible or not. I don't think Die Linke can be considered as a party of the left in the progressive sense of the word. At European level, we don't have a classic majority system in the Parliament, which decides on the government. The Council is too strong for that. It is possible that we could succeed in forging an ad hoc alliance between the pro-European parties and they will surely dominate the coming elections. From a German point of view the question of a progressive pro-European policy can't be seen through a left right spectrum.

Q : An advance for the radical left seems probably though. This left speaks about another kind of Europe and doesn't call itself anti-european. How do you see that?

P.F.: Up till now, the left in Europe hasn't tried to formulate a common vision of this "other Europe". This is something the parties of the left have to tackle. That will lead to a classic left-right confrontation, something that I think Europe urgently needs, because the presumed consensus hides from citizens the direction we want Europe to go in. But the situation of the parties of the left is currently very different. I think it is nevertheless a big step forward, that all the socialist parties have rallied behind Martin Schultz as a common candidate.

Q: But that is not enough ...

P.F.: True. But it is a small step in the right direction.

In the streets of Athens, Maoist posters predict “a major disaster”. Pensioners living on 300 euros a month give an ironic smile at the mention of the Union. It’s the start of the Greek presidency of the Council of the EU. Taxi drivers and café waiters are now printing off receipts without being asked. In the offices where the European Commission has its “task-force” – the team of experts supporting Greek budget management – there are bulletproof vests, just in case...

THE BURDEN OF AUSTERITY

Today, the Commission expresses satisfaction: “things are beginning to go better, like in Spain, like in Ireland, like in Portugal”. The Greeks have a budget surplus. Put it another way, they have so cut back on their outgoings, that for the first time their income is bigger than expenditure (if you exclude debt repayments, of course).

In 2009, PASOK and New Democracy had more than three quarters of the Greek vote between them. In May 2012, they fell to one third. New Democracy lost half of its supporters. PASOK collapsed from 44% to 13,18%, and fell further in the next elections. Today, the polls put it on 6%. Further to the left, Syriza quadrupled its score in May, and reached well over a quarter of the vote in June with 26,89%. The dark side of all this was the rise of Golden Dawn, with 6.26% of the vote.

“After the years of corruption and pork barrel politics, the two major parties are paying the price for their support for austerity policies imposed by the rescue package” declare Aristos Doxiadis and Manos Matsaganis in their study “National populism and xenophobia in Greece”. Moreover, in the course of the last two years, the country has seen 200

“POLITICS DISCLOSES ITS LACK OF ALTERNATIVES, AND IS REDUCED TO PERFORMING THE TASKS REQUIRED BY THE ECONOMIC WORLD”

attacks attributed to thugs in black shirts. And even before the shock of the fatal stabbing of the young rapper Pávlos Fýssas, and the arrest of around 20 leaders of Golden Dawn, at least two immigrants had been murdered.

A NEW HISTORY

Are we facing a new European drama? “I don’t believe that history can repeat itself. We know what happened in the past, and most people don’t want to go through that again. In any case, the economic, political, legal and cultural links in the EU are too strong to allow another descent into hell. But, I do fear new forms of exclusion, inequality, and political repression in the region. It worries me” says Alfredo Saad-Filho.

“Tell them to remember that we are human beings, not statistics!” cries an old woman in Athens, confirming the faint hopes and faith still with those who have suffered the worst of the crisis. But, for too long, in a number of Member States of the EU, it has only been the courts that have seemed to bring concrete answers to the daily problems of the people. Portugal is the best example. Its Constitutional Court has four times already refused the austerity measures negotiated between the government and the Troika.

This is what Massimo d’Alema wrote in the preface to “The Changing Faces of Populism”: “The other face of populism is technocracy, consisting in the shift of real power to increasingly unaccountable and unapproachable groups inspired by the economic rationality of what has been called ‘la pensée unique’. This has gradually shrunk the space of freedom of politics, rendering its very exercise meaningless, in terms of the power, the strength, the capacity to choose between different options and to influence the real processes of the economy. Politics discloses its lack of alternatives, and is reduced to performing the tasks required by the economic world”.

But this transferred power remains in the hands of the big traditional parties. It is up to them to demonstrate if they still have practical answers to the problems of their populations. This is for us the real, and the principal challenge of the European elections in May 2014. Make no mistake; it is not society that is being tested – but those who hold the reins.



NEOLIBERALISM IS FOR THE ELITES

Interview with Alfredo Saad-Filho, professor of political economy
at the University of London (SOAS)



© Leepower

99% protester at Occupy London

The policies of austerity, applied by many governments since 2010, seem to ignore normal participatory systems and balances of power. Cuts in public spending, regressive tax increases, pension reforms as well as the reduction of labour protection have worsened the humanitarian consequences of the crisis. The record high unemployment rates have disproportionate consequences on vulnerable and marginal groups of society. These are the conclusions of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

Result: With two million jobs lost in the four programme countries there is ever-growing risk of poverty. In Portugal for example it has risen by 26% higher. The European Parliament has initiated an inquiry on the responsibilities of the Troika. But will that suffice to re-establish the rule of law?

Q: Have we just had bad luck?

A.S.F.: The EU has not stumbled into this situation by mistake. There has been a project of forcing the entire continent towards

neoliberalism and that cannot succeed without fracturing the social consensus that has underpinned the European project since the end of the Second World War. That has been leading to a debasement of democracy, depoliticization of politics. Because everything that really matters in the realm of the economy is now outside of political discussion. So what is left is cultural identity and religion.

Q: We are told there are no alternatives.

A.S.F.: This has been the neoliberal discourse for a long time. You will remember the very famous phrase of Margaret Thatcher saying, "There is no alternative". Now the objective is to prevent protests becoming a threat to an economic model that does not respond to their aspirations or to their capacities. This is really a dead-end street. You find young people especially despondent about politics, and it should not be happening, believing that politicians offer no answers, that politicians only are there for the taking. This is not true. But we do have a problem.



“IT IS CRUCIAL TO BREAK THROUGH THIS CYCLE THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR THE LAST THIRTY YEARS NOW THAT SOCIAL PROBLEMS, **LIKE UNEMPLOYMENT, ARE INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS.** BREAKING THIS MYTH IS CENTRAL FOR THE LEFT.”

Q: Why do socialist parties not have better answers than the rightist parties?

A.S.F.: I think you are hitting the nail on the head now. We have seen that with the election of François Hollande in France but also in other countries. The Left almost invariably ends up doing liberalism more slowly than the Right would, or doing it even more efficiently than the Right would, but fundamentally unable to deliver, because neoliberalism does not deliver for the majority of the population. It delivers for the elite. Over the past last thirty or forty years, there has been a tremendous progress for the elites around Europe and around the world, tremendous increase of consumption for the ten or fifteen per cent. But for the bottom eighty or ninety per cent there is a tremendous decrease in social and economic security. This is what the leftist parties are confronted with. Any socialist ideology that does not false that problem is politically completely lost. And this is a gold mine for the populists.

Q: This new division between North and South? Will that be a problem for Europe?

A.S.F.: Investor George Soros warned in the Guardian of a risk of a crisis between creditor and debtor countries. That is dramatic. European integration as it materializes in the Euro project is unsustainable. The outcome has been a much more autocratic, much more German dominated, much more right wing European Union. It is an completely asymmetric process of integration, a very unequal process of enlargement has been going on driven more and more by finance, by the German government, by the US Treasury Department. This is fundamentally undemocratic. It opens the EU to fracture in terms of of populism

Q: And nobody sees what is happening?

A.S.F.: I fear that finance and the elite, those that represent between one, five, ten or twenty per cent of the population is by and large disconnected from the public space and public sphere. They are globalized in their own culture, they don't have any concern with the public sphere of their own country, in some sense they don't belong there anymore and they don't care. If Europe goes that way, I think it will be a tremendous step back from the continent that was rebuilt at the end of the Second World War, when notions of social solidarity and social cohesion were very important. In my view that has been lost over time.

Q: So, what should be done?

A.S.F.: It is crucial to break through this cycle that has been going on for the last thirty years now that social problems, like unemployment, are individual problems. Breaking this myth is central for the Left.

Q: How?

A.S.F.: What has destroyed a great part of the legitimacy of Neoliberalism and the Euro project has also eroded a lot of the democratic aspect of the European political system. What has been happening is the development of the far right and populism. This is destructive. In my view, the way to challenge this has to be political, it has to be through the promotion of democratic values and the demand for distributive and democratic economic policies.

GREECE: ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE RISE OF THE EXTREMES

The assertion that crises lead to the rise of the extreme right is based on questionable assumptions. Not all crisis-ridden countries experience a rise of the extreme right; others also benefit electorally.

The rise of Golden Dawn in Greece should not be seen as a direct consequence of the crisis, but as the product of the country's weak democratic institutions and its polarised and highly nationalistic political culture.



by Sofia Vasilopoulou & Daphne Halikiopoulou



Over 400,000 Greeks voted for the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party in the May and June 2012 elections.

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rises, and the discontent that they generate, represent a significant challenge to democratic stability and tend to be associated with the

rise of right-wing extremism. The logic is as follows: economic crises create a social pathology and facilitate extremism because they create a society of winners and losers in which the dispossessed and unemployed will express their protest by opting for an extreme right-wing party. In other words, the extreme right provides an outlet of expression for the angry, unemployed and disillusioned. For example the inter-war economic crisis has been closely linked with the rise of Nazism and fascism in Europe.

THE RISE OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

The recent euro zone crisis has also been associated with high levels of public disillusionment, often manifested politically in the form of strikes and mass demonstrations. The crisis has been blamed by many as the main driver for the recent electoral breakthrough of the Greek neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, an extreme, ultra-nationalist and racist party which received votes from over 400,000 Greek citizens during the May and June 2012 elections. The party, which is currently represented in the Greek Parliament by 18 MPs, is in a controversial position. Following the murder of left-wing activist Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013, a number of Golden Dawn MPs and members, including its leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos, were arrested and charged for involvement in and management of a criminal organisation. Other charges include the attempt-

ed murder of immigrants; incidents of grievous bodily harm; and blackmail and money laundering. The status of the party remains ambiguous: the party will remain legal throughout the investigation and continues to enjoy parliamentary representation. Interestingly, its support has not suffered as a result of these events. According to a recent poll by Kappa Research, Golden Dawn is the third political force in Greece with support estimated at 7.5%.

THE PERILS OF GENERALISATION

Is this the result of economic crisis? This line of argumentation tends to overlook two very important facts. First, that other European countries experiencing comparable crisis conditions—including Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain—are not witnessing a similar phenomenon. Interestingly, in Italy the reverse has taken place. Although the country witnessed consistent support for right-wing extremism since the end of WWII, for example in the form of various parties including

“WE MAY UNDERSTAND THE RISE OF THE GOLDEN DAWN IN GREECE IN TERMS OF THE COUNTRY’S NATIONALIST CULTURE AND THE HISTORICALLY EMBEDDED POLITICAL POLARISATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS FORCES OF THE LEFT AND RIGHT.”

Key Points

- Economic crisis does not necessarily lead to the rise of the extreme right.
- Ethno-exclusionary political culture has facilitated the rise of extremism in Greece.
- Political polarisation has sustained a culture of intolerance and hindered the consolidation of substantive democracy.

the Northern League, the National Alliance and the Social Movement/Tricolour Flame, support declined with the onset of the crisis. During the 2013 elections, the Northern League saw its electoral support halved, declining from 8.1% in 2008 to 4.3%. In Portugal the nationalist National Renovator Party received 0.2% of the votes cast in 2009, which increased only marginally to 0.3% in 2011, indicating consistently low levels of support. Similarly, there is little support for right-wing extremism in Spain. Possibly the only exception is the regionalist/nationalist Platform for Catalonia. Although its support has increased at the local level, during the 2011 national elections the party received a mere 0.2% of the vote. In Ireland there is no extreme right-wing party contesting for elections.

Second, there is no clear explanation of why the dispossessed and unemployed will express their protest by opting for the extreme right rather than the extreme left. Indeed, in Greece the rise of the Golden Dawn has also been accompanied by the rise of fringe left-wing parties. The same poll cited above places the Coalition for the Radical Left (SYRIZA) in first place with 22.5%. SYRIZA, which was a relatively marginal party

prior to the crisis, has significantly increased its support in the past three years and has become a serious contender for government. Like any other fringe party in Greece, SYRIZA has been able to capitalise on the crisis. The party has organised a number of demonstrations directed against the EU and the bailout, and has increasingly centred its rhetoric on the exploitation of Greece by foreign powers and the role of domestic politicians as collaborators.

ADDRESSING QUESTIONABLE ASSUMPTIONS

In a nutshell, the assertion that crisis leads to the rise of the extreme right is based on two questionable assumptions: firstly that all crisis-ridden countries experience the rise of the extreme right; and secondly that it is primarily the extreme right party family that benefit electorally from the crisis. Yet, the impact of the euro zone crisis indicates that while economic crisis may become associated with the rise of right-wing extremism in some cases, it may not in others; crises often become associated with the rise of both extremes.

If we define extremism as the absence of pluralism, then we may understand the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece in terms of the country's nationalist culture and the historically embedded political polarisation between the various forces of the left and right. The rise of the Golden Dawn is thus better understood as the product of a long-term process of political polarisation that characterises Greece's modern history. The country experienced civil war, dictatorship and political violence throughout the 20th century. What the crisis has done is to serve as a "trigger" that did not, in itself cause the rise of extremism but facilitated it by intensifying the conditions that are favourable to it. These conditions are relevant to political culture; we understand political culture in terms of nationalism.

"THE POLITICAL CENTRE BECAME ACCEPTED ON THE BASIS OF THE PROVISION OF PATRONAGE RATHER THAN THE STRENGTH OF LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS CHALLENGED THIS SYSTEM AT ITS CORE."



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NATIONALISM AND DEFIANCE

Greek nationalism may be best described as “ethno-exclusionary”. The distinguishing feature between “us” and “the other” is ethnic superiority based on an idealised vision of Greece and an element of defiance. The element of ethnic superiority derives from the formalisation of narratives that emphasise Greece’s glorious past, including the civilization of the ancient Greek city-states and the legacy of Orthodox Byzantium and its sacred linguistic *ethnie*. The defiance element stems from the anti-colonial character of Greek nationalism. As part of the nation-building process post-independence, the predominant narrative emphasised the distinctive identity of Greece vis-à-vis its former colonial ruler, the Ottoman Empire, which generally tends to be portrayed as inferior because of its civilization and religion. As such, Greek identity is contrasted against the Ottomans on the basis of Ortho-

doxy versus Islam and progressive democracy versus the dark years of imperial rule. Defiance against this rule in order to restore the values of national self-determination premised upon the ethnically and religiously superior Greek nation is justified as a means to the ultimate end.

The collective memory of the Greek nation is institutionalised by formal state means such as the education system, which emphasises the superiority of Greek Orthodox descent, Greece’s unique language and ancient heritage and the glorification of struggle against the “other”, which tends to be portrayed as aggressive and expansionist but culturally inferior. Greeks are taught from a very young age to glorify lawlessness and defiance. They are raised with narratives of sacrifice, national victimisation and the veneration of violence. As a result, defiance against authority, anomie and sacrifice for the nation are

fundamental elements of Greek national pride. These narratives constitute mainstream political culture and are upheld by all political forces regardless of ideology or other social cleavages.

Despite the fact that Greek parties are divided on class lines, they are united by a common conception of nationalism, which has legitimised violence and perpetuated a violent political culture through political polarisation. In other words, while Greek society is united by a shared sense of ethnic superiority based on Greek language, Orthodox religious identity and a common discourse of intolerance, lawlessness, defiance of authority and disrespect for institutions and the Rule of Law, it is historically divided between two political extremes, i.e. left and right.

GREEK POLITICS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since the establishment of the Greek state, Greece has been politically divided and its history has been marked by internal violence, armed insurrections and threats to its democratic stability. The assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias in mid-19th century is exemplary of the divisions over who should rule the country internally. During the early 20th century, the country became further polarised. Domestic reforms, the war in Asia Minor, the legitimacy of Great Power intervention and Greece's role in WWI were among the issues that divided those who supported the Crown (i.e. the royalists) and those in favour of Eleftherios Venizelos' modernization reforms (i.e. the democrats or Venizelists). Greece's defeat in the war with Kemal (1919-1922), the subsequent Asia Minor disaster in 1922 and the end of the Megali Idea resulted in increased Greek hostility against external powers and consolidated the nationalist narrative of a nation betrayed. It also revealed the weak foundations of Greek democracy marked by violence; for example the 1922 attempted coup and the subsequent execution of six royalists leaders.

“THE MAIN PROBLEM IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF LAWS OR INSTITUTIONS BUT THE ABSENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND A STRONG LIBERAL MAINSTREAM CENTRE.”

During the inter-war period, these internal divisions and the deep political unrest that threatened Greek parliamentary politics became exacerbated by the political turmoil of the inter-war crisis and the rise of right-wing authoritarianism elsewhere in Europe. The 4th of August Metaxas regime (1936-1941) constitutes another example of Greece's propensity towards violence and authoritarianism but most importantly illustrates the paradoxes ingrained in Greek nationalism. Although Metaxas was a right-wing authoritarian leader influenced by some of his European counterparts and regimes consolidating at the same time in countries such as Portugal, Italy and Germany, his refusal to cooperate with the Axis powers in 1940 illustrates the elements of ethnic superiority and defiance that characterise the Greek nation. His infamous 'OXI' (No) celebrated annually in Greece every 28th of October constitutes the nationalist myth of the epic of the 1940s.

ECONOMIC CRISIS EXPOSES WEAK DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATIONS

During the war a number of rival resistance groups were formed, including the non-communist National Republican Greek League (EDES) and the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), which was the military branch of the left-wing National Liberation Front (EAM). From 1943 onwards, these groups came into confrontation with each other, culminating into the 'Dekemvriana' civil strife between communists and the Greek government supported by the British; and

the subsequent civil war (1946-1949). As such, post-WWII Greece was characterised by the continuation of internal violence, persecution and criminalisation of the left (the Greek Communist Party – KKE) and a series of political crimes such the assassination of the communist activist Nikos Belogiannis in 1952. In the post-civil war era conservative rule and further clashes dominated the political scene, which resulted in the Constitutional crisis of 1965. The inability to form a government finally resulted in the 1967 Colonel's coup.

These events illustrate the deeply embedded polarisation that characterises Greek society and the absence of overlapping consensus over political values. The historically-rooted polarisation on the one hand, and the sense of national superiority, on the other, have inhibited the consolidation of a liberal mainstream political centre, the establishment of a strong civil society and a political culture based on pluralism and tolerance. This propensity towards political polarisation and extremism were contained but not eradicated by Greece's clientelistic system during the post-dictatorship era. **The political centre became accepted on the basis of the provision of patronage rather than the strength of liberal-democratic institutions. The econom-**

ic crisis challenged this system at its core, thus revealing the weak foundations of Greek democracy and the propensity of Greek nationalism to become expressed politically through support for the extremes.

The rise of Golden Dawn is thus not particularly surprising as its main ideals are not "alien" to the principles that define Greek nationalism. Its increasing support, combined with the concurrent rise of SYRIZA, has served to expose the inherent weaknesses of Greek democratic institutions. Part of the problem is that the main opposition to Golden Dawn stems from radical left-wing forces, further fuelling political polarisation. Another is double standards. It was not until the assassination of a left-wing activist that the Greek authorities acted; murders and instances of grievous bodily harm against immigrants were insufficient to generate a response. It is these principles that expose the fragility of the Greek political system and hinder the consolidation of substantive democracy in Greece. **The main problem is not the absence of laws or institutions but the absence of civil society and a strong liberal mainstream centre.** In the final analysis, shifting people's attitudes requires generational change, which is achieved through long-term educational reform.

ABOUT

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IDENTITY MATTERS

when it comes to integration

Sunder Katwala, director of the think tank British Future, explains how Social democrats should get more comfortable with questions of identity and belonging in the debate about integration. Identities of majorities should be considered too, he insists.



by Sunder Katwala

Integration matters. It goes to the heart of the purpose of politics when societies are changing fast. What is the content of our common citizenship, in multi-ethnic societies of many faiths and none? Do we have a shared society, or a segmented one? Are collective projects still possible?

THE BRITISH WAY

Any social democrat will think these are important questions, yet the European centre-left struggle to feel at home with the theme of integration. The rationalist social democrat is comfortable with measurable socio-economic inequalities, but finds the emotionally subjective terrain of felt belonging harder. Despite a recent history of empathizing with how identity can matter to minority groups, social democrats somehow find it uncomfortable to engage with the cultural identity of majorities too. And the entire political class can struggle to talk about integration in a language that people can understand.

Socio-economic concerns are important. The rhetoric of equal opportunity and shared citizenship will ring hollow for citizens, from whatever background, who feel left behind, or cut off from mainstream opportunities. But that insight shouldn't harden into a comfort zone belief that, if needs around jobs and housing are addressed, issues of belonging will look after themselves. This is unlikely – and it will anyway fail as politics. Social democrats who seem tone deaf when people want to talk about identity will fail to mobilise the broad coalitions they need for their social causes. Britain has an uneven, mixed record on integration. The UK has established stronger anti-prejudice norms than most other European societies, with a stark intergenerational collapse in racist attitudes. Studies consistently show that black and Asian Britons now have a mildly stronger sense of being British than their white fellow citizens. Yet that is a rather double-edged success. Most people thought that debates about diversity and multiculturalism were questions about minorities, for minorities, and about minorities. Such a debate will, by its nature, be too narrow to

develop a shared sense of identity which is equally owned.

If identity matters to minorities, it matters to majorities too. This can be a social democratic blind spot, reflecting an unfortunate instinct to fall into the trap of accepting a populist framing of identity and integration issues as being all about the question of 'them and us'. The 'them and us' argument tends to take a similar form, whether it relates to new migrants, settled minorities, or minority faith groups, like Muslims. It is a simple story: 'there are too many of them; they are taking resources that should be ours; they aren't like us, and they don't want to be'. (And 'we aren't even allowed to talk about it', to throw in a dose of conspiracy and betrayal).

Social democrats often feel that they face an unfortunate dilemma over this 'them versus us' claim – tending to respond to a politics of competing grievances through a tactical triangulation, a decision about how far to trade-off minority needs for majority reassurance. (Even benign attempts to offer a counter-argument about economic contributions and cultural diversity can fail

to realise that a 'they are good for us' story is still about 'them and us').

The way out of this trap is to understand the integration question as about us, all of us, feeling integral to the society we share. What shall we do now? How shall we all make the 'new us' work?

The good news is that people often agree about this, as British Future's work studying attitudes to integration in the UK found.

Firstly, there was close to universal agreement on the essential foundations for integration: respect for the law; the ability to speak English; and the desire to contribute and to work were simply basic common sense.

Secondly, those foundations do unlock a broadly held reciprocal commitment to fair treatment: that those who do play by the rules deserve to be treated as members of the British club with equal status.

A PUBLIC CONSENSUS

What emerged too was a sense of how this sequencing matters – almost a delicate dance of etiquette towards mutual respect and a shared belonging. Newcomers being committed to 'here' – wanting to be here, and to join in – unlocks mutual respect for cultural diversity, from food and music, to religious freedom. So 'fairness' demands – such as anti-discrimination, equal citizenship, and respect for freedom of religious expression – are in. But 'carve out' demands, the appearance of wanting to live by the rules of somewhere else, within British society, would undermine the idea of a shared set of rules we all must observe. The third level of integration is about emotional attachment to British identity, and symbols of identity. This had lower priority – partly because of an understanding that this will take time to be authentic. Moreover, as British citizens differ over issues like the Monarchy or the wearing of Remembrance poppies,

the same choice must be open to new Britons too. The idea of personal "choice" was quickly voiced to challenge the idea that people should be judged by whether they watch the same TV programmes and films, or which sporting teams they support.

The breadth of this public consensus on a liberal approach to integration as reflected in polling showing overwhelming support for the statement "To belong to our shared society, everyone must speak our language, obey our laws and pay their taxes – so that everyone

**"RESPECT FOR THE
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who plays by the rules counts as equally British, and should be able to reach their full potential". 83% of the British public support this, while only 3% opposed. It reflects a strong majority across social classes and ethnic groups. It was favoured across the political spectrum, being accepted as fair by UKIP voters by the striking margin of 92% to 1%.

The research showed that there is a latent public consensus about integration, but perhaps one which can be hidden by the way we tend to talk about these issues. You would struggle to start a public conversation about the terms which policy-makers and academ-

ics use – whether these are around integration, assimilation, community cohesion, multiculturalism or interculturalism. There are disagreements about what the words mean – whether multiculturalism is the acceptance of the social fact of a multi-ethnic society, or a policy choice to emphasise difference over commonality – which can obscure substantive agreement about what equal citizenship in a diverse society means. People have strong and clear views about how we live together, whether we have a shared society, and what playing by the rules means. Unlocking a shared sense of what we can legitimately expect of each other as citizens may depend on working harder to translate these elite policy debates into the language that people themselves choose when they talk about how we live together, locally and nationally, if we want a shared society.



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ABOUT

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“DEMOCRACY IS HYPOCRISY!”

European Muslims, democratic malaise and Islamist extremism

Many claim that Islamist movements are today approaching the zenith of their influence in Europe. What's more, there is a widely held belief that this trend of expanding Islamist notoriety is only going to accelerate. Certainly, Islamist prominence does seem to be increasing, but why? Is it appropriate to blame it on the rising tide of disillusionment with democracy? We have found this reasoning to be at best misleading, at worst something that plays all too well into the Islamist discourse.



by Usama Hasan & Charles Cooper

It is important to note that Islamism, in any of its forms, is not the dominant political orientation among the European Muslim population. Indeed, of Europe's twenty million or so Muslims (excluding Turkey), only a tiny minority have turned away from liberal democratic values towards pursuing an Islamist mode of politics. Yes, there are more European Islamists with anti-democratic values today than ever before, but at the same time, there are more pro-democracy Muslim activists than ever too.

ISLAMISM'S CONFLICT WITH DEMOCRACY

The Islamists' conflict with democracy is no new thing: they have long disagreed with democratic principles and struggled to reconcile their beliefs with concepts such as universal human rights, freedom of religion, speech and expression, and gender equality. For decades now, the most infamous groups have followed a strict, inflexible ideology in which democracy is deemed to be 'as a form

of government, bankrupt.'¹ Further, extreme Islamists regard it as an improper form of politicking that supposedly engenders irreparable arrogance and materialism: any system of electoral politics is inherently kufr (infidelity) because it wrongly bestows sovereignty to man (and not God), going against what is a central tenet to any Islamist ideology.² For Islamists, the caliphate is the only ideal political model, the only one that would allow for full implementation and state enforcement of the shari'a code of law, something that is 'incompatible with the fundamental principles of democracy' according to the European Court of Human Rights.³

¹ Sayyid Qutb, as quoted by Azzam Tamimi, in 'Democracy in Islamic Political Thought', lecture at Belfast Mosque, 10-1997.

² Abdul Qadeem Zalloom, 'Democracy is a system of kufr: it is forbidden to adopt, implement, or call for it', London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 1995.

³ 'Judgement in the case of Refah Partisi and Others v. Turkey', Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, 13-02-2003.



Mosque of Rome, Italy

In recent years, though, there has been a rhetorical shift away from the emphasis on this theological paradigm of anti-democratic Islamist thought. Indeed, more and more, contemporary Islamist groups seem to be distancing themselves from outright rejection of democracy, instead preferring to criticise it from within. Taking inspiration from their counterparts in the Middle East, some European Islamists are even integrating with and operating from within the system, something that signals either a liberalising trend in Muslim politics,⁴ or an entrenchment of European communalism,⁵ depending on how one interprets it.

That said, is the notion that more Muslims are radicalising because of dissatisfaction with democracy at all relevant? Below, it is shown that while democratic malaise is on the rise, this is not why the ranks of Islamists have swelled of late. In Islamist propaganda, though, disillusionment with democracy does play a central role: socioeconomic issues that generate a sense of vulnerability among Muslims are at once exaggerated and explained as inevitable outcomes of democracy, creating something of an excuse for Islamist activism. Disillusionment, though, is not the real culprit here.

A CYNICAL EXPLOITATION OF A EUROPE-WIDE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DEMOCRACY

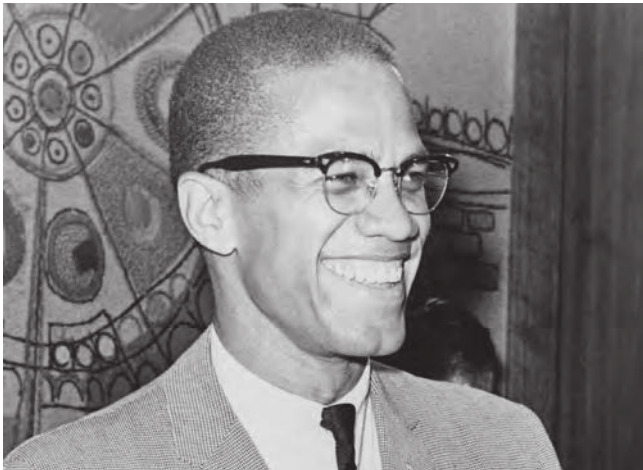
Islamists' conceptual treatment of democracy has altered of late. On one level, there has been a shift into the mainstream for the

anti-democratic critique. On another, Islamists have begun to work from within the electoral system. Whatever the case, no more is it something that only the Islamist intellectual elite deals with. Nowadays, many more choose to justify their allegiance to the Islamist cause on grounds of what they deem to be failings of the democratic system. Indeed, Muslim sensitivities regarding the democratic system have taken the spotlight as the principle means by which Islamist groups justify their existence in the West.

Putting its questionable validity to one side, the Islamist case against democracy has certainly been strengthened of late by the upheaval of the "Arab Spring" that began in December 2010. Its consequences have fed further the Islamist critique on democracy, bolstering the perception that Muslims need to rally behind the Islamist cause because that is the only political ideology that is sound in a country with a Muslim majority. Events in Egypt, Libya, Syria, even Tunisia, are all cited as evidence that democracy just does not work in a Muslim context.

⁴ Dilwar Hussain, 'Beyond Islamism', *Emel*, Issue 88, 01-2012.

⁵ Uriya Shavit, "'The lesser of two evils': Islamic law and the emergence of a broad agreement on Muslim participation in Western political systems", *Contemporary Islam*, 12-2013.



"Democracy is Hypocrisy" was first popularised in a speech by Malcolm X.

© Library of Congress

"DEMOCRACY IS HYPOCRISY"

In a sense, though, there has been a generational shift among Islamists. Mottos like "democracy is hypocrisy"⁶ now take precedence over "Islam is the solution" and the idea that democracy is repugnant because only God may be sovereign has evolved into one in which democracy is repugnant simply because it is unjust. The latter argument has proven to be far more popular with young Muslims (theology does not have the same appeal that common social grievances do) and fits well into the accepted media discourse; however, it does not reflect accurately the reasons for which Islamist groups actually gain adherents.

One of the principal conditions that facilitate radicalisation to Islamism is a sense of vulnerability. Vulnerability engenders identity crises, and it is these that lay the foundations for radicalisation, because they leave some Muslims exploitable. Inasmuch as that is the case, it is a perceived disillusionment with democracy that fuels Islamism. It is democracy – as opposed to anything else – that is blamed for cultural segregation and economic inequality.

As mentioned above, besides this clear-cut blame-game in which democracy always loses, more moderate Islamists have taken a different track, with some embracing the electoral system as a means of upholding communalism and isolationism (see box). This method of working from within democracy is inherently un-democratic, though, involving as it does Muslims 'forsak[ing] their individual opinions in favour of the opinion of the collective,'⁷ allowing their vote to be determined by an organisation.⁸

That democracy is doomed to inevitable failure is not the orthodox view among European Muslims, though, and it is important to recognise this as such. While recent events have played into the hands of the anti-democrats, they have not engendered a general ideological shift among European Muslims away from the mainstream perception that democracy works, and works well.⁹ The same people who would have been radicalised before are the ones that are being radicalised now so, in that sense, little has changed.

Key Points

→ Economic stagnation, social polarisation and democratic malaise exist for all Europeans, not just Muslims. While vulnerability can contribute to Islamist radicalisation, the same people who would have been radicalised in the past are radicalising today.

→ It is important to differentiate between Islam, which has no specific prescriptions for modes of governance, and Islamism, which seeks to establish a caliphate and implement shari'a law.

→ There is a changing narrative within Islamism which from a theological critique to one that democracy is repugnant simply because it is unjust. However, there has not been a general anti-democratic shift among mainstream European Muslims.

⁶ This was a phrase first popularised in a speech by Malcom X that has been widely adopted by contemporary Islamist groups in the West.

⁷ Haitham al-Haddad, 'Advice to British Muslims regarding the coming elections', *Islam21C*, 16-10-2006.

⁸ See al-Haddad, 'All about voting'.

⁹ Zsolt Nyiri, 'Muslims in Europe: basis for greater understanding already exists', *Gallup News Service, Gallup World*, 30-04-2007.

“FOCUSING ON THE FACT THAT IT IS ISLAMISM, AND NOT ISLAM, THAT IS IRRECONCILABLE WITH DEMOCRACY IS THE FIRST STEP IN EASING TENSIONS BETWEEN MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES”

The difference now is that disillusionment with democracy is being used as an excuse for Islamist activism more than it was in the past.

A NECESSARY REACTION – EUROPEAN MUSLIM DEMOCRATS

Until fairly recently, the most vocal European Muslims have been, without a doubt, the Islamists. This has meant that the overall visibility of Muslims has been defined by a small fringe of individuals, something that has fed into damaging rightist narratives.

To counteract this, many have been outspoken in working to counter the overwhelming perception that Muslims, as a religio-political bloc, do not agree with or support democratic values. They seek to limit and reverse the damage that these vocal, intolerant few have caused to Europe's Muslim population by lending credence to the misconception that all Muslims want to do is 'control the state without being a subject of the state.'¹⁰ And with far-right (and, indeed, not-so-far-right) groups now criticising the EU for its policy of “naïve tolerance” towards the Muslim population, the stakes are higher than ever.¹¹

At the more conservative end of this spectrum of pro-democracy Muslim activism are those such as Tariq Ramadan and Rached Ghannouchi. Ramadan, a “post-Islamist” who, despite an occasional tendency to obstruct progress in reformist Islam, has made substantial contributions to the debate, holds that ‘non-Muslim governments in which Muslims are able to participate democratically are more Islamic than authoritarian governments run by Muslims.’¹² This radical-sounding position is shared by many, among others, Ghannouchi, leader of Tunisia's Ennahda Party and one of the last century's most important Islamist thinkers. He recently said that Britain embodied the values of his ideal Islamic state better than most Muslim-majority states, because a state is ‘more Muslim, more Islamic, the more it has justice in it.’¹³ Figures

like these, though, are not going far enough. Another important contributor to this debate – and someone who does go further – is Dilwar Hussain, former president of the Islamic Society of Britain. He has rigorously questioned some of the fundamental assumptions of the Islamist ideology, particularly in the context of the Arab Spring.¹⁴

More important is the role played by those such as Sheikh Manwar Ali, former jihadist and director of Salafist group JIMAS. Whilst remaining a leading ideologue in Britain's Salafist movement, Sheikh Ali advocates for secular democracy, affirming and reaffirming that Islam as a religion welcomes pluralism and that democracy is theologically sound, even optimal, within Islam. Working with organisations like British Muslims for Secular Democracy, the likes of Sheikh Ali hope to show that there is no irreconcilability between modern-day Salafism and democratic values, let alone any civilizational clash between Muslims and non-Muslims.¹⁵ We at Quilliam have developed this idea extensively; indeed, advancing this debate is a central principle of our organisation.¹⁶

¹⁰ Vincent Cooper, ‘A bad fit: Islam and democracy at home and abroad’, *The Commentator*, 19-10-2013.

¹¹ Jonathan Laurence, ‘Islam and social democrats: integrating Europe's Muslim minorities’, *Dissent*, 10-2013.

¹² Jocelyn Cesari, *When Islam and democracy meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 163.

¹³ Mukul Devichand, ‘Rashid Ghannouchi on Britain, Islam and liberal democracy’, *BBC Radio 4*, 12-02-2012.

¹⁴ Hussain, ‘Beyond Islamism’.

¹⁵ See Manwar Ali's lecture as part of the British Muslims for Secular Democracy and Network for a New European Generation symposium, ‘Islam and secular democracy’, Queen Mary's College, London, 09-2012.

¹⁶ See Maa'jid Nawaz, ‘A global culture to fight extremism’, TED Talk, TEDGlobal 2011, 07-2011; Noman Benotman, ‘People, protest and democracy in the Middle East’, *The Frontline Club*, 02-03-2011.

It is former proponents of an anti-democratic agenda who are leading the way in bucking the mainstream discourse on Muslims. Other ex-radicals like Rashad Ali, Ed Husain,¹⁷ and Munir Zamir champion a pro-democracy agenda and present a strong counter-narrative to that of current radical trends. Central to this particular line of discourse is that, while Islam 'has no specific prescriptions for modes of governance',¹⁸ Islamism – on account of the centrality of establishing the caliphate and implementing the shari'a – does. Thus, it is ultimately incompatible with democracy. This means that moderate or hard-line Islamism can never and will never truly gel with liberal, secular, democratic principles. Focusing on the fact that it is Islamism and not Islam that is irreconcilable with democracy is the first step in easing tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It falls to reforming individuals and groups like those mentioned above to dispel the myth that fringe groups have long disseminated, something that is already well under way in the United Kingdom.

So, while some commentators determined in 2006 that the 'secular effort is faltering against the vibrancy and energy of the Islamists',¹⁹ we would argue that, now, this is not the case. Europe's under-represented Muslim majority is once again finding its voice. And, while certain Islamist groups are claiming that 'disaffection

and disillusionment with the political process are widespread throughout society with voters asking whether their vote really matters',²⁰ there is substantial, striking evidence to suggest that this is significantly more the case with non-Muslims than Muslims.²¹

BEYOND THE VOCAL MINORITY

In the current climate of economic stagnation and social polarisation, democratic malaise is setting in for all Europeans. But to view this as something affecting Muslims exclusively, or even just Muslims in particular, is incorrect. It is a Europe-wide, cross-religion phenomenon, and to blame any surge in Islamist radicalisation on it is a mistake.

Radicalisation is not a function of democratic malaise. Saying so just plays into the Islamist narrative. Muslims do not join fundamentalist political movements simply because of expenses scandals or foreign policy decisions; it is not as simple as that. Nonetheless, grievances that may arise as part of a perceived disillusionment with democracy do play a role in generating appeal for Islamist movements, for they have the potential to alienate and stigmatize ordinary Muslims with the possible result of making them susceptible to extremist propaganda. They are not, though, the sole or even primary cause of radicalisation.

The Haitham al-Haddad case

One of the most influential anti-democratic but pro-electoral process Islamists is Haitham al-Haddad, a man who encourages participation in the democratic system only to further Islamist and communalist objectives. For him, Muslims living in a democracy are compelled to vote because they are duty-bound to command the good and forbid the evil. So, if, by voting, they are ensuring that the least worst situation will materialise, then it is obligatory that they vote. Even if the system is kufr, which it most definitely is, participating in it is not necessarily kufr. It depends on the nature of the participation - ie. if one votes as part of maslaha (ie. in the public interest), then it is fine. If one votes for another reason, like fulfilling their role as a citizen, then it is kufr. He compares voting to a starving man being able to eat un-slaughtered meat: this

is acceptable because in doing so the man is creating a less bad situation. Despite the fact that he encourages those who choose not to vote not to impact upon others' decisions – it is their right to vote or not vote, and to compel them to do otherwise is, he holds, kufr – his views are undemocratic in their very nature. Indeed, while he might sound like he has faith in democratic values, he does not. On numerous occasions, he urges people not to vote for who they deem to be the best candidate; rather, he urges Muslims to vote as a bloc and according to who the Muslim Association of Britain (an Islamist group with strong links to the Muslim Brotherhood) deem to be the most suitable. Not doing so is, he holds, at risk of being kufr. See 'All about voting', 6-4-2007, Alternative Entertainment, available at alternativeentertainment.wordpress.com/2007/04/06/all-about-voting-shaykh-haitham-al-haddad/

“RADICALISATION IS NOT A FUNCTION OF DEMOCRATIC MALAISE. SAYING SO JUST PLAYS INTO THE ISLAMIST NARRATIVE.”

An explanation of what is beyond the scope of this paper. Briefly, though, the primary reason for which Muslims join Islamist organisations is to be found in the Muslim identity crisis in Europe and its subsequent misrepresentation by charismatic recruiters. By Islamists, any dissociation with citizenship or uncertainty regarding identity are exacerbated, explained and understood through a lens of “democratic failure”, and as such Islamists can justify their ideology, referring to a fabricated narrative and fuelling their argument that human sovereignty is fundamentally flawed.

The way forward is littered with obstacles, but the persuasive and pervasive Islamist discourse may be overcome. Until recently, fringe groups have muffled the voice of the European Muslim majority – now it is being reclaimed. Now, it falls to all pro-democracy Muslims – and not just those prominent ex-extremists and reformers – to guide European Muslims into greater assimilation

with their nations and re-address questions of citizenship and identity. After all, that is where the true causes of recruitment to Islamist extremist ideologies lie, as do the roots of the constructive message of European Muslim democrats that is thankfully on the rise, despite formidable challenges. **The next decade will be very interesting for Islam, extremism and democracy in Europe.**

17 See, for example, Ed Husain, 'Islam can lead in either direction', New York Times, 03-12-2012.

18 Ed Husain, 'Ed Husain: you ask the questions', The Independent, 14-04-2008.

19 Delwar Hussain, 'Bangladeshis in East London: from secular politics to Islam', openDemocracy, 06-07-2006.

20 'Alternative vote: advice for British Muslims', Muslim Research and Development Foundation, Islam 21C, 01-05-2011.

21 'Survey reveals Muslim attitudes', BBC News, 07-05-2009.

ABOUT

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MICHEL WIEVORKIA

When politics and individualism collide

*A French survey published in late January found that more people were ready to support the Front National in the European elections than the UMP or Parti Socialiste, traditionally the country's two main parties. Queries spoke to French sociologist Michel Wievorkia—author of the recently published book *Le Front national entre extrémisme, populisme et démocratie* (“The Front National: between extremism, populism and democracy”)—and asked him to use the case of France to analyse this democratic discontent. In the following interview, he identifies three parts to the problem: political, economic and cultural.*



Interview by Alain Bloëdt

Queries: To help define the issues at stake, would you describe the Front National as an extremist or populist party?

Michel Wieviorka: It is both, creating a duality that plays to its advantage. The party has not severed the extremist, racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic roots from which it grew. However, it has recently taken a different tack in a bid to put on a more respectable public face, to join the institutional game, and to seek integration and participation in the system, as embodied by the woman currently leading the party.

Q.: Are these two approaches mutually exclusive?

M.W.: Yes, they are like chalk and cheese. Marine Le Pen's biggest opponent is her father.

Q.: How is that possible?

M.W.: Because of a make-believe approach that involves using intangible talk to reconcile what are in reality opposing views. The FN is not shy about its contradictions, a fact quite common among populist parties.

Q.: Could this contradictory stance prevent it from becoming a party like any another?

M.W.: There are signs that it might have trouble shrugging off the core values on which it was originally based in order to remould itself as a hard right party. Like Marion Maréchal, who seems closer to her grandfather than to the current party leader, some party members—although young—hold to views that remained rooted in its underlying extremism. It isn't really a case of the new generation against the old.

Q.: How can we counter these parties?

M.W.: By pointing out the ambivalence in those messages that run contrary to fundamental human values and by countering the proposals in its manifesto to show how inane they are from an economic standpoint. It is one thing to say that the FN is a racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic party; it is another to say that it has an economic programme that does not hold water and that pulling out of the euro—as it suggests—would be catastrophic. We need a combination of moral convictions and reason.

Q.: The underlying criticisms are there but they do not seem to be heard.

M.W.: When it comes to values and reasons, it is not the message that goes unheeded; it is the messenger. The FN is criticised by people who mostly give the impression of belonging to some form of elite. However,

it is hard to lecture about morals when you are earning several thousand or even tens of thousands of euros a month. Money and morals make poor bed fellows. It is equally difficult to claim that the Front National's economic programme is inept when we are failing to bring down unemployment, stimulate growth and combat inequality.

Q.: So how should we go about it?

Do we need a change in political leadership?

M.W.: I am very pessimistic about the current situation. I am not saying that our incumbent politicians are not up to the task but I do feel they are far from living up to the people's expectations or offering solutions for the future, and I am not even talking about idealistic prospects. It is an increasingly thorny issue and, unfortunately, the political left has no more to offer than the right at present.

Q.: Does Europe offers any signs of encouragement?

M.W.: In terms of underlying issues, such as the relationship between France and Germany and the level of diplomacy. France should not be committing to action in Central African Republic alone. Elsewhere, however, experience shows that change is possible. Take Brazil under Lula, for instance, which lifted millions of people out of poverty, or Bolivia under Evo Morales, which has made previously excluded indigenous people an integral part of society. I will also now be watching Michelle Bachelet's second term with interest.

Q.: How do you think the economic and financial crisis has affected the rising popularity of the FN and other populist parties in Europe?

M.W.: I would like to keep the crisis in per-

"I AM NOT SAYING THAT OUR INCUMBENT POLITICIANS ARE NOT UP TO THE TASK BUT I DO FEEL THEY ARE FAR FROM LIVING UP TO THE PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS OR OFFERING SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE, AND I AM NOT EVEN TALKING ABOUT AN IDEALISTIC PROSPECTS."

spective because it has not had the same severity across the board: it has hit harder in southern Europe than in northern Europe, for instance.

Q.: Yet populist parties have made breakthroughs in Finland and Norway.

M.W.: And in Switzerland! However, while it is true that Spain is facing a terrible crisis, there has been no sign of an emerging extreme-right party there. We need to be wary of taking theories too far. It is a widely accepted fact in Europe that we are suffering from a crisis in political representation.

Q.: Is that crisis warranted?

M.W.: To be honest, I find it excessive, at least in France. It is true, for instance, that our institutional system is inappropriate: if we had the general election before the presidential election, it would perhaps have more appeal and would do more than simply confirm the outcome of the presidential election. I also think that if we had more of a proportional system, then the crisis would perhaps not be as strong as it is today, even though it would be

Key Points

- Marine Le Pen's biggest opponent is her father.
- Countering the Front National requires a combination of convictions and reason.
- We need to be wary of taking theories too far.
- Political representation in societies where there is growing inequality has been tarnished by the image of a political elite that lives the good life, which spurs populism.

morally criminal to introduce such a system today because it would be playing into the hands of the Front National.

Q.: On a European level, those who seek to revise the Treaties are ridiculed, for fear of how citizens might react. You are one of them. Do you believe institutional reform is necessary?

M.W.: Yes, because elected representatives are less and less capable of wielding the political influence entrusted to them. Globalisation and European construction make the lives of public officials more complicated on a national level.

Q.: Do political representatives represent everything?

M.W.: Political representation in societies where there is growing inequality has been tarnished by the image of a political elite that lives the good life, which spurs populism. I also believe that the feeling of powerlessness and the accusations of corruption say a lot about political representation.

Q.: Has politics lost its teeth?

M.W.: In a way, it has, especially in France. By definition, political representation brings us back to the idea that there are parties and a parliament; yet politics is mired in a media-friendly presidential approach that seems keener to cultivate opinion than sit through long parliamentary debates.

Q.: That is a political analysis of the political crisis. What about the ability of politicians to deal with economic influence?

M.W.: Politicians are overwhelmed. Globalisation makes domestic political life

“POLITICIANS NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF A NEW CULTURE TO WHICH THEY DO NOT BELONG, A CULTURE THAT REQUIRES GREATER PARTICIPATION, MORE DEBATE, MORE INTERACTION.”

more complicated within the framework of the nation state. Economic life is largely dependent on European and international issues that extend beyond the boundaries of the nation state.

Q.: And from a cultural perspective?

M.W.: Politicians need to take account of a new culture to which they do not belong: I am talking about the younger generation and the internet; a culture that requires greater participation, more debate, more interaction—all of these are things that politicians do not traditionally handle very well.

Q.: Is it fair to talk about “discontent”?

M.W.: The political system has collided with a cultural change that has brought a much greater focus on individualism. I am not saying that people are less united or less capable of thinking about politics. However, they do act as individuals and seek to live as such, which naturally jars with the approach of politicians who think in terms of the masses, in terms of big groups.



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ABOUT

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POPULIST FEMALE LEADERS

should not be underestimated

Far-right movements are no longer solely havens for undereducated, anti-establishment chauvinists—thus the importance of female leaders should not be underestimated. Populist parties have increased their public appeal and offer seemingly attractive alternatives to Europe’s current employment crisis by promoting an anti-modernist perspective on emancipation. Progressive forces need to counter.



An interview with Andrea Peto
Associate Professor at the Department of Gender Studies
of the Central European University in Budapest.



© Andrea Peto

Queries: Despite of the vast array of academic literature on the populist radical right, there is still relatively little attention paid to the role of women in such movements. Is this changing with the emergence of women leaders such as Pia Kjærsgaard or Marine Le Pen?

Andrea Peto: In the past twenty years there has been cutting edge critical research on gender, mobilisation and the far right, as well as on understanding the far right from a gender perspective, which raises questions about the lack of visibility of this research to a wider audience.

In Germany, Women's Network for Research on Far-Right Extremism has been working on gender and the far right for more than ten years and has tried to coordinate its efforts with researchers in other European countries. These women are diligently researching far-right politics and subcultures, sometimes even putting themselves at risk, but they are still not recognised by mainstream academia and constantly struggle to obtain funding for their work. They are also introducing new research topics such as far right and masculinity.

On the other hand, Germany has put a vast amount of money into research on far-right political movements and activism in other countries, especially since Breivik's attack and the gloomy forecasts for the upcoming

European Parliament elections, but this is mostly descriptive political science-oriented research.

Q: Does the emergence of these female leaders make the far right more acceptable to women?

A.P.: I think some far-right strains have always been acceptable to some women. Here the question is what characterises women who are mobilised as voters and what are the institutional mechanisms that promote women to leading positions. The far right is traditionally viewed as a masculine movement and if you analyse the electoral appeal of these parties, you see that there are more men supporting them than women. But this is not a reason to forget about women who support and vote for far-right parties.

In the past years, a major shift has happened in the mobilisation for far-right parties: these parties are changing their agenda and appeal to the public. Those who are participating in these parties are not the undereducated anti-establishment losers portrayed by the media in the past, but highly educated professionals who speak foreign languages, know the language of politics and have experience in the political system. The women who actually make it in those political parties have a very good education and social skills. These women have a symbolic presence,

and they are inviting more women to join the ranks and enter politics on their terms as we do not see too many female leaders emerging in progressive politics, especially in "New Europe".

Q: Can the increasing role of women leaders in populist movements be considered as a structural change or rather as a communication strategy?

A.P.: This question is actually representative of a very traditional understanding and interpretation of far-right women in politics, as pendants or relatives of powerful male politicians.

In the past few years several new female leaders have emerged not only in France and Hungary, but also in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium, and they are actually changing the face of far-right activism. The emergence of racist feminism advocated by the far right is a serious challenge for progressive politics.

These women are agents of change, so no matter how deeply you disagree with what they are saying, they should not be framed as puppets. They are the advocates of an anti-modernist emancipation. If you frame them as puppets, it is not only disrespectful to them as human beings, but it is also a major political mistake, because you are underestimating the political appeal and political support they have, and you cannot beat them with political arguments. It is a major political and strategic issue.

Q: When it comes to voting, women with populist views do not often vote for populist parties, while men are more likely to do so. Why is that so?

A.P.: This relates to the taboo surrounding public support for far-right ideas. And it is a very gendered assumption that men are more willing to broach taboo topics in pub-

**"THE EMERGENCE OF RACIST FEMINISM
ADVOCATED BY THE FAR RIGHT IS
A SERIOUS CHALLENGE FOR
PROGRESSIVE POLITICS."**

“WHAT WE ARE SEEING NOW WITH THE FAR RIGHT IS A VERY APPEALING ‘SOLUTION’ TO THE STRUCTURAL CRISIS OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY.”

Key Points

→ The relationship between far right politics and gender has been researched for more than a decade but has not yet reached a wide audiences.

→ Our current democratic processes structurally exclude women, and the far right has reworked its agenda and appeal to the public to offer a sense of agency in a different, anti-modernist framework.

→ Far-right parties have made use of gender politics to bring their narrative on other issues into mainstream conservative discourse. Progressive political thought needs to reconceptualise democracy in a way that empowers women instead of marginalising them.

lic as women are expected to be shy. Generally those who support the far right were Until recently very, those who support the far right were generally cautious about sharing their views, but I've noticed a major shift in rhetoric. In the past five to ten years, xenophobia and welfare chauvinism have become more and more acceptable and mainstream, with increasing public exposure, as the internet and social media opened a new chapter in transmitting those ideas that further transcends the distinction public and private.

If men are more likely to be in a position to express their ideas publicly, which is an assumption, then you can say that the question is legitimate. But I would not say that women are reluctant, because that would indicate that women do not have the agency to say what they would like to say. And that is not the case. In Poland the “army of mohair Berets”, as the press call them—the elderly, religious women who listen to Radio Maryja—have a crucial role in transforming what public discourse on human rights issues is tolerated by the public.

Q: In recent years there has been a notable increase in the use of the feminist discourse by populist radical-right politicians as a weapon to be used against certain minorities (Muslims, Roma, Travellers). Is this genuine, or just an instrument used

for electoral gain? What effect will it have on the overall gender discourse?

A.P.: The discourse about minorities is a very complex issue, because they are usually portrayed as “non-Christian, coloured migrants”. All those differences are related to the concept of European whiteness, and this is a constitutive part of the far-right ideology, which is deeply rooted in the European colonial legacy.

This is not only instrumental; but it is a constitutive part of far-right thinking to create difference and to profess the supremacy of one group over another.

Q: Are there regional differences in the interaction between populism, the far right and gender? For example, is there more machismo in the far right of some countries than in others?

A.P.: The far right parties are deeply rooted in their national context. But we must not let this mislead us, because they are a part of a European and global phenomenon. Their differences are related to their respective national political cultures. The Norwegian far-right Progress Party, which currently sits in the government, is very different from the Romanian far-right party. The political culture is different in Norway than in Romania, but as far as the overarching of family-centric conception of, their far-right parties are very close to each other. Family is a key notion for these



Anke Van dermeersch (Belgium), Marine Le Pen (France), Pia Kjaersgaard (Denmark), Krisztina Morvai (Hungary).
Poster of the movie "Le Populisme au Féminin"

movements, as according to them it is the core element that makes up the nation. This family-centred imagination about the future envisions a world with only a heteronormative nuclear families in which the mother stays home and takes care of the children, only working part time, which appears to offer a solution Europe's rising unemployment.

It is dangerous, because there is a real problem, unemployment and the transformation of the concept of work, and here they offer a kind of solution. And very often you see in history that when real problems emerge, very harmful solutions are offered to offset them.

Q: How do you differentiate between conservative and far-right discourse? Both seem to share a colonial legacy.

A.P.: Quite often in the media the line between the two is very blurred. In the case of women's issues and gender politics, there is a very thin line between the essentialist feminist movement and the far-right women's movement, which is based on the discourse of difference. There is a

possibility of mainstreaming that kind of discourse into conservative political thought through gender politics.

There is the example of the Hungarian conservative women's umbrella organisation, presented an award called the "Golden Wheat Stalk" to a female journalist named Beatrix Siklósi, who had previously interviewed David Irving on public television and openly shares her anti-Roma and anti-Semitic sentiments. Here you see this very poisonous mixture coming together under the heading: women protecting the nation as they protect of family.

Q: Could the difficulties faced by certain women in accessing the political system push them to the fringes, and make the far right more attractive to them?

A.P.: Women who support the far right are actually not on the fringes. If you look at the composition of far right supporters and voters, for example in the case of Hungary, their electoral support is from the middle class, rural areas, and those with a university degree. We cannot characterise them as losers of the transition as some

of them are pretty successful business-women who made their career in the ethnocentric market they are advocating as a response to globalisation. What we are seeing now with the far right is a very appealing "solution" to the structural crisis of representative democracy.

Q: But it's not gender-specific, is it?

A.P.: It is gender-specific, because this kind of liberal democracy, which in Europe is connected with the free market, is a deeply gendered system. This vision of democracy structurally excludes women, and the far right is offering agency for these women in a different, anti-modernist framework. Again, this is a challenge for progressive politics: how to reform, how to reconceptualise democracy in a way that does not marginalise women. It could really offer an opportunity for women to be represented and their interests to be articulated in an intersectional perspective.



MARGINALIZATION AND DISENGAGEMENT

The European youth vis-à-vis the political system

Young Europeans are discontent – and they are showing it. The precariousness of the labour market, the threat of social exclusion, and the lowering of expectations are contributing to the growing mistrust of institutionalized politics. This dissatisfaction and frustration are the driving forces behind new kinds of political involvement. Italy, Hungary, Spain. Three countries struck by the crisis in various ways, but where populist parties and movements have framed young people's issues and their role in society. What are the potential connections between the youth's difficult socio-economic situation and the appeal of populist movements?



by Giacomo Bottos, Aniko Gregor, Niko Hatakka,
Davide Ragone & Danilo Raponi - FEPS Young Academics Network



SPAIN - GENERACIÓN PERDIDA

The Spanish economic condition, among EU members, is probably the most fragile after Greece. The main parties, the PP (Popular Party) and the PSOE (Socialist Party), are dominant actors also in the economic and social fields, as they exercise control over public economy bodies, communications and media, universities, partly the judicial system and also, until a recent past, savings banks (cajas de ahorro). In spite of the crisis, their funding is still almost totally public.

Spain, thus, represents a special case and that is why the so-called "Spanish exception"¹ has been invoked in recent times. Spanish political troubles are similar to the ones of other Southern European countries, but populist forces do not have any direct

representation or expression within an established political party, since they only emerge in demonstrations and street protests.

It has been said several times: "Europe is not a place for young people". Spain is even less so. The lack of rights and jobs explains why some talked about a *generación perdida*². The group of young people under 35 is not homogeneous and it can be divided according to education, that is, whether or not they have received a secondary education.

Youth unemployment and temporary contracts are a dangerous combination, bringing with them the marginalisation of a generation. Having studied is not an advantage to get a permanent position and the few stable jobs are more likely to be found in low-qualified employment³. Re-

1 See Bartomeus, Oriol, *La excepción española*, in *www.eldiario.es*, 2013.

2 See Simón, Pablo, *La generación perdida*, in *www.eldiario.es*, 2012.

3 See Jiménez, Beatriz et al., *La emancipación precaria*, Madrid, Centro de investigaciones sociológicas, 2008.

cently a new movement was created, Juventud sin futuro: it points out the paradox that the most educated generation in Europe (in Spain they usually say: "la generación mayor preparada de nuestra historia") is at the same time the one with the fewest employment opportunities and the worst salaries. We cannot exclude possibility that some day it will form a political party, or at least electoral lists, against the "partidos del Régimen".

Spanish citizens, however, and especially young people, are distancing themselves from politics: less than 4% of them are affiliated to a party and often their involvement is related only to public demonstrations and

Key Points

→ Unemployment and disillusionment with politics are widespread among young people, with a possibility that they could become attracted to populist parties.

→ Populist parties also appeal to younger people because they take them into account in their discourses, whereas traditional parties tend to ignore them.

→ The dialectics of parties aimed at younger people are often based on oppositions: the young vs. the old, the elite vs. the marginalized, etc.

→ Populist parties also know how to make an efficient use of the internet and social networks, providing better access to younger citizens.



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Movimiento 5 Stelle's Beppe Grillo.

strikes. But in the last few years, some new (more or less organized) civic movements have come to express their discontent with a number of social issues and, as a consequence, there is a new debate on populism in Spain⁴. The main protest movement occupied streets in 2011 and it is called Movimiento 15-M or the Indignados. It is not yet very organized; it did not compete in the last political elections and it holds utopian aspirations, even if it has an enormous magnitude: it seems that between 6,5 and 8 millions Spanish (over a total population of 47 millions) participated in these protests, started on 15 March 2011 in 58 cities. The indignados are young (75%), they hold university degrees (70%), they mistrust what they perceives as "corrupt" politicians and traditional parties, "tienen conciencia conocimiento e interés por la política. Y votan. Pero no lo hacen de manera cohesionada"⁵.

The Spanish political system is in crisis. According to some polls, in case of elections, today the PP would obtain more or less 24,5% (44,6% in 2011) and the PSOE

**"IN SPAIN, YOUTH
UNEMPLOYMENT
AND TEMPORARY
CONTRACTS ARE
A DANGEROUS
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THAT IS
MARGINALISING
A GENERATION."**

only 21,5% (28,7%). Abstentions and blank votes are growing, while some votes lost by the main parties will be probably given to the leftist party Izquierda Unida (around 17%) and the centrist party Unión Progreso y Democracia (13,5%). Both parties would seemingly double their vote compared to the previous elections.

Young people, however, seem to identify themselves gradually more with the UPyD, a party founded in 2007 against the two-party system and one which claims that its purpose is to regenerate Spanish democracy. The UPyD, nonetheless, receives strong criticism for the perceived populism of the arguments used by its leader, Rosa Díez (a former PSOE MEP) and the lack of internal democracy (a tendency common to other populist movements across Europe, such as in Italy's Movimento 5 Stelle). The political crisis and the weakness of parties nevertheless incentivize the growth of UPyD, which manages to support both liberal proposals and projects in favour of a stronger Welfare State, and it is growing more structured at local level.

With a dramatic economic crisis and a rapidly changing political system, we therefore can't rule out the possibility of accelerations towards populist movements or an immense increase in abstentionism. This, naturally, creates space and opportunities for the Spanish Socialist Party which, however, as well as its European peers, ought to find new messages and policies to renew its appeal to young voters, which will determine its future as a successful political force.

⁴ See Casals, Xavier, *El pueblo contra el Parlamento, Madrid, Pasado y presente, 2013*, and Sauquillo, Julián, *El riesgo de populismo en España*, in <http://www.cuartopoder.es>.

⁵ See Calvo, Kerman, *El voto indignado*, in www.eldiario.es, 2012.



HUNGARY – ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT DISTRUST

From the early history of Jobbik one already finds evidence that the party has always maintained strong links to young people. Indeed, Jobbik was established in 1999 in Budapest as a youth civil organization composed mainly of university students. Their rapid success as a political party in the Hungarian political sphere is undoubtedly to be credited to their young voters.

In February 2013, one of the most widely circulated Hungarian daily newspapers, the leftist *Népszabadság*, published a research report about the party affiliation of university and college students. The report shocked the Hungarian public by claiming that one third of students in higher education eligible to vote at the 2014 national parliamentary election would vote for Jobbik⁶. This result reflects the findings of other recent studies claiming that Jobbik is the country's youth⁷.

Studies addressing the question of why it is so attractive to young people highlight the importance of their anti-elitist and revolutionary/radical anti-establishment attitudes, the distrust against the current political elite (not just the governing party of Fidesz but the previous socialists too), as well as against national institutions, and the appeal of Jobbik's authoritarian and nationalist attitudes⁸. Economic factors surprisingly effect in a different direction than expected: middle and upper class people (frightened of a potential "de-classing" due to the economic crisis) are more likely to vote for Jobbik. This pattern is repeated among young people.⁹

The active use of the internet and new media tools, such as social network websites or microblogs, also plays a significant role in catching the attention of those young radical-right sympathizers for whom news consumption has been shifted from traditional spheres (like television or printed media) to these new alternatives.¹⁰ Researchers argue about the extent to which the need to belong to a close-knit community has been an important factor in being attracted to Jobbik. Some claim that the sense of community belonging is a less important factor¹¹ while others highlight the importance of radical right subculture among the Hungarian youth¹². To explain this phenomenon, Barlai introduced the term 'subcultural right-wing extremism'¹³: young people are more open towards subcultural activities since being a formal or informal member of these groups holds some kind of rebel stance that is attractive to its supporters.

Jobbik knows that their generational feature means a significant advantage among young people. A clear sign of that is their recent trendy and modern poster campaign depicting young leaders of Jobbik and targeting young audiences with the slogan of "The future cannot be stopped! The most popular among young people." Younger Jobbik MPs actively follow every step of the government concerning youth politics, criticize them passionately and report their activity via their personal websites and the main website of Jobbik, giving the impression of being truly committed to the problems of young people.

Jobbik IT, the youth organization of Jobbik, had 21,000 followers in December 2013, 10 times more popular than its socialist counterpart and 4 times more than the current governing party's Fidesz. According to their own short description, Jobbik IT's main goal is to

mobilize apathetic and pessimistic young people who are disappointed with politics but would like to be proud of being the members of the Hungarian nation. Besides this, Jobbik IT targets young people who are interested in everyday public and political issues. The organization provides a community for the youth by organizing camps, short trips, concerts and other free-time activities that satisfy the leisure needs of this generation.

6 See Dóra, Ónody-Molnár. „Tarol a Jobbik. az egyetemisták körében az LMP-vel a Fideszt”, *Népszabadság*, February 2013.

7 See Karácsony, Gergely; Róna, Dániel, „The Secret of Jobbik. Reasons behind the rise of the Hungarian radical right”, *Journal of East European and Asian Studies*, February 2011. See also Rudas, Tamás. „A Jobbik törzsszavazóiról.” In Kolosi, Tamás. Tóth, István György. (eds.) *Társadalmi Riport 2010*. Budapest: TÁRKI. 2010.

8 See Róna, Dániel; Sörös, Anett. „A kuruc.info nemzedék. Miért népszerű a Jobbik a fiatalok között?” In Szabó, Andrea. (eds.) *Racionálisan lázadó hallgatók 2012. Apátia-radikalizmus-posztmaterializmus a magyar egyetemisták és főiskolások körében I.* Szeged: Belvedere. 2012.

9 See Tóth, András; Grajczár, István. „Miért olyan sikeresek a radikális nemzeti-populista pártok nagy társadalmi-gazdasági átalakulások, válságok idején?” *Politikatudományi Szemle* 2009/3.

10 See Barlai, Melani. „Jobbik on the Web”. In Parycek, Peter and Noella Edelmann (eds.) *CeDEM12 Proceedings of the International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government KREMS: Edition Donau-Universität Krems*. 2012.

11 See Kovács, Tamás. „The Jobbik-phenomenon: the Hungarian youth is on the road of radical right.” In Kákai, László; Pálné Kovács, Ilona. (eds.) *Ten Public Policy Studies*. Pécs: University of Pécs, Department of Political Studies. 2013.

12 See Róna, Dániel; Sörös, Anett. „A kuruc.info nemzedék. Miért népszerű a Jobbik a fiatalok között?” In Szabó, Andrea. (eds.) *Racionálisan lázadó hallgatók 2012. Apátia-radikalizmus-posztmaterializmus a magyar egyetemisták és főiskolások körében I.* Szeged: Belvedere. 2012.

13 See Barlai, Melani. „Jobbik on the Web”. In Parycek, Peter and Noella Edelmann (eds.) *CeDEM12 Proceedings of the International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government KREMS: Edition Donau-Universität Krems*. 2012. p. 231.



ITALY – THE YOUNG VS. THE OLD

According to the results of an Italian survey, the Movimento 5 Stelle was in March 2013 the most popular party among young Italian voters in the age group 18-34 (29.8% of people aged 18-24 and 35.9% of people aged 25-34 would vote for M5S).

Young people have always been an important part of the M5S electorate. Indeed, the share of young voters was even higher in earlier elections in which the movement participated¹⁴. In a first phase (roughly between 2007 and 2011), the typical supporter of Beppe Grillo's initiatives was young, university-educated, lived in a medium or large city and had good IT skills. In a second phase (after the 2012 local elections), the pool of voters became more balanced, both in terms of demographics and in terms of political orientation.¹⁵

Beppe Grillo also dealt with topics related to young people's issues before founding the Movimento 5 Stelle. In 2006 he published an e-book, *Modern Slaves*, which was a col-

lection of accounts sent by young people to Grillo about the working conditions that they experienced (low salaries, underpaid or free internships, precarious employment). Ever since, topics related to young people are often mentioned in Grillo's blog and speeches. Young people are, in Grillo's rhetoric, more capable than their elder counterparts of initiating change and countering traditional Italian immobility: "Young people are changing the world. The whole Maghreb is burning [...] Bill Gates invented Windows when he was just nineteen [...] Shall we let a 74-year old man with no hair plan our future?"¹⁶. Young people's aptitude to change is also related to their ability to use new technologies and the internet, which are a crucial theme in the narrative of the Movimento 5 Stelle.

The old/new divide is crucial in the narrative of the Movimento 5 Stelle, while the left/right one is considered as misleading and irrelevant¹⁷. Allegedly, the existing parties are all involved in a system of power that is old, corrupted (Grillo quite often stresses the fact that a lot of MPs have been convicted), and exploitative of common citizens. On the one side, some people are seen to benefit from the system – the so-called insiders; on the other, some people are excluded and have to pay its cost – the outsiders.

This old/young divide overlaps at least partially with this distinction between insiders and outsiders. The narrative of the Movimento 5 Stelle stresses the issue of the labour market's dual structure, where stable and well-paid jobs are common among older people while unemployment and precarious employment are the rule among the youth. This job market issue is thus presented as a "generational clash": the "baby boomers" generation leveraged on good opportunities, spent money and made debts that young people now have to pay. This narrative reinforces the anti-political stance of the Movimento, according to which the political system is a "gerontocracy" and the politicians are old men and women... even "dead" ("They are dead and they didn't even notice", Grillo often says). In contrast young people are depicted as the victims of the system. They are "without future" and "without hope". They are forced to emigrate or to accept mini jobs in conditions of exploitation. The old ruling class, accused of having behaved as "fathers who go whoring" and squandering the heritage destined to their sons, is seen as entirely responsible for the current state of Italy.

Portraying young people as innocent victims of a political system that is conceived as an enemy prevents them from actively engaging in politics. Yet, the M5S seeks and invites the participation of the citizens. However, this kind of participation deals mainly with single and local issues. General topics are discussed more in a denunciatory tone than in order to elaborate proposals¹⁸. The most important political decisions, as well as all the decisions about the structure of the Movimento, are taken by Grillo and Casaleggio. Moreover, the engagement of an average M5S supporter often takes the form of clicktivism. Such forms of engagement, though inadequate, are perhaps a sign of

"THE OLD/NEW DIVIDE IS CRUCIAL IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE, WHILE THE LEFT/RIGHT ONE IS CONSIDERED AS MISLEADING AND IRRELEVANT."

“YOUNGER JOBBIK MPS CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT PASSIONATELY ON YOUTH POLITICS, GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF BEING TRULY COMMITTED TO THE PROBLEMS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.”

the need for participation. Progressive politics should address and counter this “passive” type of participation, finding the way to foster a more active engagement of young people in the political arena.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE CRISIS

Our analysis of different countries (Hungary, Spain, and Italy) has showed a complex situation. This is understandable. Populism has always been considered as something difficult to describe and to give an account on, because of the differences between its forms. Populism has assumed different forms depending on the country and it is due to various reasons: the legitimization of political parties, the deepness of the economic crisis, the electoral system as well as national history and other factors. With regard to the relationship between populism and youth, we have observed sharp differences.

In the following lines, comparisons will be made with regard to three topics: the use of the media (Internet, TV), the relationship between populism and youth, and the presence of xenophobic and right wing elements in the narrative of populist parties.

In Hungary, Jobbik uses the Internet, used to have its own online TV channel and also employs social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In Italy one can observe two different uses of the media: the “Berlusconi’s telepopulism” (that focuses on the use of television and addresses mostly old people) and the use of web by “Movimento 5 Stelle” (through the blog *beppegrillo.it* and the use of Internet and new media). In Spain, although no populist party participated in the elections, the movement of the Indignados made a massive use of the Internet.

The Hungarian Jobbik has had great success amongst the youth. This is also partially true for the Movimento 5 Stelle, even if young people (18-29) are not the age class with the highest share of voters for the movement. Youth is also a significant part of the Spanish movement of the Indignados. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that unemployment and disillusionment with politics are widespread between young people and hence these can easily become votes for populist parties.

Some populist movements and parties use classical right-wing arguments and stress tropes and themes of national identity. This is the case of the Hungarian case. To a lesser extent also the Movimento 5 Stelle is critical towards immigration but without xenophobic overtones. In the Spanish case this element seems not to be particularly relevant.

ABOUT

The Young Academics Network (YAN) was established in March 2009 by the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS) with the support of the Renner Institut to gather progressive PhD candidates and young post-doctoral researchers willing to use their academic experience to contribute to the ideation of the Next Europe and the Next Left. The group has rapidly enlarged and presently it incorporates around 30 outstanding and promising young academics. The added value of YAN is the pan-European, innovative, and interdisciplinary character of its working groups.

14 See Bordinon, Fabio; Ceccarini, Luigi, „Five Stars and a Cricket. Beppe Grillo Shakes Italian Politics”, *South European Society and Politics*, 2013.

15 See Corbetta, Piergiorgio; Gualmini, Elisabetta, *Il partito di Grillo, Bologna: Il Mulino. 2013 and Bordinon, Fabio, Il partito del capo. Da Berlusconi a Renzi, Rimini: Maggioli Editore. 2013.*

16 Grillo, Beppe, *Speech for the local elections in Siena*, 13/05/2011.

17 See Zanatta, Loris, *Il populismo*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013.

18 See Rosanvallon, Pierre *La contre-démocratie. La politique à l'âge de la défiance. Paris: Seuil. 2006.*



DISCONTENT OVER TURKEY'S *democratic deficit*

Democratic discontent occurs in Europe when key democratic institutions are seen to be mostly spinning their wheels. It is hard to use a similar analogy for the discontent felt in a country like Turkey, where democratic bodies are broadly failing.



by Ahmet Insel

Beyond the shortcomings of its institutions, Turkey faces another source of discontent, caused by the democratic deficit on an institutional level and compounded by its political and social policies. The problem manifests itself mainly through the growing rift between ever-louder calls for democracy on the part of civil society and the immutable presence of authoritarianism on the part of government. Turkey is a country that is finding it hard to throw off the yoke of secular authoritarianism. This has led to a climate in which an increasing number of people see the process of democratisation as a key issue, which in turn fuels frustration over the country's democratic deficit.

Turkey's political centre of gravity lies largely to the right, in a mix of conservatism and nationalism. Far-right movements are far more commonplace than in Europe. The country's extreme-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) is the third-largest force in parliament and is widely respected by the political establishment. Yet it is by no means the only group to pander to populism: mem-

bers of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) also use and abuse vote-catching populism, especially its charismatic leader, Tayyip Erdogan. Playing a populist card that blends conservative and religious values with developmentalism driven by neoliberal policies, the AKP advocates neo-nationalist talk extolling the grandeur of a more Islamic Turkey. It uses the results of ballot boxes as the sole yardstick on which to base the democratic nature of its government, strengthening democratic authoritarianism in the process.

Turkey is mired in a serious crisis of governance. The legal system handed down from the days of Kemalist authoritarianism was largely designed in the interests of *raison d'état*. As that system has fallen apart, religious and identity groups have gradually seized control of the legal apparatus. This has given rise to conflict over the rule of law and a crisis that has paved the way for an unusual extension of state power.

In addition, the new government headed by Tayyip Erdogan successfully played the card of EU membership and democratic awakening to eliminate the traditional tutelary

tools of the regime, notably the military. Yet the resulting vacuum has not strengthened democracy; instead, it has established a form of civilian authoritarianism, affecting not just fundamental liberties but also the country's economic policies, especially its urban initiatives. Urban-transformation plans have exacerbated the social exclusion caused by neoliberal policies that seek to extend free-market principles to all walks of life.

The Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in June 2013 conveyed the frustration of citizens fed up with the steamroller approach of the authoritarian government personified by Mr Erdogan. These demonstrations quickly spread throughout Turkey as people protested against attempts to flout civic dignity. The immediate future will reveal whether this wave of citizens' indignation can turn the authoritarian tide of neoliberal conservatism.

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THE KREMLIN'S CRACKDOWN

on social forces

Vladimir Putin had long established a monopolistic political. After years of public acquiescence, mass anti-Putin protests erupted in Moscow in 2011. In response the government shifted to a repressive gear.



by Maria Lipman

If the European Union member states feel the onset of democratic malaise, Russia is suffering from a chronic undemocratic condition.

Almost a quarter-century ago the collapse of the Soviet communist system brought with it the promise of democracy – the 1993 constitution defined a multiparty system with a separation of powers and mechanisms of public participation. Whatever expectations were associated with a transition to democracy, however, did not materialize. Instead a deep disillusionment set in. When Vladimir Putin came to power he steadily and effectively eviscerated the institutions of democracy. Both chambers of the parliament, regional governors, political parties, mass media and big business – all previously independent (and not infrequently unruly) political actors – were taken under control. Political competition was virtually eliminated: from 2000 on all federal elections had preordained results. Putin evolved as a leader-of-no-alternative, his personal authority unchallenged and uncontested. His system of governance is based on tight political controls, and everything – whether in political,

societal, or business realm – is at the government's discretion.

The overwhelming majority of the Russian people were acquiescent to this arrangement as the high and rising price of oil enabled Putin to deliver growing incomes. After the turmoil of the 1990s' people in Russia valued stability and did not seem to mind that it came at a cost of curtailed political rights and an encroachment on civil liberties.

The situation began to change a few years ago when young, urban Russians, the most "post-Soviet" Russian constituency developed a taste for civic initiatives ranging from charitable activities to environment protection and discussion clubs.

In late 2011 Putin's announced comeback to the Kremlin combined with fraudulent parliamentary election prompted popular outrage. In Moscow the "post-Soviet Russians" staged mass streets protests. Tens of thousands took to the streets chanting "Russia without Putin".

In mid-2012 the Kremlin shifted to a repressive gear. Some of the protesters were arrested and are currently on trial. New repressive laws were adopted. The Kremlin launched an aggressive anti-liberal, anti-Western campaign that pitted the conserv-

ative majority against their excessively modernized compatriots who are condemned as unpatriotic and undermining Russia's "traditional values". The "post-Soviet Russians" are angry, but they do not have the power to oppose the Kremlin's hardened anti-liberal policies. The more conservative majority may be also discontent with corruption, injustice and lawlessness, but the general perception is that nothing depends on the people themselves and that change is more likely to make things worse rather than better.

The government is increasingly apprehensive of any societal forces, whether liberal or "right-wing", xenophobic one. In Russia anti-migrant sentiments are fairly popular. There have been ugly episodes of anti-migrant riots including in Moscow in the fall of 2013. The government, however, is first and foremost, concerned with keeping the xenophobic energies in check rather than promoting ethnic tolerance.

Maria Lipman is the editor-in-chief of the *Pro et Contra* journal, Carnegie Moscow Center; she is an author and political commentator on Russian politics and society.

POPULISM & NEOLIBERALISM

The dark sides of the Moon

Similar political symptoms are emerging in countries and regions that present different historical and socioeconomic contexts as well as diverse levels of prosperity, inequality and poverty. And in this respect, Latin America and Europe seem to share several similarities.



by Fabián Bosoer & Federico Finchelstein



In Latin America, political apathy or even the frustration of citizens vis-à-vis their political representatives go together, and is often even augmented by the insufficiencies of state and governmental responses to citizen's social demands and expectations. In Europe and Latin America, this situation is the primary source of populism. Populism presents itself as a solution to a sort of "perfect storm" (a systemic crisis) where the "successes" and "failures" of the policies implemented during the last decades are turned into the populist notion that the political system is now detached from the citizens.

In societies faced with the challenges of globalization, populism presents an answer that stresses a conflation of the past histories of the political with the so-called current crisis of representation. Thus, paradoxically, at the same time that there is a sharp increase in the demands and expectations of citizens, there is a decrease in satisfactory responses for national political systems. Especially those parties associated with European and Latin American forms of populism, which present themselves as being a simple answer to this complex situation. But these answers differ substantially across the Atlantic.

In Latin America, populist movements have tended to combine authoritarian plebiscitary presidential leadership, elected by popular majorities, and a curtailment of political rights parallel to the expansion of social rights. European populism, on the other hand, generally targets immigrants and emphasizes European disintegration.

On both continents, populism represents a non-pluralist response to neoliberal austerity measures and a widely perceived crisis of representation fuelled by the continued presence of an elite of technocrats that switches from government to government and is seen as indifferent to growing social gaps.

Many observers believe that the current European crisis resembles what happened ten years ago in Latin America. As a whole, Latin Americans had lived the first grand crisis of neo-liberalism some ten to fifteen years ago and the result was that the region left neo-liberalism behind.

It did so by more or less applying policies that enhanced processes of democratization, political participation and social inclusion. These policies were favoured by high international prices for the region's commodities. In some case, these measures were accompanied by authoritarian responses and populist patterns of state reorganization. All in all, these political models combined measures of democratic consolidation through social inclusion at the same time that they promoted the weakening of institutions and substantially increased social and political polarization.

There are some important structural frontiers between countries with post-industrial forms of capitalism and long-term experiences with democracy and the so-called developing countries, underdeveloped and/or emerging democracies. However, there are very significant converging historical processes.

The crisis of the welfare state and full employment, de-industrialization and public

deficits created consequences already experienced in Latin America many decades ago: structural unemployment, wild austerity measures, downward social mobility and an abrupt fall in the quality of life of the middle classes. These consequences have created the conditions for the emergence of populism as a response. In Latin America, especially in Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela, populism amplified social rights while curtailing democratic consolidation.

A critical factor to evaluate the historical effects of dominant economic and political experiences is their success in presenting ways to democratize political and social life. Neoliberal responses to economic and social developments have shown significant disengagements vis-à-vis issues of economic and social inequality. They have often been associated with authoritarian deformations of democracy. Populist, or neo-populist experiences, have differed with neo-liberalism on the issue of state intervention and social inequality while also promoting non-pluralist forms of political engagement. Neo-liberalism and populism stress, or even promoted, the levelling of social or political rights and are often against more equal emancipatory forms of democracy.

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Federico Finchelstein is an associate professor and director of the Janey Program in Latin American Studies at the New School for Social Research and Eugene Lang College.



“PEOPLE DON’T EXPECT MIRACLES”

Europe is not alone in facing populist challenges and protest movements. In the United States, the rapid spread of the “Occupy” movement and the entryism of the Tea Party in the Republican Party show the significant challenges facing representative democracy there.



by Matt Browne

The rise of populist movements and parties of protest is not a trend isolated to Europe. In the United States, the “Occupy” movement spread across the nation at an unprecedented pace, galvanizing public resentment towards excessive pay and the perceived failure to punish those whose irresponsible behaviour had led to the global financial crisis. And, on the right, the Tea Party today is now engaged in a hostile take-over of the Republican Party, moving the establishment tradition aside, and pushing the party further to the right on everything from taxes to gay marriage and birth control.

While the character of the populist surge in Europe and the North America may differ, on both continents two underlying trends common to mature democracies across the globe have created a fertile environment in which they can flourish: declining deference towards and trust in political elites, and growing pessimism about the future – one combined with a sense that people “are losing their country”. For the first time in generations, people no longer believe that their children’s future will be better than their own. And for the millennial generation, and others, organized politics

appears both impotent and not necessarily the best or most efficient way of changing the world. **These trends present significant challenges for mature democracies, but they are particularly acute for progressive parties who argue for active government that promotes collective action.** To rise to the populist challenge, then, progressives need to counter scepticism about the role of government as well as pessimism in the future. This will require rethinking both the progressive political offer – to ensure that what we promise and propose is credible – and the way we conduct politics – to rebuild trust with those we seek to represent. Justin Trudeau’s campaign for the leadership of Liberal Party of Canada well illustrates the importance of renewing our way of doing politics. In Canada, as across many OECD countries, party membership had declined rapidly. While being criticized by his opponents for being light on policy, Trudeau understood that his first task was to re-establish a connection between the Liberal Party and voters. His campaign, learning from Obama, sought to make politics fun, provided people with real opportunities to engage, to share their views and to contribute. As a consequence, the party earned a

150,000 new members. Of course, policy still matters. As do policy pledges. Too often, progressives have been keen to over-promise during a campaign, and under-deliver in government. **During campaigns, there is a tendency to raise expectations only to become “representatives of the state” who explain how difficult it is to change the status quo once in office.** Yet as recent successes in the US around raising the minimum wage illustrate, when progressives present a realistic and concrete objective and campaign for it in an open and inclusive manner, they can channel much of the populist disquiet and energy towards constructive ends. If the same energy can be achieved when it comes to creating greater employment opportunities for young people, then we can begin to restore faith in government’s ability to tangibly improve people’s lives. People don’t expect miracles, but they do expect a politics and a society that respects, empowers and includes them. If progressives can deliver that, then we will defeat the populist threat.

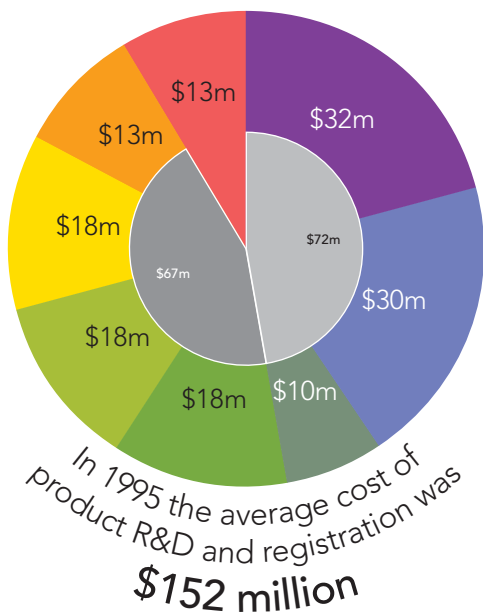
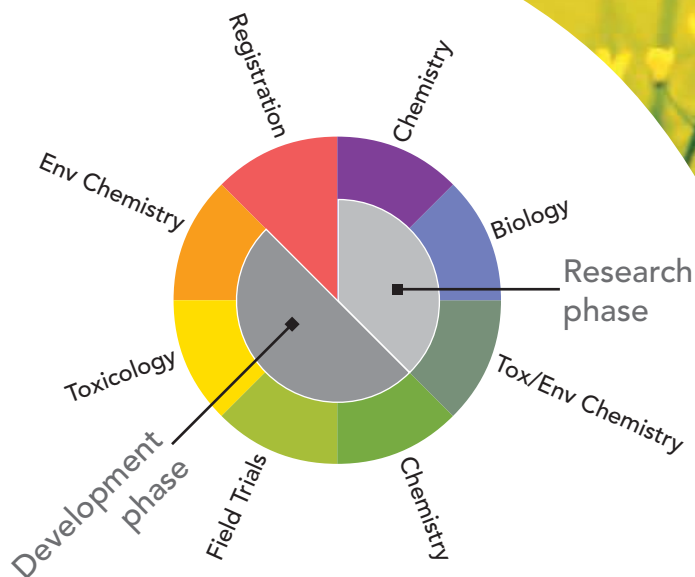
Matt Browne is a senior fellow at the *Center for American Progress Action Fund*.

Innovation

Essential for crop protection

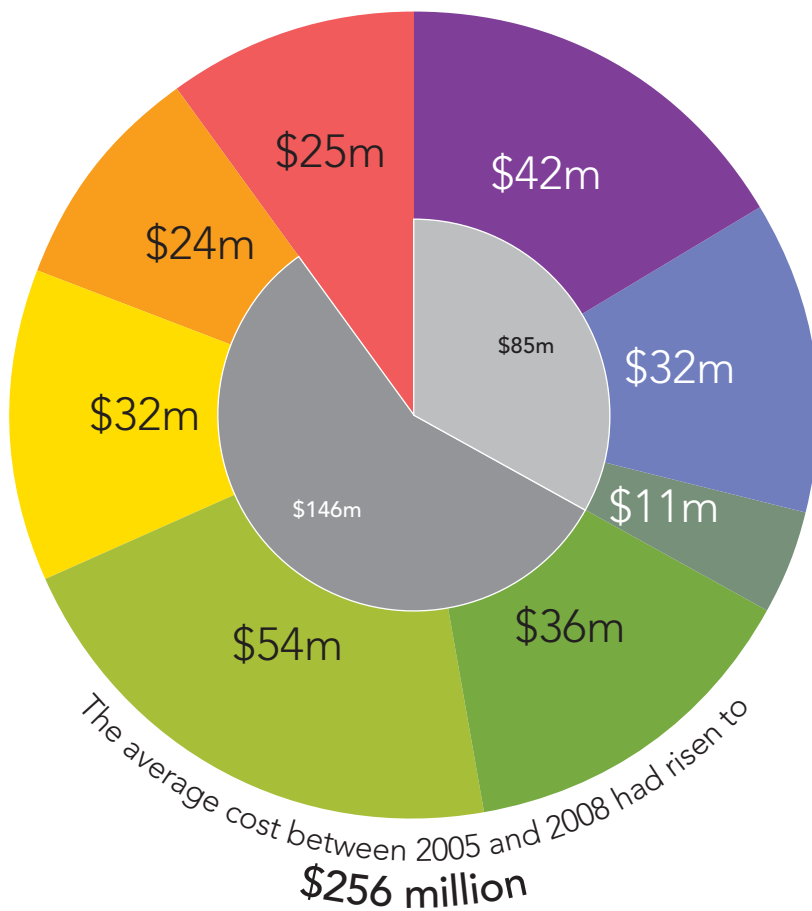
Effective crop protection solutions for sustainable productive agriculture are essential; but it takes more than 10 years and in excess of €190 million to bring a new product to market. In 2012 Europe's share of worldwide R&D was just 7.7% compared to 33% in the 1980s.

Europe must unlock its agricultural potential with a regulatory environment that fosters innovation.



Data from 'R&D trends for chemical crop protection products and the position of the European Market', Phillips McDougall, 2013

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INSPI- RA- TION

MY EUROPE

Mustapha Ben Jaafar

P. 96



PORTFOLIO

The PIGS

P. 100



MEET THE PRESS

Revolt in Ukraine

P. 110



REPORT

Young Academics Network

P. 114



ZOOM

Kalevi Sorsa Säätiö

P. 119



DIARY

FEPS & Members

P. 120



PUBLICATIONS

Christophe Bourseiller

Ernst Stetter

P. 124



WHAT DOES EUROPE MEAN TO Mustapha Ben Jaafar?



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“WE NEED TO JOIN OUR EFFORTS TO BUILD A FAIR AND MORE BALANCED PARTNERSHIP FOR MOBILITY AND SECURITY.”

The European Union has understood the legitimate call of the Tunisian people for social justice, freedom and responsive government very well. Indeed, it did not miss the historic moment created by the Arab uprisings that swept the region. Despite the complexities of its decision-making and the early hesitation of some member states, the EU's response has been rapid and its support for change strong and clear.

Three years later, the EU's commitment to accompany the Tunisian transition has remained unchanged at all levels. I have seen this engagement through my encounters with heads of state and government, members of the European Parliament, senior officials from the European Commission and from the EU High representative's external service.

TOWARDS A WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP

The Tunisian revolution has provided us with a unique moment to revisit our common partnership established in 1995. We have always associated Europe with universal values, notably human rights and democratic principles. The 2011 revised

European Neighbourhood Policy is more adapted to our expectations in terms of political pluralism and economic inclusiveness. But ultimately, we are jointly responsible for achieving our mutual strategic interests in line with a more balanced partnership based on common values.

Indeed, a win-win partnership between Tunisia and the European Union remains a common strategic goal. I hope that what constitutes the core of the European identity, notably integration, solidarity and openness to diversity will prevail against xenophobic sentiments and populist tendencies, which have worsened in a time of economic crisis.

Progressives from both shores of the Mediterranean should continue in this regard to work together to build a common agenda. The reaction caused by the arrival of 25,000 Tunisians in Europe in the aftermath of the revolution was unfortunate. I understand that the European Union is not a monolithic bloc but in order to prevent such attitudes in the future, as progressives we need to join our efforts to build a fair and more balanced partnership for mobility and security.

Our common future depends on our capacity to overcome possible mispercep-

tions about an “unstable South” and a “fortress Europe”. The EU's positive response to the Tunisian revolution turned a page in our bilateral relations.

THE LEGACY OF FOUNDING FATHERS

Europe has showed on several occasions that it has the necessary resources to tackle its financial and economic problems when its leaders decide to do so. The European project was built on a historic decision to reconcile peoples and to show solidarity towards those among its member states who need it most.

Without interfering in European affairs, I think that the European Union should continue to be inspired by the spirit of its founding fathers while trying to renew its project to overcome its difficulties. European progressives have always opposed austerity measures and neo-liberal macroeconomic policies. I hope they will succeed in convincing European citizens of the rightness of their views and the efficacy of their policies.

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Tunisia and the European Union share the same commitment towards universal values and the wellbeing of their respective citizens. The constitutional process

“THE INTEGRATION PROCESS IN EUROPE
REMAINS **A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION** FOR
THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN AN UNITED MAGHREB”

launched after the 2011 election has shown an exceptional capacity for compromise between political forces, despite the several crises Tunisia has gone through, costing the lives of two political leaders.

My party – Ettakatol - has favoured consensus-building from the outset because we considered that polarization would be dangerous in a time of transition. Obviously, this option was misunderstood when we decided to form a coalition government

with Ennahdha and the Congress for the Republic. It turned out that this choice was not only adapted to the fabric of Tunisian society, but it brought positive results through the national dialogue and the voting of the Constitution.

The integration process in Europe remains a source of inspiration for those who believe in a united Maghreb. The EU's support for this dream will be crucial, particularly in regard to institution-building.

Mustapha Ben Jaafar *has been President of the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia since November 2011. He is Secretary General of social democratic party Ettakatol. A doctor, he is also a former Minister of Health.*



Protest during the Tunisian Revolution.

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IS OUR STRENGTH.
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LISBON, PORTUGAL
MAY 14, 2013

© Carlos Spottorno

Its world-famous tile painting is one of the most unique Portuguese crafts. In this corner, the traditional tile painting technique was used to write this message: "holy Europe of hope", along with many euro symbols. Southern European countries are traditionally Europhiles. Thanks to the extreme austerity measures imposed by the so-called Troika, this feeling is quickly disappearing. Just like the tiles on the wall.

THE PIGS

Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain through the eyes of the economists

PIGS is a term coined by the business and financial press as a way to refer to Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain during their current financial plight. What started as a pejorative label was eventually taken up without any qualms by the media. I have attempted to illustrate what we would see if we were to translate into images the articles we read in the financial press. In the end, what stands out the most is the glaring absence in these images of all that is positive, beautiful and promising in our countries – and that still endures.



Photographs and captions by Carlos Spottorno





© Carlos Spottorno



ATHENS, GREECE
MAY 6, 2012

© Carlos Spottorno

Here we see people walking at a flea market while a man looks for useful objects to take inside a garbage container. After years of deep economic crisis and harsh austerity measures, with no clear future on the horizon, Greece has become a poor country. On the left part of the image, a violent robot graffiti makes me think of how this crisis may somehow be the consequence of a hyper-technological life.



NAXOS, GREECE
MAY 23, 2013

© Carlos Spottorno

Barely two kilometres away from the dreamlike port of Naxos, there is a dump where anything can be found, from a fridge to a dozen rotten goats. Even though one has to dispose of this garbage, why must it be piled on such beautiful cliffs? There must be a better way to deal with it.



© Carlos Spottorno

PALERMO, ITALY
OCTOBER 10, 2010

© Carlos Spottorno



Two young men drag a horse on their scooter.

The horse is wearing a mask because it is about to compete in a race close to a highway.

In Central Palermo, many horses are supposedly used as tourist attractions, while in reality they take part to the illegal races behind a multimillion-euro gambling business.



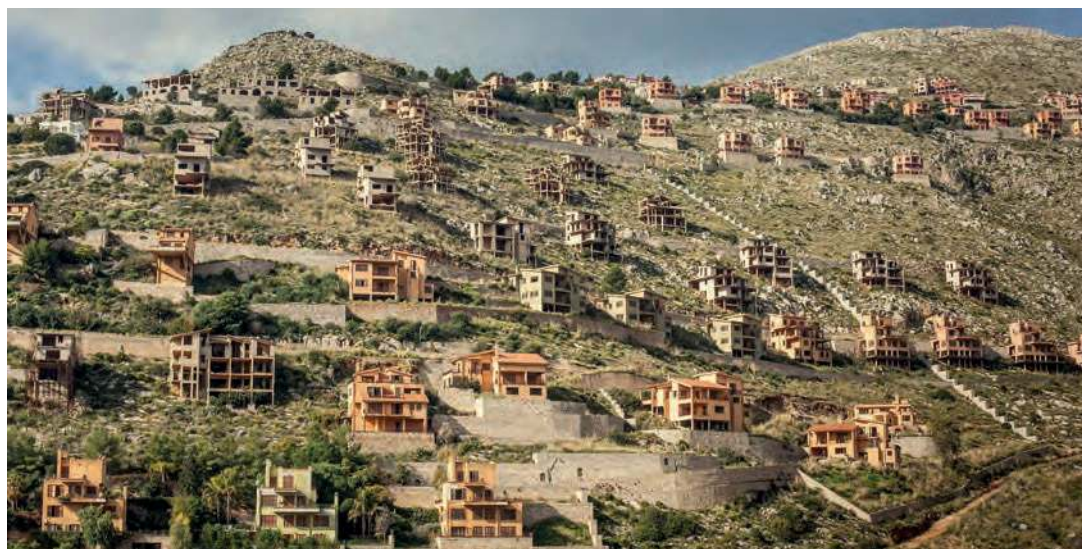
© Carlos Spottorno



MONDELLO, ITALY
JANUARY 21, 2011

© Carlos Spottorno

The local court has embargoed these abandoned buildings at Pizzo Sella for almost two decades, after a dispute between environmentalists and a local developer. The story of the houses in Pizzo Sella began in 1978, when the Sicilcalce spa - a company close to Cosa Nostra boss Michele Greco - got 314 building permits. Someone simply gave away the permits and got paid for them, while some live inside those skeletons on the hill.



© Carlos Spottorno



© Carlos Spottorno



PALERMO, ITALY
JANUARY 26, 2011
© *Carlos Spottorno*

This picture of children walking by two burnt cars was taken in the Z.E.N. (North Expansion Zone). It is a suburb designed in the seventies to relocate the families living in slums in the outskirts of Palermo. Designed by world-famous architect Vittorio Gregotti, the Z.E.N. became a home to crooks and drug dealers instead of becoming the urban paradise that had been promised. A few days before finishing the works, thousands occupied the whole neighbourhood within a few hours. Again, complicity between the mafia and local politicians seem to be related to this failure in urban planning.



© Carlos Spottorno



CACHOPO, PORTUGAL
AUGUST 12, 2011

© Carlos Spottorno

A woman cleans the front of her home, standing on a step ladder in a balcony with no railing or security measure. It does not matter how poor a house may be; a southern European traditional woman will never let it look dirty. She will risk her life if necessary to get every inch of her house polished and shiny.



© Carlos Spottorno

**LISBON, PORTUGAL
JULY 17, 2011**

© Carlos Spottorno



A man waits for his lunch near the garbage containers in a little restaurant in central Lisbon. In societies where family acts as the basic social structure, able to absorb economic impacts and offer a safety net for those without any resources, people who do not have any often fall into depression and are at risk of social exclusion. Being a lonely person in southern European countries is always a very bad sign.

**SESEÑA, SPAIN**
JULY 29, 2009*© Carlos Spottorno*

Residencial Francisco Hernando was built in the early 2000s. It is one of the clearest examples of the wild speculative urbanization that took place during the last decade in southern European countries, and especially in Spain. This residential compound is now partially empty. Many working and middle-class families bought one or two apartments in order to speculate, and got caught out when the bubble burst. Besides this, the area is not really ready for a normal life. It lacks schools, shopping areas, hospitals, and it was built very close to a dump for used tyres, with no environmental or security measures at all.

*© Carlos Spottorno*



© Carlos Spottorno



CARBONERAS, SPAIN
AUGUST 08, 2012

© Carlos Spottorno

The Hotel “El Algarrobico” was built in a protected natural park with the complicity of local authorities. Popular activism and the pressure from Greenpeace stopped the project, although after a decade of litigation, it has not yet been demolished. However, it is interesting to see now how much locals would like the hotel to start operating and revitalize the poor local economy.

*Find out more about
Carlos Spottorno's
work on the PIGS at
www.thepigs.eu*



IN A PIGS' EYE!

by Vincent Marcilhacy

Spanish photographer Carlos Spottorno won the 2013 Photobook Award at the Kassel FotoBook Festival in Germany with his work entitled "The Pigs". The award came amid a maelstrom whipped up by news that credit rating agencies were stripping a number of countries of their "A"s. While the photobook reveals a remarkably original approach, it is its jarring combination of all-too-real crisis and artistic interpretation that has garnered particular attention.

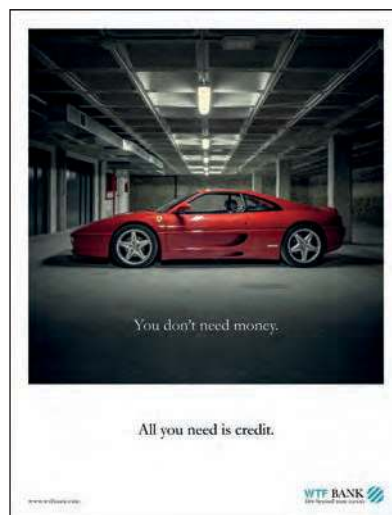
"Pigs" is a pejorative acronym coined by business and financial types—mainly from English-speaking countries—as a form of shorthand for the economically challenged countries of Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain (with some adding Ireland to the mix as it began to feel the full effect of the crisis). The expression received extensive coverage in the press, leading to protests from Europe's southern contingent. Spottorno's book intentionally mimics the format and logo of *The Economist*, a magazine known for its neoliberal views. With his glossy parody of the business journalist's bible, Spottorno challenges the money men to face their inconsistencies while encouraging us all to explore a more critical analysis of our own attitudes.

Rather than simply denouncing the stereotypes typically associated with these countries, Spottorno chooses to portray them in a manner that raises questions and fuels indignation through images that are at times shocking but always subtle. *The Pigs* uses the power of the image to question and understand the current state of crisis-hit societies. Spottorno demonstrates the central role of photography—through its ability to both critique and educate—in a world where pictures have become a lingua franca. His approach—like that of many other photographers—commands increased awareness; his commitment shakes up our own attitude to the political and economic currents now at play in Europe.

As we have seen, photography is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics. The power of the message found in Spottorno's work is also conveyed in its inherent irony—a satirical slant that spills over onto the back of the book, with its ad for a fictitious bank invented by the photographer. The accompanying slogan says it all: "You don't need money. All you need is credit." The author

invites us to visit the bank's website at www.wtfbank.com and take out a line of credit to buy a villa, Ferrari, football team or even property on the moon.

On the eve of the next European elections, we are offered another insight into Europe through an impressive joint project involving nearly a dozen European photographers called "The Rise of Populism". The initiative, which will be featured in the second issue of *The Eyes* in March, presents a series of surveys conducted in Norway, France, Belgium and the UK on the effects and threats associated with the rise of populism in Europe. Here, again, the power of the still image and the commitment of young photographers offer a wealth of insight and encourage us to question our convictions.



Carlos Spottorno's fake advertisement for the WTF Bank

Vincent Marcilhacy is publisher for *The Eyes (Europe & Photography)* and the man behind *Aman Iman Publishing*. He has also worked for *Agence VU'*, produced and co-published *VU' Mag* and directed *Galerie VU'*. www.theeyes.eu

REVOLT IN UKRAINE

*The violent protests in Ukraine continue unabated.
The demonstrators are calling for President Viktor Yanukovich
to step down and want the country to move closer to the EU.
Will the opposition have its way or are more clashes yet to come?*



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[+] INFO: www.eurotopics.net

13.01.2014

POLITYKA ONLINE



Nationalists play into Yanukovich's hands

Ukrainian security forces once again took brutal action against pro-European demonstrators on Saturday in Kiev, leaving among others former interior minister Yuriy Lutsenko seriously injured. Even more worrying than the government's brutality is the growing strength of Ukrainian nationalists among the government's opponents, the left-liberal news portal Polityka Online comments: "The demonstrations have been going on for almost two months now and are experiencing an ideological crisis. Because in Kiev and other cities, marches with people bear-

ing the black-and-red flags of the fascist liberation army the UPA commemorating the 105th anniversary of the birth of nationalist Stepan Bandera took place recently. ... The radical and national slogans that were chanted at these anniversary marches have nothing in common with European principles and values. It's not worth signing an association agreement with such a Ukraine. For Yanukovich, this is good news."

[+] INFO: www.polityka.pl

22.01.2014

DIE TAGESZEITUNG



UKRAINE NEEDS OPTION BETWEEN PUTIN AND EUROPE

Kiev was the scene of new clashes between aggressive demonstrators and the police on Tuesday night, which reportedly left two people dead. Ukraine needs a third way because the choice between Europe and Putin threatens to destroy it, the left-leaning daily Die Tageszeitung contends: "This bloc mentality is essentially alien to the protesters. They just want to get rid of a corrupt president and live the good European life they imagine for themselves. So they'll have to put pressure on the politicians. A third way won't be easy for a country that lacks mineral resources. It will be necessary to constantly balance European and Russian interests. But for a country whose West is oriented towards Europe and whose East sees itself as part of Russia, the choice between 'Putin or the EU' could prove to be a test of endurance that ultimately endangers the continued existence of the country in its present form."

[+] INFO: www.taz.de



23.01.2014

DE VOLKSKRANT



Ukraine won't be oppressed

Yanukovich seems determined to subdue the opposition protests, the left-liberal daily De Volkskrant comments: "But Ukraine isn't Russia. Nine years ago the country went through a grass roots revolution, and it has a very active civil society. Despite its close ties with Russia, the country is too European to let itself be oppressed once more. Hopefully Yanukovich realises that, and will opt for dialogue and compromise. ... Otherwise the

worst is to be feared. Meanwhile Europe stands on the sidelines and looks on. ... In the last 20 years 'Europe' - in contrast to its attitude towards the peripheral state Turkey - hasn't shown any real interest in Ukraine. ... Consequently there's really only one strategy for shaping the European continent: cross your fingers and hope for the best."

[+] INFO: www.volkskrant.nl

27.01.2014
DE VOLKSKRANT



DEMONSTRATORS DON'T WANT COMPROMISE

The opposition won't reach an agreement with President Yanukovich because their fight long ago ceased to be about closer ties with Europe and became a fight against the regime instead, the left-liberal daily De Volkskrant surmises: "Too little and too late - the concessions are not enough for the demonstrators on Independence Square. They want Yanukovich's head, or at least his resignation and new elections. The opposition has no control over the radicals who have been clashing violently with the police for over a week now. A compromise with the authorities would simply add fuel to the fire because armed with batons and shields, the radicals could just as easily turn against the opposition. ... This long since ceased to be about closer ties with Europe but about abuse of power and corruption in the country. 'Get rid of the gang' is the slogan, and all forms of authority are considered suspect."

[+] INFO: www.volkskrant.nl



© Nessa Gnatoush

27.01.2014
FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU



Opposition must also make compromises

Even though the opposition is right to reject Yanukovich's offer of participation in government, it should not stand in the way of compromises, the left-liberal daily Frankfurter Rundschau comments: "Anyone who assumes governing responsibility without being given real powers can only lose. He would also turn his own supporters against him. Nonetheless, the opposition must now make compromises. Instead of negotiating the demands as a package it should pick

out solvable issues for closer examination. Because only a quick compromise can save Ukraine from a new wave of violence and prevent it from splitting up. The citizens of the country need a visible sign that despite all the barricades, politics is still possible. This sign must come on Tuesday when the parliament convenes."

[+] INFO: www.fr-online.de

28.01.2014

THE INDEPENDENT



EU should push for new elections

President Viktor Yanukovych's concessions to the opposition are not enough to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, the left-liberal daily The Independent believes: "The Ukrainian President cannot redeem himself merely by eschewing tyranny. Of course he must compromise with the opposition and forge a political solution to the crisis. Ultimately, however, he must also call an election. Endemic corruption, economic stagnation and the botched withdrawal from talks with Brussels that sparked the worst unrest since the ... Orange Revolution render his position otherwise untenable. ... If we are to help resolve the crisis, we must not inflame it further by trying to make Kiev choose. We can, however, try to persuade Mr Yanukovych to go one step further and call an election."

[+] INFO: www.independent.co.uk

29.01.2014

EL PAÍS



OPPOSITION WANTS YANUKOVYCH'S RESIGNATION

The Ukrainian opposition won't be satisfied with Azarov's resignation, the left-liberal daily El País surmises: "The undaunted civil society is challenging Ukraine's authoritarian president to a power struggle. And whereas a couple of weeks ago the prime minister's resignation might have appeased the protesters, now this is anything but certain - despite the celebrations on the street. The heterogeneous opposition is

interpreting the president's concessions as a sign of weakness and seems determined to keep fighting to depose him. In November the protests were still an expression of pro-Western sentiment. Today they're an explosion of anger at the bad governance and corruption under Yanukovych."

[+] INFO: elpais.com



THE FEPS YOUNG ACADEMICS NETWORK



© FEPS

Be challenged, be inspired, be engaged. The FEPS Young Academic Network is a younger generation of outstanding European scholars, whose talents and commitment to the progressive cause are the reason to believe that not only there is a future for the movement, but that that it will be a bright one.



by Ania Skrzypek & Judit Tanczos



And it all started with a call for paper... This story begins on a relatively chilly autumn day in September 2009. Imagine a sem-

inar room in Brussels. You have surely seen many similar ones. Think about the round table...

The places around are taken up to the last one. The mood is not cheerful. European social democracy had just lost the European elections. Progressive academics and politicians gathered in order to look at the lessons coming from the defeat. As the conversation goes, it becomes clear that it would be too easy to mourn the result and casually continue with everyday business. In the tense debate it is becoming clear that more has to be done; that the actual reasons have to be examined and that there is a need for a new path for the movement to take. The event finishes with the report "10 Recommendations for 2010", which is the first FEPS Next Left Research Programme document and which is where the announcement of the new platform for younger scholars can be found.

As always with good ideas, the motivation was quite simple to spell out and quite complicated to realise. What the European elections showed, confirming the tendencies on the national level – social democracy was ageing. Young people were drifting away from it, most obviously not retrieving in its programme the ambition that their generation would have for Europe

and European societies. So there was an obvious need to bridge that gap. It would not happen by casually saying to them that they "were the future", as they were the contemporary world already and wanted to live their lives, fulfil their dreams and hope for more already now, and not only for tomorrow. It had to be something more genuine. It had to be about enabling the younger generations to be part of all, also political and academic conversations. And from the curiosity what they would have to say – the call for paper with a theme "Next Europe, Next Left" was launched.

"YOUNG PEOPLE WERE DRIFTING AWAY FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS NEED TO BRIDGE THAT GAP"

THE CALL: NEXT EUROPE, NEXT LEFT

Ensuring the dissemination of the Call was not an easy task. FEPS was still a very young organisation and here it was facing a challenge to find ways to broaden and open its networks to those, who had not yet come under the radar. This is why the Call specifically addressed the PhD candidates and post-doctoral younger researchers, which was at that point the group not at all accommodated neither in the youth structures nor in the think tank dimension. When the deadline was to approach, there was a bit of stress in how far there would be any responses to the Call... So when the papers started coming in as

an avalanche on the rainy Friday of January 2010, the joy was enormous. Here we were – having a chance to set a new platform. The articles were carefully assessed. Those most innovative, which carried inspiring ideas, were soon after printed in what then became known as the first issue of FEPS Queries – Scientific Magazine. It was presented in March and the title of the volume was the same as the original title of the Call. The awardees were invited to join a ceremony, which was held in the hospitable premises of Renner Institut in Vienna. The event took place in "Europa

Saal" and was opened by Dr. Ernst Stetter, FEPS Secretary General and Mag. Karl Duffek, Director of Renner Institut. All awardees held presentations of their papers and were subsequently offered diplomas by Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer, Chair of the FEPS Next Left Research Programme. His presence then was significant, especially that the later developments have also always enjoyed his attention and he participated in a number of subsequent seminars offering his views on the FEPS YAN research papers.

When the ceremony was over, the query that everyone seem to have been asking

themselves was: and what now? At that point there was no roadmap. Actually, it was to the contrary. On the FEPS side there was a hope that these young scholars, who all had made an effort already to take part in a debate would be keen on continuing. And this anticipation was proven to be more than accurate during the next two days, which FEPS Team members (from the initial call it had been Ania Skrzypek and Yolanda Fernandez) and the awardees spent on debating what sort of a programme they would be interested in. All was touched upon: goal, working methods, and the calendar. While using the interactive team building and brainstorming methods, the initiative had been developed predominantly by the participants of the first round themselves. Framing the process in that way was in fact trend setting. Since that point onwards it was clear that the right to self-determination of this group had to be respected, especially if the expectations were that they would enthusiastically engage and offer their time, potential and skills. Moreover, it was then established that the work leading to creation of a network is equally important as the research, which is also why much attention would be devoted to the reflective sessions. This is where the interactive, innovative and definitely unorthodox methods would be applied. And this is why the support of external consultant Michael Holzhauser was so precious.

THE FIRST CYCLE: SETTING THE GOALS

The first cycle took a year and featured three meetings. It was a very demanding round in the life of the FEPS YAN, since the group continued to grow from meeting to meeting. Herewith the research projects had been becoming more and more inter-

disciplinary and pan-European. It led to constructive tensions, especially that these young scholars from diverse backgrounds needed to work within three working groups. Their overall themes corresponded respectively to three themes: Social Europe, Political Europe, and International Europe.

Despite the fact that the group continued to enlarge and several times had to absorb as many as 50% gain in terms of new membership, it always seemed as if everyone had been on that journey altogether all the time. It was most fascinating and has always proved how enthusiastic, open-minded and welcoming the group has been. The meetings continued to take place in the premises of Renner Institut and soon enough it was seen as a real "home" for FEPS YAN. Returning there for all the sessions, meeting with colleagues from the Institut and Garten Hotel, decorating the Hoffinger Saal with flipcharts – these all have been most comforting circumstances for the network to thrive.

In the due time, certain rituals were established, becoming constant elements of the seminar's programme. Among them were, to give an example, "gear wheel", which always opened the meeting; and evaluation round, in which members had to mirror the seminar putting together a theatre play, drawing a poster or singing a song. These

"IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT THE WORK LEADING TO CREATION OF A NETWORK IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS THE RESEARCH."

different moments of both academic debate and network building are preserved in numerous anecdotes, one of them commemorating the song (to be sung to the melody of "Forever Young") "Do you wanna really write forever, forever YAN..."

THE SECOND CYCLE: CONSOLIDATING THE NETWORK

The first cycle was finalised with three papers, set of rules and regulations (agreed by the FEPS YAN members) and call for new candidates. The second cycle, which was to take 2 years, was launched herewith. This is also when Judit Tanczos joined the FEPS YAN Team. Its first meeting featured presentations of individual abstracts, which then were followed by a peer review. The ones overlapping or remaining in proximity were then put together, becoming a fundament on which bases the new working groups were formed. There were 5 of them established. All of them experienced tough moments (for example with members dropping out), having been able almost each time to seek a solution. The discussions became much more open and herewith also members started being exceedingly critical towards each other, taking more responsibility for one another's papers. The sense of mutual respect among members, as also the mutual assistance in making a progress in terms of research, consolidated the group further.

It was more or less that period when they started referring to each other as “FEPS YANNies”.

The FEPS YAN continued meeting in Renner Institut three times a year, however the members started being involved in other FEPS activities. They were invited to join the first (and the subsequent) FEPS “Call to Europe” conference, and then also FEPS “Renaissance for Europe”. Their role as FEPS YAN ambassador would be matched with specific mission that they would need to carry during the event. This would include, for example, being the first respondents or drafting a critical summary of the debates. It has been beneficial in terms of opening new possibilities for interactions, allowing FEPS YAN to propose ideas to other gremials and also to be able to follow diverse debates taking place in different contexts. The principle was to ensure that all FEPS YAN get a chance to represent the group and face one of the external challenges, while also they had responsi-

THE THIRD CYCLE: REACHING OUT WITH A MESSAGE

With the end of the second and the beginning of the new third cycle, the ambition and appetite to accelerate within this programme grew. The interesting tension among members in terms of in how far the deliberations should be academic, and in how far they should be policy-proposals-oriented, persisted. It has been to the benefit of the FEPS YAN in overall, as it motivated the group to search for different ways of presenting their findings and herewith also a “Communication Committee” was set up. Keeping the principle of continuous internal transformation, the group has seen members departing and joining other networks (such as FEPS Next Left Focus Group or Working Group). In parallel, it also enjoyed new scholars getting involved. With each adherence new perspective and new set of ideas was brought in, which made the FEPS YAN most vibrant, intellectually daring and politically inspiring group to work with.

“BY NOW, FEPS YAN HAS MET 12 TIMES, GATHERING ALTOGETHER MORE THAN 50 OUTSTANDING YOUNG EUROPEAN SCHOLARS.”

bility to brief the rest of the group upon their return. Soon after the number of events in which FEPS YAN members were present substantially grew – and this is also when the FEPS YAN logo and the FEPS YAN leaflet were put in place. They were used also for example at the PES activists’ event in Budapest in March 2013, to where the FEPS YAN seminar was moved – allowing the members to experience a “real” PES activity.

The scheme of work has altered as well. The cycles were defined to take one year only and would feature three meetings. The first would be devoted to a discussion on abstracts, the second would take shape of a Summer Academy and the third one would be a chance to finalise the outputs. The Summer event would be longer than the others (usually taking two weekend days). Its programme would encompass sessions of peer review, moments of writ-

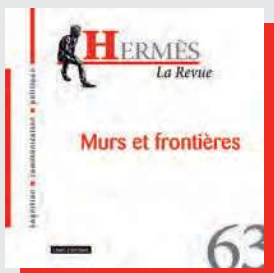
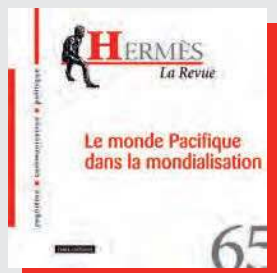
ing and last but not least, guest lectures by experts involved in other FEPS programmes and projects. In that sense, the concept followed the very positive experience of exchange between the FEPS YAN and young Indian scholars, which was enabled by Dr. Klaus Voll, FEPS Special Consultant on India. Within 2013 round, there were six working groups (Economic Governance, Populism, Europe 2014, Get the Party Started - Modernising Party Politics, Employment and EU enlargement) and there were altogether thirty Young Academics involved.

By now, FEPS YAN has met 12 times, gathering altogether more than 50 outstanding young European scholars. It has been a great privilege to be able to be part of this journey, to remain challenged and inspired by their ideas, and to live through the beautiful momentums of this networks’ creation. This new community of idealism and academic excellence is perhaps one of the most solid reasons to believe in a greater future ahead of Europe and the progressive movement. The FEPS YAN members have courage to dream the dreams, to spell out ambitions and to show ways towards a better and fairer society. And while typing their story on the 4th anniversary of FEPS YAN establishment, it is essential to thank them for hard work, commitment and their own solemn belief in the hopes that we all have entrusted in them.



HERMÈS

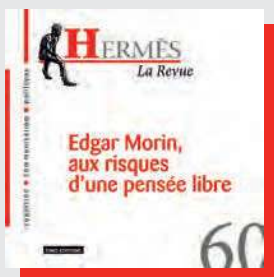
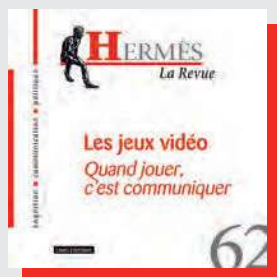
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The Kalevi Sorsa Foundation is a Finnish social-democratic think tank which aims to encourage public debate and develop policies that promote equality and democracy.



Established in 2005 by the Social Democratic Party of Finland, the Foundation strives to build bridges between the academic community, media, civil society organisations, and political actors.

POLICY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Foundation's research and development focuses on issues that are central to future of the welfare state.

Currently, the Foundation has four ongoing research projects that aim to develop policies to ensure fair and sustainable economic development and full employment, to strengthen democracy and increase political participation, to reverse the rise of inequality and ensure social mobility, and to organise and finance quality care for the elderly in an equitable manner as the population ages.

Past projects and publications have tackled among other issues education for all, the provision of social and health services, just tax policy, consumerism, corporate social responsibility, democracy, and happiness.

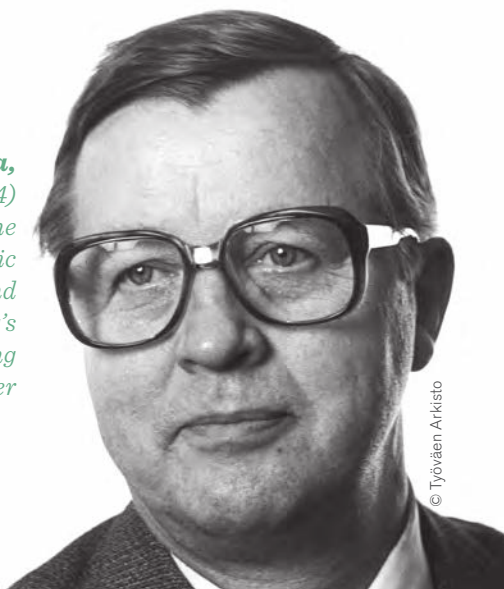
The Nordic and the European is present in all aspects of the foundation's work, and international networks and contacts are also important sources of inspiration. The Kalevi Sorsa Foundation seeks to follow European developments and participate in European debates, as well as to provide new perspectives to Finnish public debate through events in Finland with high-profile international speakers, such as the annual Research and Policy Days organized with the FEPS.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY

In line with the internationalist spirit of Kalevi Sorsa, the foundation bearing his name also supports democratisation in young democracies. Since 2008, the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation has worked to promote democracy and active citizenship in Macedonia by strengthening the capacities of young civil society activists at the grass-roots level to function in a multicultural environment. Together with local partners, the Foundation trains trainers and organizes workshops that aim to increase self-motivated inter-ethnic cooperation, disseminate knowledge and increase awareness of inter-ethnic relations.

Further information about the foundation's projects and events can be found at: **www.sorsafoundation.fi**

***Kalevi Sorsa,**
(1930-2004)
Former Chair of the
Social Democratic
Party of Finland
and the country's
longest-serving
prime minister*



MEMBERS DATEBOOK



FONDATION JEAN JAURÈS |

FRANCE

March 5, Paris

French Europhile journalist Bernard Guetta will present his new book "Personal conviction. How I became European" (Seuil) and his vision for Europe during a public debate that will take place at the Fondation Jean-Jaurès office in Paris. The Fondation Jean-Jaurès hosts the "City of books" a series of regular public debates based on recently published books and their authors.



CEE NETWORK | SLOVENIA

March 7, Ljubljana

CEE Network will take an active part in a public discussion on women reproductive and sexual rights, presenting the overall situation in EU. CEE Network will also debate why it was so important to organize a regional action in South-Eastern Europe in solidarity with the women who are losing this right under the right-wing government in Spain.



CEE NETWORK | SLOVENIA

March 10-21, New York

CEE Network representatives will be actively involved in the regular 58th session of the UN Commission on the

Status of Women which will be this year focused on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. CEE Network will present their analysis of the set backs on the status of women caused by neoliberal approach to solving financial and economic crises in the former transition countries in the CEE and South-Eastern Europe.



FUNDACIÓ RAFAEL CAMPALANS |

SPAIN

March 14, Barcelona

The Foundation Rafael Campalans will host, together with FEPS and the Renner Institute, a national roundtable debate on 'Building Welfare Society.' In this seminar we will organize the debates around two sessions: the first one, titled "Towards the Promise of a New Credible Welfare State" and the second one, "Delivering Social Europe through a modern Social Model". Alfred Gusenbauer, Chair of the FEPS Next Left Research Programme and Ania Skrzypek, Senior Research Fellow at FEPS will participate, as well as other top academics of different European universities.



FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG |

GERMANY

March 20, Brussels

Far-right movements have become a problem of pan-European dimension.

The fear that after the 2014 European elections the Parliament will be constituted with the highest percentage of far-right parties in European history seems to be justified. Therefore the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Representations of North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg to the EU, the EU Liaison offices of the SPD and Alliance 90/The Greens in the German Bundestag as well as the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung are joining their forces organizing a public debate on "Europe under pressure from the far-right – a challenge for European democracy" with inter alia Adam Krzeminski, Journalist and Publicist; Angelika Schwall-Düren, Minister for European Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia and Andreas Gross, Council of Europe.



FOUNDATION MAX VAN DER

STOEL | NETHERLANDS

March 21-23, Tunis

FMS will organise a media training for its sister party Ettakatol in Tunisia. FMS has been supporting Ettakatol since 2011 and has done different trainings with the party ranging from campaign trainings, to communication and media trainings. A new Constitution has been adopted and this year elections will be held in the country. Therefore, FMS will continue supporting the party in these crucial times.

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BEYOND AUSTERITY, TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

A Gender Aware Framework

WOMAN UP !

Although in several European countries male unemployment has significantly increased as a result of job losses in male-dominated sectors such as the construction and the financial sectors, it is becoming increasingly evident that women are

also going to be severely harmed by the implementation of austerity policies and by the credit squeeze.

FEPS, in collaboration with TASC, ECLM, the Open University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, has launched a research project with the objective to discuss the changing position and role of both women and men in the labour market in Europe, considering whether or not recent austerity policies have had particularly gendered effects and where the roots of such gendered impacts lie.

Further, the project will focus on how to create the conditions for a gender-equitable and expansionary macroeconomic framework in Europe. A macroeconomic framework where equitable growth, creating quality jobs, increased living standards, and macroeconomic stability are at the core. This on-year project will have a programme of meetings and policy-related writing.

FINANCE AND INEQUALITY

in Europe

FEPS, the Jean Jaurès Foundation and the Leeds University Business School, has launched a research project with academics and policy-makers to present and discuss ideas for policy measures that can break the nexus between the growth of finance, inequality, and the job drought in Europe. These ideas encompass changes in regulation, financial structure, and financial and investment policies.

This project is aimed at stimulating the intellectual exchange between academics



and policy makers and refining the policy proposals in light of policy makers' experiences. Principal investigators of this project are Prof. Gary Dymski, Divisional Director of research and Dr. Annina Katltenbrunner, Lecturer of Economics. Both come from Leeds University.



FORUM RENAISSANCE

3-5 April, The Square, Brussels

Europe is facing a crisis today and it is up to the European Left to propose common solutions. This initiative, called "Renaissance for Europe for a common progressive vision" launched by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Fondation Jean-Jaurès, Fondazione Italianeuropei and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has accompanied three electoral campaigns in France, Germany and Italy over the last two years.

In 2014, Renaissance for Europe has a broader challenge: to defend the progressive vision during the electoral campaign of the European Elections. The ambition of this event is to reengage progressive leaders and citizens in a political discussion about the state of the Union and the desired directions of integration.

The forum, organized by FEPS in cooperation with the S&D Group, the PES, the PES Group in the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Young European Socialists (YES) and FEPS National Foundations and Think Tanks, organises a three-day Forum with many European

leaders, including Hannes Swoboda, Sergei Stanishev, Elio Di Rupo, Martin Schulz and the mayors of several large European cities.

On the first day, there will be an interactive debate with European leaders. On the second day, it will host ten workshops on a variety of significant topics, a plenary debate with Progressive Mayors and city councillors, closing with a leaders debate with Belgian and European key figures. On the final and third day, we will offer a workshop organized by YES.



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THE EURO'S

French gravediggers

Review by Christophe Bourseiller



If you believe that the main enemies of European construction are the populist parties—the Front National in France, the PVV in the Netherlands, or UKIP in the United Kingdom—you're very much mistaken.

Or so goes the unorthodox theory put forward by *Le Monde* editorialist Arnaud Leparmentier. The battalions of separatists, nationalists and populists who have taken to the streets of Europe's major capitals and continue to send shockwaves with their results at the polls are, in fact, only a perceived threat. To think populism is the problem is to fail to see the forest for the trees. In *Ces Français fossoyeurs de l'euro* ("The euro's French gravediggers"), Leparmentier embarks on a fascinating critique of his fellow countrymen. Having successively served as *Le Monde*'s correspondent in Germany and European bureau chief in Brussels, the editorialist is well versed in the problems facing Europe. He explains that those who deserve the most blame for the euro crisis, and more generally for the uncertainty plaguing the "European ideal", are none other than the EU's own advocates. Particular opprobrium is reserved for the French leaders, who are singled out in succession: Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, and finally the French socialists, who are depicted as neo-Marxist dinosaurs lost in a social-liberal Europe (in fairness, Chancellor Angela Merkel also finds herself in the author's crosshairs). One of the main criticisms levelled at the leaders is that they have historically lacked long-term vision and awareness. European construction has gone awry since Maastricht; each country defends its own national interests, to the detriment of the collective good. In short, impeding German influence is considered as more important than building a shared home. Behind all the flowery rhetoric there is a great deal of infighting. Leparmentier revisits the entire history of the European Union, recounting for ex-



ample the strained relations between Jacques Delors and French socialist party stalwarts, who were strong eurosceptics. The journalist attaches particular significance to the 2010 meeting between French and German leaders in Deauville, which he views as a major defeat. He writes at length about Nicolas Sarkozy's ineptitude in handling the Greek crisis, during which "the French president showed weakness." Two years on from the devastating financial crisis of 2008, Europe should have stood up to Greece and its never-ending ap-

peals for aid. The EU failed to do so, and as a result, "After Deauville, the Greek crisis became the euro crisis." According to the author, such missteps and mismanagement have put Europe on very treacherous footing. The future of the euro has been thrown into doubt, not by Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, or Nigel Farage, but by those charged with defending the single currency.

Written in a brisk style with no shortage of irony, *Ces Français fossoyeurs de l'euro* offers readers a good journalist's account of the crisis, replete with behind-the-scenes dealings and insider information. The conclusions that Leparmentier draws are enough to make your blood run cold. Can a Union built on such shaky foundations survive the blunders of its "defenders"? Is the euro still viable now that there has been talk about a possible return to national currencies? The author ends by answering yes on both accounts, after having argued the opposite throughout—the final contradiction in a caustic, paradoxical book.

Ces français, fossoyeurs de l'euro. // Arnaud Leparmentier
(Éditions Plon, 2013)

Christophe Bourseiller is a French actor, journalist and writer.

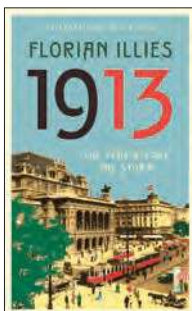
1913

The year before the storm

Review by Ernst Stetter



If you go to a bookstore in early 2014 you will find enormous amounts of literature on the 1914-1918 war, which marked the beginning of a dramatic, unprecedented and cruel era of slaughter. One resource that is well worth exploring is Europeana, a collection of personal stories, films and historical material about the First World War that is available both in print and online. However, if you would like to get a feeling for what could have emerged in this new age of unlimited possibilities, if Europe and the world hadn't embarked on this horrible war, you should read Florian Illies' latest novel, *1913 – The Year Before the Storm*. While the account is definitely a work of fiction, it is based on expert historical analysis and research by the German author, who studied history at Oxford. This international bestseller is an "absolute gem of a book", as the Guardian writes. 1913 was the year when intellectuals, writers, actors, painters, and philosophers dreamt of a new age and new ways of seeing society, when they imagined the outcomes of taking a different approach to morality. It was the year when the fledgling cinema industry discovered the notion of a star and jazz was introduced to the masses in the US. The book narrates a journey throughout the 12 months of the year, starting on the first second of the first hour of the first day, when 13-year-old Louis Armstrong was arrested for firing a revolver. He went on to become one of the world's most famous jazz musicians. The year ends with a soirée of roulette in Vienna at the home of Arthur Schnitzler. Throughout the journey, the reader is immersed in decisive historical moments, such as in May 1913 when Max Weber writes about the importance of the capitalist structure in society. A more mundane event occurs in July when it rains incessantly over the summer holidays and the characters are cooped up in their hotel rooms, but there is one bright spot: Matisse brings Picasso a bouquet of flowers. The feel of the whole story is buoyant – the reader gets



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the idea that a wonderful future awaits the world. The book is interspersed with photos and documents, such as Kafka's love letters. This charming approach allows the reader to travel to a sentimental era where anything in the world is possible, where culture matters as much as politics and this confluence of events fosters the emergence of hope and the idea that the possibilities are limitless. Humour is also present, in the brilliant selection of original quotations and tracings as well as in the juxtaposition of events, such as the founding of

Vanity Fair in New York with the more prosaic opening of the first Aldi supermarket in Essen, Germany. Reading in retrospect, one sees how the light mood could overshadow signs of imminent conflict. In June 1913 the German Reichstag approved measures to swell the ranks of soldiers from 117,267 to 661,478, at a time of peace! Events such as this serve as a reminder that while the artistic and scientific communities were rushing headlong towards Modernism and Progress, hereditary rulers and politicians seemed unable to stop the march towards conflict. Illies reminds us that the world is not a dream and stormy weather can appear rapidly. "The old collapses, the times change." This quote from Friedrich Schiller's *William Tell* is printed in large type on the chemists' pocket diary for the year 1913. As we begin 2014, let us hope that 2013 will not be remembered as the year that spelled the demise of the European dream. Instead 2014 should usher in a new hope for Europe, a continent which has learnt after not one, but two human tragedies, that peace and prosperity are the foundation of the future and truly do offer unlimited possibilities. While not a comprehensive history of the year before the First World War, *1913 – The Year Before the Storm* is nonetheless an entertaining and illuminating study of an impressive era. A perfect read for a winter Sunday.

1913, The Year Before The Storm // Florian Illies
(The Clerkenwell Press, 2012)

Ernst Stetter is an economist and political scientist, as well as the Secretary General of the FEPS.

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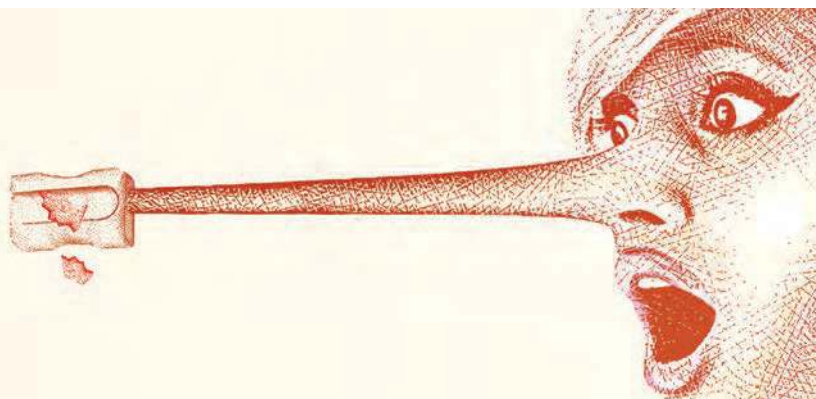
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