

Fear, love, hope – European political passions

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“Imagine there’s no countries
It isn’t hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...”

John Lennon, “Imagine”, 1971

“The First World War exploded the European comity of nations beyond repair...”

Hannah Arendt (1975: 267)

In this paper, it is argued that rational considerations alone are insufficient for the much-needed increase in the commitment of EU citizens to the polity that is theirs. The coming-to-be of the European *demos*, instead of or in addition to the national political communities will not only be a relief to the numerous national groups that do not “have” a national state, but is also a condition for addressing the geopolitical, socio-economic, and environmental problems that Europe is facing. Making use of the theoretical notions of ‘the political’ (as distinct from politics), ‘*matrie*’ (as distinct from *patrie*), and ‘*res publica*’ (as distinct from national government), this paper explores the chances of three major political passions, viz. fear, love, and hope.

Key words: passion, constitutional patriotism, European identity, democracy, politics / the political

INTRODUCTION

This paper¹ was written while a group of ‘Friends of Europe’ had gathered near Madrid to discuss the future of the constitutional project of the European Union. The countries whose populations rejected the *Draft Constitutional Treaty* in 2005 (France and the Netherlands) were not invited. The ‘friends of Europe’ want to go full speed ahead with a new draft, while France and the Netherlands try to represent the ‘will of their peoples’ (but not of the governments). According to many observers, it is a matter of time before some kind of European Constitution will be accepted and ratified by all 27 member states, because the process of European integration is irreversible. While the latter, strictly speaking, is of course not true – all member states retain the right to secede, and this right was warranted in the *Draft*

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(Art. 59.1)² – it certainly is true that the price paid for such a move would be very high in political and socio-economic terms. It is to be expected, therefore, that the discussion about the constitutional structure of the EU will continue during the coming years. Moreover, new member states will want to have their say in this process as well, if only because political independence is a recently acquired good for them.

As an unexpected result, and in largely 'negative' forms, the EU has become an object of passionate discussion. The idea of a 'European Constitution' as such has raised issues about sovereignty and national identity and has led, in some countries, to a concentration on the national government; in the Netherlands, in particular, the 'hagocentric' (referring to The Hague where the government resides) provincialism has obtained epidemic forms. The quick enlargement to first 25, then 27 member states has raised an issue about the speed and limit of such enlargement, particularly with respect to large countries like Turkey and Ukraine. The discussions about the possible reference, in the preamble of the *Draft*, to religious traditions (Judaism and Christianity in particular), but also the strong societal roles of churches in Poland and Greece, have revived discussions about secularisation, *laïcité*, religious freedom and identity that many Europeans had considered things of the past. Before, only fishermen and farmers engaged in passionate discussions about Europe, but now much larger groups of EU citizens participate in them.

Arguably, passion plays a key role in the attachment of citizens to their polity. Rational calculation and intellectual reason seem insufficient to keep a polity together, apart from times of undisturbed peace and prosperity. Rare anyway, such times are clearly over in a Europe that faces major problems in the spheres of environment, immigration, religious tension, energy supply, and foreign politics. Which are the conditions for a Europe that is capable of acting as a 'unity'? What is the commitment of its citizens, and what provides the basis for that commitment? Which are the human resources it can rely upon, if a military conflict goes beyond voluntary participation in 'peace-enforcing operations'? Will the EU prove to be a polity that EU citizens are, eventually, ready to die for, or will these citizens revert to their nation-states when things get rough?

These questions are not only a matter of reason. They also involve passion. Not without ground, European intellectuals and politicians are cautious to invoke or address the passionate sides of politics, but it can be argued that this yields a one-sided perspective, and that passion in relation to politics is a topic that needs to be addressed, if only because the two are, in point of fact, often related. Three passions organize this essay: fear, love, and hope. **Fear** has to do with the unknown effects of transfer of democratically legitimised political power, with labour markets, fishing quotas, and bureaucratic absurdities such as the EU regulation that threatened to force Bavarian waitresses to throw away their *dirndl* dresses because of natural radiation (Becker &c 2006: 26f). On the whole, it has to do not only with vague feelings of insecurity and anxiety, but also with real fear about the loss of control over political decisions that affect people's lives. **Love** has to do with the commitment of citizens to their nation, their country, their polity, but also with the attachment of Europeans to their continent, their culture, their history. What is the object of the 'love of country', to borrow Martha Nussbaum's phrase, of EU citizens – the EU or their nation-state? It may be difficult to love Brussels, but is it easy to love national governments that are forced to promise to solve their country's problems, but are

² For the text of the Draft Constitutional Treaty, I refer to the Dutch text at <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00850.nl03.pdf>

doomed to fail? **Hope**, finally, has to do with the chance that the EU as a political body and the European citizenry as the *dèmos* of that polity may find ways around the questions of sovereignty, subsidiarity and representation that now seem to block the process. To be sure, this is far from guaranteed, but it is possible to discern elements of the development of the European *dèmos* in, paradoxically enough, the anger and protest of EU citizens. In the end – of course, unless the EU dissolves again – ‘we’ will either have a European *res publica* or a bureaucratic monster, and the solution of the dilemma depends, first and foremost, on the same ‘us’.

THE LOGIC OF THE POLITICAL (FEAR)

In *Der Begriff des Politischen*, the German jurist and philosopher of law Carl Schmitt claims that “nothing can escape this consequence of the political” (Schmitt 1987: 36) What exactly is this consequence, and why is it impossible to escape it? The nearest answer is that this consequence is the establishment of friend and enemy groups (*Freund- und Feindgruppierung*) that can possibly, “*im Ernstfall*”, engage in *war*. The ultimate consequence of political loyalty, then, is death. For Schmitt, this is primarily death on the battlefield, but it is not difficult to transpose his idea to such phenomena as civil war, revolutionary struggle, hunger strike, or martyrdom. According to Schmitt, any truly political opposition contains the potential to lead to such an opposition of friend and enemy groups.

Obviously, the choice of life and death, as an ultimate consequence of the political, is what most people try to avoid most of the time. It is the main reason why societies are politically organized. Civilized countries are characterized, among others, by the general distinction between political positions and the natural persons that take those positions: separating the opinion and the person is one way of taking the sting out of political loyalty, and of allowing for difference of opinion while keeping civil war at bay. The famous statement, usually (but, as it seems, wrongly) attributed to Voltaire (François Marie Arouet) (1694–1778), expresses the point in all clarity: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”³ Not only do we find exemplified here the principle of separation of opinion and person, but also this very separation is presented as a matter of life and death. Schmitt’s principle thus finds its full application here. But it has more everyday applications, too: the conflict over the question whether or not certain people should be allowed to immigrate into the European Union can only be resolved, ultimately, by *killing* those who try to climb over the wall that separates Morocco from Ceúta and Melilla. The fact that this has not happened so far is a sign of either lack of drive on the part of those who want to get in (but this is unlikely, given the fact that people do not mind drowning in the Atlantic on their way to the Islas Canarias), or of an actual regime of toleration on the part of the EU authorities: ‘technically’ it is possible to effectively prevent people from entering the EU, just as it was technically possible, by and large, to keep people from leaving the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*. Phenomena like the ‘Holding Centre’ at Lampedusa, which effectively holds refugees without any clear legal basis, or the European ‘outposts’ in countries of origin, in which admissions are evaluated and decided before entering, thus violating the right to appeal against a denial of admission to a court in the EU, point in the direction of an absolute ‘Fortress Europe’, even if the idea of such a fortress continues to appear unacceptable to most Europeans.

³ Apparently, it was written by Evelyn Beatrice Hall in *The Friends of Voltaire* (1906), see <http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~susan/cyc/l/liberty.htm>

Death – or: Either Life Or Death, *and* the attempt to escape this dilemma – can thus be rightly considered the bottom-line of political conflict. What, however, *is* political conflict? And *where* is it? Clearly, we are not always ‘at the bottom-line’. On the contrary: we mostly find ourselves in an environment where this ‘lethal logic of the political’ seems absent, due to a number of logically prior political decisions, such as placing the monopoly of legitimate violence in the hands of the polity, channelling political controversy in a multi-party parliamentary system, and performing the ‘split’ that allows us to separate a person’s political position or opinion, as well as his or her interests and objectives, from that person him- or herself. Not ‘although’, but *because* these decisions have proved highly effective in securing a peaceful ‘civil’ society in which plurality and controversy can exist without threatening the basic structures of society and polity, the *political* basis of that situation tends to be forgotten.

At this point, Schmitt, in his critical stance towards liberal democracy, continues to be a perfect anti-dote against all kinds of complacency: we may prefer freedom and democracy, but we have to acknowledge that they are the outcome of the repeated, mostly implicit decision to have that kind of polity. At the same time, and for the same reason, an emphasis on the political as the defining characteristic of things easily strikes as an attempt at radical politicisation, while in fact it is a protest against forgetfulness. Those who turn the notion of the political into a key point of their argument often are met with ‘accusations’ of wanting to turn everything into politics. This is a misunderstanding: no, indeed, not everything is politics, there are many other things in society – and even in politics! But also: yes, indeed, everything is always-also political, although nothing is ever only political. It is at this point, precisely, that the distinction between the political (*le politique, das Politische*) and politics (*la politique, die Politik*) is pertinent.

I propose to understand ‘the political’ as a generalized characteristic, namely that of ‘being political’ in the sense of ‘bearing the potential of real conflict’, ‘real conflict’ meaning a situation in which parties no longer have a common rule that allows them to solve their conflict, and hence stand in opposition to each other as (groups of) ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’, ready, eventually, to kill each other. ‘The political’ in this precise sense is ubiquitous: it is present in everything social, and even seemingly ‘innocent’ entities such as headscarves, small crucifixes, or spectacles (Kampuchea in the days of the *Khmer Rouge*) can, under particular circumstances, become highly contested objects. To be sure, a conflict is always a conflict between (and sometimes within) people, it is not something of the things themselves. Still, *politics* is always about something, and this something has to be something *political* in the sense just indicated.

Politics can then be defined as a general concept denoting any form of ‘dealing with the political’, ranging from denying it, via neutralizing or canalising it, to exploiting it. What we habitually call ‘politics’, i. e. the sphere of government, political parties, elections, etc., is, primarily, the stabilized form of politics that our type of society has developed, fundamentally based on the decision to give ‘politics’ a specific place in society, thus liberating other spheres, e. g. the economy or the private sphere, of it. This is the *conditio sine qua non* of politics in the more habitual sense, i. e. the solving of conflicts of interests, ideals, objectives etc. within society on the basis of rules and procedures accepted by all (not only ‘law’, but also practices of negotiating, give-and-take, striking compromises, etc.). This may be a most desirable state of affairs, but it is not based on any kind of ‘natural’ division of societal spheres of which some are political and others are not, but rather, precisely, on an initial act of separation between what *is* political and what is *not*, a distinction that is never ‘given’ even though it *appears*, like all forms of ‘objective spirit’, as given within an established political order or *polity*.

Polity, relating back to Latin *politia* and Ancient Greek *politeia*, means any kind of ‘politically organized social unit’; the ‘(nation-)state’ has for a long time been the predominant form

of polity in Europe, but it is not the only possibility. From this perspective, the European Union is a *polity*, too. The question is *what kind of polity*. Today, this question boils down to the question whether the EU is an *international* or a *supranational* polity. This is not a theoretical question only, but also a matter of immediate political import. Currently, the EU seems to be a *hybrid* polity, and this points to a dilemma: one way or another, the tension will have to be solved that exists between the officially international status of the EU and its actually transnational way of functioning. This dilemma currently finds its expression in the discussion about the *veto* right of EU member states' governments, but it has to do, of course, with the question of sovereignty: if the opposition of any EU member state could be overruled by the EC as a whole, this would mean that 26 countries overrule the sovereign power of the 27th. From a citizens' perspective, it would mean that the EU is not an international, but a supranational polity that has the decisive power – the paradox of the situation is that this is already the case, so that discussions about 'sovereignty' come *post festum*. The argument that one could distinguish those cases in which the right to veto does and those in which it does not apply, does not solve the problem, because the logic of sovereignty forces then to pose the question who decides about which case falls under which category. Clearly, sovereignty really is manifestly at stake only in exceptional cases, but we do not have to agree with those theorists who, like Giorgio Agamben, argue that we are in fact living in a permanent state of exception, to recognize that such cases can indeed occur. Moreover, the question of the boundaries of a legal-political order has to be a priori solved in any 'normal' situation, too. Arguably, the emergence of an extreme case (imagine: a massive invasion of Poland by combined Russian and Belarussian forces plus the refusal of Lithuania to let EU troops use its territory for a counter-attack) will, in practice, demonstrate where sovereign power lies.

There is a tendency, in today's political philosophy, to do away with the notion of sovereignty. At this point, liberals and post-Marxists seem to join hands: mainstream liberals like John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas tend to think that the question of sovereignty can be overcome in liberal democratic polities to the extent to which it can be replaced by the notions of overlapping consensus and / or discursive community, while post-Marxists like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri believe that it can be replaced by direct democracy and harmonious cooperation. Obviously, in a situation of global harmonious cooperation, universal peaceful deliberation, and an overlapping consensus that includes every human being, the question of sovereign decision, state of exception, and, for that matter, political power, does not pose itself. The ideal self-determining multitude of Hardt & Negri has, indeed, not only done away with politics, but also with the political. However, the assumption of such a situation is highly problematic, not so much because it is difficult to realize in practice, but because, although it is thinkable in principle, it can never be more than an actual, momentary state of affairs. It is, precisely, in the *absence* of sovereign power that nothing and no one can prevent an antagonistic, oppositional voice from articulating itself, gaining force, finding allies, etc., while the *presence* of sovereign power, one way or another, means a limit, however wide, to such antagonism.

Chantal Mouffe is right, therefore, when she rejects Hardt & Negri's idea that "we need to develop a political theory without sovereignty," and she is also right to hold that the question of sovereignty is a central one (Mouffe 2005: 110, 104). The question, however, is: in which way? At this point, I suggest the following hypothesis: first of all, sovereignty has to do with the fundamental decision concerning the *constitution* of the polity ('constitution' not meaning a written legal document, but the specific form of political organization of society), and secondly, it has to do with the impossibility of a complete shift from government, which is overtly

political, to governance, which presents itself as post-political. The precise point where the strength of liberal-democratic polities turns out to be their weakness as well is this: the fact that all, or nearly all members of society – whether citizens or denizens – accept this ‘constitution’, creates a situation in which government can appear as governance.

In any given polity, there can be only a single constitution, in the sense of general political form: a polity stops being the polity it is if, at this general level, there is a conflict. Of course, a polity can have different constitutions for its constituent parts: US states each have their own constitution, sometimes with substantial differences (allowing or prohibiting, for example, the possession of arms), but *always* subordinate to the US Constitution⁴. Also, a polity can have a mixed constitution, or an unwritten one, but in all cases the relations themselves between elements or parts have to be organized in a *single* constitution. In this respect, European citizens *rightly* fear that the EU constitution will, in the end, mean the end of the absolute nature of their own constitution. At the same time, this is not fundamentally different from the situation in which states like the Netherlands declare, in their constitution, the priority of the international treaties that it has signed⁵. The alternative is, indeed, a set of treaties between EU member states. The idea, included in the *Draft Constitutional Treaty*, that the sovereignty of the member states is warranted, can only mean that the EU can never force its members to remain members.

One of the questions that can only be answered by sovereign power is the question whether or not members of a polity should be sent into war (NB: this is *not* the same question as whether a country’s troops should engage in peace-keeping or peace-enforcing operations – as many authors rightly diagnose, those actions are police rather than military operations). If the EU is a polity, the inter-, supra- or transnational status of which is yet to be decided (*politically* to be decided, that is), the next question is whether this polity is something EU citizens will be ready to give their lives for. A relevant criterion could be that the stability and viability of any polity can be measured by the readiness of its members, eventually, to die for it. Are Europeans ready to give their life for Europe, rather than for ‘their own country’?

One typical feature of polities, both in past and present, is that human lives are sacrificed in the name of it. From the perspective of the polities themselves, war is an alternative way, sometimes shunned, sometimes passionately desired (remember the widespread enthusiasm at the outset of World War I), of solving conflicts with other polities. From the perspective of citizens, it is a matter of giving, reluctantly or enthusiastically, their own life or that of their sons and daughters. The present-day ‘body bag fetishism’ is a clear symptom of this eternal problem: the extent to which citizens in Western societies are *willing* to sacrifice lives for the interest of their country in far-away places like Iraq or Afghanistan proves to be rather

⁴ The relation is stated very clearly in the 10th Amendment (the last of the *Bill of Rights*) to the US Constitution: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” (Maier 1998: 80). In the constitution of the state of California, for example, art.3, ‘State of California’, section 1 reads: “The State of California is an inseparable part of the United States of America, and the United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land.” (see <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/const-toc.html>) In the constitution of the state of Texas, we read in Section 1 of Article 1 the Bill of Rights: “Texas is a free and independent State, subject only to the Constitution of the United States, and the maintenance of our free institutions and the perpetuity of the Union depend upon the preservation of the right of local self-government, unimpaired to all the States” (see <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/txconst/toc.html>). Other US states have similar formulations.

⁵ *Grondwet voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, Art.93 and 94.

limited. The scene from Michael Moore's movie 9/11, in which he asks congressmen whether they would be ready to send to Iraq their own sons (rather than their underprivileged fellow-Americans), is evidence of two things: one is that if their polity is not under direct threat, the readiness to die for it quickly decreases (hence the rhetorical argument that 'if we don't finish the job over there now, they will be on our doorstep tomorrow'); the other is that in liberal democratic societies, citizens no longer leave the judgment of the situation to the political authorities alone: body bags not only translate into diminishing support for the administration in place, but also generates scepticism with respect to the diagnosis of the situation 'out there'⁶. The Dutch involvement in the tragedy of Srebrenica serves as a case in point. *War*, generally speaking, *has become something that Europe seeks to evade*.

European history has been a history of massive bloodshed, with two major armed conflicts in the 20th century. After World War II, first steps were taken to put an end to this situation. In 1951/2, the European Community for Coal and Steel was founded as a way of breaking the exclusive access of European polities to the primary means of warfare. Despite the development of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, mineral energy and steel continue to be primary means of warfare today: the essence of war still consists of vehicles and airplanes firing pieces of metal into human buildings and bodies. With respect to Europe, this pacification strategy has largely worked: since World War II, Europe has not been free of armed conflict, but there have been no classical wars between nation-states, and the armed conflicts in the Basque country and Northern Ireland have, however traumatic and atrocious they are, been limited to a local civil war. The interventions by the Soviet Union and its allies in a number of Central European countries – Hungary 1956, Prague 1968, etc. – remain unforgettable acts of political violence, but they have been relatively small-scale. The silent, velvet, and orange revolutions that have accompanied the breakdown of the 'Soviet bloc', finally, have generally been relatively smooth and demanded few victims. The big exception is the conflict – or rather a set of conflicts – in the former Yugoslavia, which will continue to be a stain on European conscience for a long time to come (in my opinion, moral obligation alone is a sufficient ground to include all former Yugoslav republics into the European Union).

This 'European pacification' explains, perhaps, part of the reluctance of EU citizens to face the consequences of political union, namely that, to the extent to which the EU is a supranational polity, it may get involved in warfare irrespective of the positions of its member states. The policy of neutrality that several European states have adopted, with varying success, during World Wars I and II, will in future be an option only for non-EU-members like Switzerland or Norway. Here we come across the difference between a treaty and a polity. The question then becomes, of course, whether indeed EU citizens will be ready to die for 'Mother Europe'.

EUROPEAN PATRIOTISM (LOVE)

Most democratic countries in the world today face a peculiar problem. It consists in the fact that, on the one hand, it continues to be the case that there can arise situations in which citizens are required to fight and die for their country, while, on the other hand, enlightened intellectual elites in those countries tend to develop a trans-national, if not outright cosmopolitan outlook on the world's affairs that off hand seems to exclude (or tries to evade) any such

⁶ As Immanuel Kant was early to note, members of a republic, i. e. free citizens, will quickly consider the cost of war too high (Kant 1986: 23, 24).

sacrifice. The problem presents itself when the country in question imposes measures that presuppose 'patriotic' loyalty: the infamous *Patriot Act* in the USA is the most recent case in point. Europeans have a history of patriotism related to their respective home-countries: even if it was not related to belligerent nationalism, such patriotism was national in character.

A century ago, the difference between patriotism and nationalism was indicated by the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov as follows: "Nationalism is the perversion of living national consciousness into an abstract principle, which maintains 'the national' as the unqualified opposite of 'the universal', and 'one's own' as the unqualified opposite of 'the foreign,'" while "Patriotism is love to one's fatherland" which does not exclude 'the other' (Соловьев 1997: 318, 347f). Patriotism, according to Solovyov, is also the opposite of cosmopolitanism, which he considers 'abstract' by definition, because it denies the reality that people do live as nations (nationalism is abstract on the opposite ground: it denies the fact that people, though living as nations, are still *people*). Notwithstanding the potentially constructive role of nationalism as a strategy in processes of state-building, highlighted by Machiel Karskens, nationalism as a form of 'consciousness' holds two dangers: one is its potentially aggressive exclusion of others, the other is its potentially oppressive inclusion of 'its own' (Karskens 2004: 266–268). Both dangers have to be contained, if we want, and I think we must, to invoke the constructive potential of what is, at the European level, the parallel of patriotism. The *antagonism of nations and nationalisms* is what the EU as a project and as a polity must effectively exclude. I venture the following HYPOTHESIS: the cool, calm, and collected commitment of citizens to their 'constitution', for which Habermas has invented the notion of *Verfassungspatriotismus*, is a positive force in line with the concept of civil society, but it is, precisely, too cool and rational to found a *dèmos* (not only in the sense of a substantive – ethnic or other – nation, but also in the sense of a political nation, a *Staatsvolk*), and must be supplemented by a relatively 'warm' form of emotional and 'passionate' commitment that cannot act as the opposite of patriotism, but does act as the opposite of nationalism.

For this EU-level passionate commitment, I suggest the neologism of 'matrionism', referring to Europe as a 'matrìe'⁷. Clearly, the idea of a *matrìe* is, precisely, the idea of an idea, and the same applies the notions of *patrie* and *nation*. All such notions are, as ideas, part of what motivates people in their behaviour, and the politically relevant question is how they are or are not compatible (a) with each other and (b) with the existence of the EU as a viable polity. To this question there are two sides: not only the question how 'matrionism' can be functionally equivalent to nationalism, while being compatible with nation-state bound patriotism (which, even if it may disappear in the long run, will not do so overnight), but also the question, more important perhaps in the context of international relations, how the jump from nation-state bound patriotism to European matrionism can be kept from 'jumping on' to cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan trend of the European intellectual tradition is very strong, perhaps stronger than in any other part of the world, and it continues to be difficult for committed Europeans not to project the Kantian – but not only Kantian⁸ – idea of a cosmopolity onto the world at large, and not to set the EU as a universal example. As Derrida remarked: "L'idée d'une pointe avancée de l'exemplarité est l'idée de l'idée européenne, son *eidòs*, à la fois comme *arkhè*... et comme *telos*..." (Derrida 1991: 29). Perhaps it is an example to the world,

⁷ As it turns out, this is not an absolute neologism: see <http://www.masonesque.net/forum66> where the reference, not accidentally, is to the Russian concept of Motherland (*родина*).

⁸ See Cheneval 2002.

but in the sense of an example for other major regions – the development of MERCOSUR is the first example that comes to mind – rather than as an example for the world as a whole. The question of concerned citizens ‘Is it possible to love Europe without betraying one’s nation?’ is thus matched by the question ‘Is it possible to love Europe without betraying humanity?’ Benevolent formulations such as ‘Loving humanity in the form of Europe’ overlook the political problem that one love may exclude the other.

For the basis of the ‘Love of Europe’, the same options present themselves as for ‘love of country’: ethnic, religious, linguistic, historical, and political identities. Of these five, the first three have some plausibility, but do not qualify because they would exclude substantial parts of the European *dèmos*⁹. The historical and political identity, therefore, appears to be more serious candidates, especially in their combination. It is against the background of a shared history that Europeans can unite around a set of political ideals that take into account the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity of the continent. This includes *Verfassungspatriotismus*, but is not limited to it, because it also invokes the ‘passionate’ dimension that explains *why* Europeans would (and *should*) be attached to the kind of constitution that they have. The major hindrance on the way towards European maturation seems to be a combination of attachment of EU citizens to ‘their own’ nation-state with the idea that patriotism and maturation, love of country and love of Europe, exclude each other. Arguably, they *do* exclude each other, or at least they are at odds with each other, to the extent to which the relation in political terms between the national level and the EU level remains unclear: it currently stagnates halfway between an *economic* community – the ‘common market’ – and a *political* union. To be sure, the decision to have a common market, *and only that*, is a political one: the very separation of politics and economy is political to the bone. Ever since the *Treaty on European Union* (Maastricht 1992), rightly considered by Weiler as a great “constitutional moment” in the history of European integration, it is impossible to consider Europe as a peace treaty or a common market, because those were topped by a monetary and political union; however, while the first is an established fact, the precise nature of the political union is not only unclear, but also contested (Weiler 1999: 3f).

This means that the status of the EU as a *place of politics* remains as yet unclear. To be sure, one of the aims of the *Draft Constitution* was, precisely, to bring more clarity in this matter. For someone’s position as a *subject*, it makes little difference, whether one’s human and civil rights are guaranteed by a national constitution, a European constitution, or the *Treaty of Nice* (2000), but the uncertain status of the constitutional project makes it unclear what it means to be an EU *citizen* as an individual in society. To realize one’s political nature is to look for the place(s) where one’s life is actually being determined, and exert influence there, thus engaging in *self-determination* – to be a citizen means to have a well-defined *right* to do so. Under conditions of *égalité*, this principle of self-determination implies the existence of a *dèmos* that participates in political power *in all its places*. One of these places, obviously, is the EU itself. Consequently, if the composite EU *dèmos*, a *dèmos of dêmoi*, wants to gain political control over the forces and bodies that determine its existence and direction, it must be able to relate to the EU as to a European *res publica*.

⁹ For an assessment of these different options, esp. the religious one, see (van der Zweerde 2003).

A EUROPEAN *RES PUBLICA*? (HOPE)

The concept of a *res publica* implies the notion of *common good* which is the subject of public discussion and decision. The notion of *common good*, however, is misleading: it suggests that this common good is somehow given or can somehow be deduced, thus concealing the fact that in a pluralist polity we are dealing, primarily, with a plurality of *ideas or conceptions* of common good. The traditional solution to this problem is to point out, on the one hand, that there are a number of *bona* that *all* citizens will recognize, such as safety, property, and security, and that there are others about which they differ, such as the exact nature of society (see the discussion about a 'social Europe' as opposed to a neo-liberal one or about a 'Christian Europe' as opposed to a secular one). The problem is, however, that the line of separation between these two groups of 'goods' is not so easily drawn. Do such things as the availability of energy or the protection of the environment belong to the category of *common goods* or are they *particular ones*? The fact that the EU has recently taken up the issue of a common energy policy, as well as the fact that it has taken decisions that lead the EU beyond the criteria of the Kyoto agreements, suggests that they are. Or should we be more critical here and argue that the EU is doing politics here rather than articulating the already generally accepted *bonum commune*? Is biodiversity a general condition for a sustainable society, or is it a collective particular interest of those who attach value to nature? The point is, of course, that the line that separates those common goods, values and priorities about which there is a general consensus, and those over which controversy reigns is itself an object of contest and controversy. This then leads to the conclusion that, one way or another, the EU, if it is to be a *republic* that Europeans can desire to be citizens of, must develop a proper place where these controversies and antagonisms can find their legitimate place and be fought out. Contrary to the antagonism of nationalities, which we, in my mind, have to get rid of, the antagonism of ideas and conceptions of common good must find its place *at the level of the EU*. Arguably, the strength of any politically organized society can be measured by its capacity to accommodate social antagonism. The Mouffean idea of a transformation of antagonism into agonism is an appealing suggestion at this point.

This implies the *politicisation* of the EU, a politicisation that has several aspects to it. The first of these is 'theoretical': EU citizens will have to rid themselves of the false conviction, heavily stimulated by national politicians, that national governments continue to be the only true places of political power, an illusion that lawyers have already shed a long time ago. The decline in respect for the professional politician – aptly reflected in a decline in salary that makes it increasingly difficult for political parties to 'find good people' – is a symptom of the fact that politicians indeed have a much smaller impact on the society for which they are made politically responsible than they are forced to promise the electorate. Under present-day conditions, it is objectively impossible not to be disappointed in elected politicians. Therefore, not only must the EU be politicised, but also the politician must be reinvented at the European level: what is needed in addition to bureaucrats who are part of the *Verwaltungsapparat* is politicians who do not negotiate supposed 'national interests' which are in fact based on the latest national election, but who deal with the politics at a European level.

The second aspect, consequently, is practical. In order to make the EU more political and less administrative, direct elections of the European parliament on the basis of European platforms seem to be inescapable. The very idea that in the European parliament both countries and citizens are represented is at odds with the principle of equal representation: despite the fact that they stand for the same perception of the common good, a Dutch liberal MEP has a

greater relative weight than his German colleague because he represents a smaller number of voters. In terms of parliamentary democracy, the very idea that the Dutch MEPs as a group represent ‘The Netherlands’ is an ill-conceived copy of the idea that MPs in the national parliament represent their electorate, whereas in fact they are elected by their electorate to represent the *dèmos* as a whole and, most of all, to be good politicians.

In addition to this, it might seriously strengthen the cohesion and identity of the EU if it were to have a directly elected leader, e.g. the president of the European Commission. Even if such a ‘European president’ would play a mostly ceremonial role and have only symbolic power, still she or he could represent a substantial advance in the recognition, by EU citizens, that the EU *is* their polity, even if its relation to their ‘own’ national polity remains unclear (arguably, unclear relations of power always go at the expense of democratic control – if that is true, citizens are the ones who have to demand greater clarity).

Finally, on this practical level, the gradual shift of political power from the national to the transnational level could go along with the strengthening of *local* government: regions and cities. Even if the traditional argument that a viable *polis* should not go beyond a certain size does not take into account the present-day possibilities of communication – the mass-media, internet –, it still remains true that people are more committed, politically, to what they consider to be their social environment, and this social environment is in most cases more local than the national level. On the whole, my argument goes in the direction of an ‘imperial’ structure, one in which there is a central government and administration, including such things as the protection of human rights, a single foreign policy, a common energy and environment policy, a single army, etc., but one in which local polities to the largest possible extent deal with their own affairs. Perhaps the question is not so much ‘empire or not’, but *what kind of empire*. The subsidiarity principle is part of the 1992 *Treaty of Maastricht* (Art. 2)¹⁰ – the problem, however, is that the EU can only apply it with respect to its member states, but it cannot force those member states to apply it within themselves; only citizens can do this.

More important, therefore, and ultimately decisive, is the level of ‘political consciousness’ and of the development of active ‘European citizenship.’ First of all this includes the development of a European ‘civil society’ that contains non-governmental organizations that deploy their activity at a European rather than a national – either local or global – level, thus forming the organizational basis of the European political society. Secondly, this implies the coming-to-be of a European public space, including the ‘media’ which serve as places of expression within that space. Partly, this public space is in place already. There are, for example, European journals like *Lettre internationale* and there is an increasing number of publications in more than one European language at the same time, – published exchanges between Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida can serve as an example here. At a more modest scale, the conference where this paper was initially presented and the publication that will result from it are also elements of such a public sphere. But these admittedly are small-scale and sporadic. What is lacking, for example, is a European television network, something that could play a major role in the realization – in the double sense of ‘becoming aware’ and ‘making real’ – of a common cultural as well as political space.

Apart from such ‘pro-European’ phenomena, and in an apparent opposition to them, there is the development of European citizenship in connection with Euroscepticism, protest against Brussels, rejection of Constitutional Treaties, etc. A – literally – extreme example is

¹⁰ See http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/C_2002325EN.000501.html

the presence in the European Parliament of ITS, the ultra-rightist 'Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty' faction which houses, among others, Bruno Gollnisch, Dimitar Stojanov, and Alessandra Mussolini. Paradoxically, the existence of this faction in the European Parliament is an implicit recognition of the political relevance of the latter: although these politicians are 'anti-European', they do treat the EU as a real place of political power. Arguably, it is a phenomenon that points to an important aspect of any full-grown democracy: it accommodates its own rejection. Only a polity that gives, within itself, a place to the possibility of its abolition deserves the name of an open democratic polity *that acknowledges*, in its institutional structure, its own political character, i. e. the fact that it rests, in the end, on the contestable decision to *be this polity*.

To be sure, anti-European sentiments alone can never provide the ideological basis of a stable European citizenship, but they share at least its form – and form is, in political matters, at least as important as content. As the profoundly European Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, nick-named 'the Georgian Socrates' by Jean-Pierre Vernant, remarked in a 1990 *France Culture* radio interview: "...la culture européenne est basée sur l'idée de l'accompli, sur l'idée de donner forme à tout, à la vie politique, à la vie spirituelle, *donner forme*." (Mamardachvili 1991: 61) Once again, it seems, 'Europe' must give form to itself, not only an administrative or legal form, which it already has, but also a form to the conflicting passions that it houses within itself. Moreover, there is every reason to assume that, as they continue to make themselves ridiculous in the public space, extremist politicians will stimulate the passionate adherence of others to more reasonable forms of European citizenship: Mussolini, Haider, Le Pen and the others are what most Europeans do *not* want – they are the valves, not the engine. A polity is not only a bureaucratic, 'rational' machinery, but it is also a living body full of both rational and irrational processes. A combination of these two aspects explains the need for at least two valves – one on the left and one on the right side.

CONCLUSIONS

Europe continues to be a fragile yet inevitable project. Surely, it is not inevitable in an absolute sense: it is possible that it may, one day, be dissolved, just as large supra-national polities have been dissolved in the past (even in the recent past: the disintegration of the USSR). The price for this will be high in socio-economic terms, and it may be very high in military terms as well, but it clearly is, and continues to be, a possibility. The EU is inevitable only *given a predominant desire for peace, security, and prosperity*, which is not self-evident (however natural it may appear today). But even given a continuation of that desire, it is fragile. The main reason for this, I think, is the fact that the very principles, on which the European polity rests are 'weak' principles: the actual strength of such a polity depends on the extent to which sufficient numbers of Europeans concretize these principles in non-antagonistic manners (or: transform initially antagonistic positions into agonistic ones) at the level of the EU (Mouffe 2005: 127).

There is a reason to *fear* that European citizens will fail to recognize their own reality, i. e. the fact that the EU *is* their polity, whether they like it or not. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the citizenries of France and the Netherlands will perhaps delay, but not stop the juridico-political unification of the EU. The reason for this, orthodox Hegelians would argue, is that constitutional unification is part of the objective course of history, the effect of and reaction to 'globalization', and part of a general increase in scale of socio-economic and political reality. In fact, however, this is not necessarily true: if we drop the idea that there is

such a thing as inevitable historical development, then we must also acknowledge that it is, in principle, possible that Europeans fall back into their national determinations.

There is also an ample reason to continue to *love* the European project. After all, it is quite a unique achievement in world history to pacify, by and large, a subcontinent that has been flooded in blood throughout its history, and particularly in the more recent past.

There also is, finally, a reason for a *hope*, though certainly not for naïve optimism. There already *is* a European constitution – in the sense of a general political organization of society (the original meaning of *politeia*) and in the sense of constitutional documents like the Treaty of Rome of 1957. Moreover, there are signs that European citizenship is in the making.

In these concluding remarks, I have thrice employed the turn of phrase that there is a *reason* for a certain *passion*. There is, obviously, a paradox involved there, which can only be solved if we drop the idea of reason and passion as each other's opposites. The way out is the acceptance of the idea that reason itself is 'passionate'.

To return then, finally, to the mottos given at the beginning of this paper, Europe still faces the task of proving Arendt wrong, and to show that the repair of the European comity of nations is possible. Such repair is only possible, however, if those nations 'forget' – however painful and prolonged the process might be – about themselves as nations with a claim to statehood. There can be many nationalities and ethnies within the same territory, but there can be only a single nation if the latter is understood in political terms, as the *dèmos* of the polity. The genesis of the EU *is* the story of the gradual replacement of a multitude of nation-states into a single state-nation. Arendt was right that after World War I the emergence of the idea of national statehood deprived large numbers of Europeans of citizenship. Equal EU citizenship is the obvious solution not only to that problem, but also, and more importantly today, to the sensitivities in probably all nation-states in Europe, most of which came into being in a process of conquest, civil war, and centralization. This, of course, does not apply to the centres (Île de France, Central England, Holland, Castilla, Preußen, etc.), but it does apply to the peripheries (Bretagne, Savoy, Wales, Cornwall, Friesland, Limburg, Galicia, Andalucía, Saarland, etc.). Arguably, the majority of Europeans do not live in the historical centres of their respective nation states, and hence have at least mixed feelings with respect to their national identity.

It is not difficult to *imagine*, with John Lennon, that there are no countries, but it is much more difficult to make them disappear. From the global and world historical perspective, only one position is tenable: all countries are contingent entities which have come into being and have disappeared or will disappear. They disappear, however, because of either decline or conquest, not because they actively abolish themselves. The only historical example I can think of is the initial Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft*, a confederate construction in which the partners, the cantons, did *not* give up their sovereignty, and have not done so until the present day¹¹. Perhaps, then, the EU has its model in the reality of its innermost other.

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¹¹ The present-day version of the confederal constitution still warrants the 'Eigenständigkeit' of the cantons, in art. 47 of 3. Titel, 1. Kap., 2. Abschnitt. See <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/101/index.html> and in fact, cantons can even secede from other cantons, as Jura did from the canton of Bern, by a simple majority in a number of communities.

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EVERT VAN DER ZWEERDE

Baimė, meilė, viltis – Europos politinės aistros

Santrauka

Straipsnyje teigiama, kad vien racionalūs svarstymai yra nepakankami didėjant ES piliečių įsipareigojimams savo politiniam dariniui. Būsimasis Europos *dėmos*, vietoj arba šalia tautinių politinių bendruomenių, bus ne tik palengvinimas daugeliui tautinių grupių, neturinčių tautinių valstybių, bet ir sąlyga spręsti geopolitines, socialines ekonomines ir aplinkos problemas, su kuriomis susiduria Europa. Nagrinėjant sąvokas „politiškumas“ (atskiriant ją nuo sąvokos „politika“), „motinystė“ (atskiriant ją nuo „tėvystės“) ir „*res publica*“ (atskiriant ją nuo tautinės valdžios) išskleidžiamos trys didžiosios politinės aistros – baimė, meilė ir viltis.

Raktažodžiai: aistra, konstitucinis patriotizmas, Europos tapatumas, demokratija, politika, politiškumas