

# **NEW EUROPEAN**



**Biannual Views  
of International Affairs  
Winter 2014-15**

# NEW EUROPEAN

Biannual Views of International Affairs

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## NEW EUROPEAN

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# Editorial

The EU parliamentary elections in May 2014 shook the complacency of the established political party groups, who saw what they call "populist" parties in several countries gaining a surprising number of seats. In Denmark, the Danish People's Party gained no less than 4 of the country's 13 seats by the slogan "More Denmark – less EU – it is possible". Apparently the voters did not realize that the party has supported about 80 per cent of the proposed EU rules in the EU Parliament as well as in Folketinget, the Danish parliament.

One long article in this issue is an analysis of the speeches of three parties, Jobbik in Hungary, The Freedom Party in The Netherlands, and the Danish People's Party in the EU Parliament during the 2009-2014 election period. The article, "Europe Deserves Better", is an extract of a book with the same title, which was published by an organization called OEIC (Organization for European Interstate Cooperation) just before the May 2014 EU Parliamentary elections. It is an excellent and thorough report; but it does leave one somewhat amazed that the EU Parliament should thus be sponsoring critical analyses of so-called "right wing fringe parties" who are legally represented in the same parliament. When will the turn come to the Socialists or the Christian Democrats?

The results in the 2014 and 2009 elections for these three parties were: Jobbik: 2014:3, 2009:3; Party for Freedom: 2014:4, 2009:0; Danish People's Party: 2014: 4, 2009:2.

The other long article is an interview by Diana Schumacher with Armand Petitjean, a very personal account of how the heir to the Lancôme empire came to be an ecological pioneer. Armand Petitjean died in 2003.

The Spring 2014 issue brought an article by the American ecologist Jonathan Foley. By an oversight no reference was given to the website [ensia.com](http://ensia.com), a treasure trove of articles on environmental issues.

Chris Wright was another contributor to the Spring 2014 New European with an delightfully readable account of the essentials of economy. It was with great sadness that I learned that he had died shortly before the article was printed. *lhp*

# Want Sustainability? Start by Leaving the EU

DAVID ACUNZO

**G**iven that the European treaties are already a compromise reached after extremely ferocious negotiations, an 'other Europe' is simply an illusion.

I am a supporter of political ecology. I consider that a controlled shift to a sustainable economic regime is needed to prevent an uncontrolled global decline, if not collapse, forced by events.

The required drastic reduction in the environmental impact of our activities implies soberer modes of consumption, a shift away from fossil fuels, a scaling down of distribution networks (*i.e.* de-globalization), more circularity (reuse, recycling) and a stabilization of world population.

However, one can only observe very little change at the national or international level.

As strong regulations are necessary for the changes to occur, the current ideological framework of globalized free markets cannot bring about the necessary changes.

Indeed, profit and growth are the main goal, resulting in more environmental impact and pollution. We therefore need a new ideological paradigm underlying the organization and goals of our societies.

## **The EU: undemocratic, regressive and ideologically locked by law**

The EU enjoys a progressive image in most European countries, including Britain. It is however essential to bear in mind that the EU is first and foremost about freeing the markets and increasing productivism rather than social and environmental welfare. In fact, productivism and globalization are enshrined into the Lisbon treaty.

For instance, Articles 32 and 63 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union prevent Member States from protecting themselves from third countries where social and environmental requirements are lower and therefore production costs are cheaper.

They also encourage large distances between production and

consumption locations. Article 39 on agriculture and fisheries does not state that the objectives are to produce food while limiting the damage to the environment or to ensure the high quality of the products.

The objective is rather to *“increase agricultural productivity”* by *“promoting technical progress”* and to optimise the *“factors of production, in particular labour.”*

Additionally, it should be noted that EU citizens have very little - if any - control over the policies, new treaties or new enlargements that the EU pursues.

### **Would a stronger EU be more progressive?**

Some may object that a stronger Union is needed for the EU to be able to apply more progressive policies. However, there is no indication today that the underlying ideology will be ever questioned in a future treaty.

On the contrary, the new Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and the EU, secretly being prepared for us, is going to go even further in freeing the markets and giving leeway to multi-nationals.

This is leading to fears about a downgrading of the social and environmental regulations and about making the policy implications of environmental research entirely irrelevant.

A stronger Union thus means going further in the same direction.

Others argue that a different Europe is possible. However, for a radical shift in policies to happen, all 28 Member States have to agree unanimously and simultaneously to change the treaties under the new terms.

Given that these treaties are already a compromise reached after extremely ferocious negotiations, an *“other Europe”* is simply an illusion.

What is possible, however, is to withdraw from the EU by virtue of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. The EU is what it is and cannot be recreated: take it or leave it.

### **The risk of deeper liberalism in an independent Britain**

There is, however, the risk that leaving the EU will aggravate neo-liberalism inside the UK. Indeed, Britain has often been pushing the EU to keep its hands off the economy.

In January, the UK lobbied the Commission and succeeded in aborting further control on fracking activities. It also appears to be responsible for the watering down of the revised Markets in the

Financial Instruments Directive (“MiFID II”), whose aim is (or was) to regulate the financial system, for instance to limit speculation on food prices.

It is true that the EU, until now, has acted as a restraining force in front of British right-wing anti-environmentalism and neo-liberalism.

However, it should be noted that the successful lobbying of the UK and the trend that the EU is taking (see e.g. its disappointing CO<sub>2</sub> targets and its progressive authorisation of GM usage) indicate that this restraint is only superficial and will not last.

### **“It’s a right-wing thing”**

One difficulty in many European countries, including Britain, is that the idea of withdrawing from the EU is associated with very conservative or exacerbated nationalistic ideologies, as exemplified by the vocal UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party.

Both are also sceptical about climate change. In particular, UKIP does *“not regard CO<sub>2</sub> as a pollutant”* and criticizes the EU for distorting the energy market (through the Emission Trading Scheme, and subsidies and feed-in tariffs for renewables) and for preventing the UK from restoring its coal industry.

Similarly, Conservatives are also associated with moderate EU, as well as climate change, scepticism. However, the desire to leave the EU is perfectly separable from these ideological stances.

EU withdrawal should instead be seen as a way for the people to regain control over the economic, social and environmental policies applied in their own countries, and to avoid being trapped inside the one-track ideology of an international oligarchy.

As a consequence, the potential referendum should not be seen as a way to express one’s view about the party proposing the vote, but merely as an opportunity to allow radically different society projects to happen.

### **Anti-EU progressive movements**

In order to show to rulers that the desire to leave the EU is not necessarily a call for neoliberal, conservative or far right policies, progressive movements have to organise themselves to weight in the debate.

They should educate people on the ideological prison that the EU treaties represent. They should apply pressure on moderate and left wing representatives to also call for a referendum if they get into power or, better, get organised themselves as a political party.

In France, for instance, the Union Populaire Républicaine (UPR,

Popular Republican Union) is becoming increasingly popular. Most importantly, it is a moderate movement calling for radical political changes impossible within the EU.

For instance, it wants to renationalise former State companies, ban GM foods and favour local food production while guaranteeing self-sufficiency of the country.

### **A British equivalent?**

In Britain, an equivalent may be the cross-party organisation Campaign for an Independent Britain, which, as its name indicates, focuses solely on withdrawal from the EU.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 in Athens these organisations signed a joint communiqué with eight other European organisations pursuing the same goal, stating that the EU is an undemocratic regime under the “*dictatorship of the markets*”.

People across the Union are therefore starting to realise the EU aggravates their loss of control over the decisions taken inside their own country.

Leaving the EU is of course far from being sufficient: a controlled shift of the economy to environmental sustainability will require strong political will and great strides in popular education.

We cannot be sure that leaving the EU will in itself result in a better response to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but what is almost certain is that without leaving the EU, there is no hope of any ideological shift.

*DAVID ACUNZO has a PhD from The University of Edinburgh and is a graduate in Environmental Management and Engineering from ISIGE Mines ParisTech and Tsinghua University. This article has been published by THE ECOLOGIST, January 31, 2014 as well as by NO TO EU, Norway, October 2014.*

# Over the Farm Gate

## SIR RICHARD BODY

Scientists are calling the alarm after extensive research to show that we are rapidly losing land capable of growing arable crops. Thousands of acres are being lost every year so that an area the size of Spain has ceased to be worth cultivating. All this is due to chemical farming.

It is particularly serious for the UK where wheat is the prominent crop. From about 1950 to the end of the century there was a great increase in the yield of wheat due partly to the introduction of new varieties but also because chemical farming was proving successful.

In the last 15 years yields have fallen so much that the figures are back to where they were before 1950. Chemical farming has not satisfied the Law of Return. Wheat contains a number of elements such as selenium, zinc, copper and others which make a feed grain that maintains both the health of the animal as well as human beings. Chemical farming does replace some of the other elements that are necessary such as nitrogen but not all of them. In addition to that the constant spraying of herbicides kill the millions of microbes that play an important part in fertilizing the land.

These are the factors that are impoverishing our soil. In North America so much of the soil has been degraded that it is no longer practical to grow wheat or other feed grains.

In many ways the problem is more serious in the poorer countries of the world. These have been mainly agrarian societies where human manure and all organic waste go back on the adjoining land in accordance to the Law of Return. In recent decades many of these societies have become civilized in that people have moved into towns and villages which lie alongside rivers. A primitive system of drainage takes the human manure and organic matter into the rivers and then down to the sea to feed the fish.

Because it is impracticable for it to be sent back to the land where the food was grown and thus the soil is impoverished and eventually unable to produce the crops they previously did.



In my Book, *Our Food our Land*, published in 1991, I explained how twenty civilizations had perished, many of them in North Africa and the Middle East thus converting vast areas into desert. In all these twenty cases an agrarian society had become civilized, that is it had come to live in towns and cities.

It seems clear that continuous chemical farming is the cause of the present day degradation of our soil. Happily, there are farmers who realised these dangers and in the UK there are now thousands of acres where the farmer has turned his back upon chemicals to rely upon compost made from the organic waste collected in the towns. Some of these farmers have reported results that verge on the miraculous and academics who have done this research remind us that the world's population is increasing at an alarming rate. It was 6 billion 15 years ago. It has now reached 7 billion and it is estimated to become 9 billion within the next 30 years. If millions of people now die because of malnutrition what will happen when there are another 2 million to feed?

Unless we abandon chemical farming and return to organic husbandry there will be nothing less than a famine. The UK may rely upon wheat as a foodstuff for the millions of animals on our farms but it is also the principle ingredient in our diets. Britain's population has doubled and in England the increase has been due to mass immigration. British farms were unable to grow enough food for the people in the Second World War. Now, as a result of twice the number of people to feed and having lost millions of acres to housing and other developments, we might ponder on what is likely to happen.

Sir RICHARD BODY is a former British MP and the author of several books on farming and on European and democratic issues.

# How the Conservatives Could Save Their Bacon

REVIEWED BY JOHN RATRAY

From the beginning, the question of British membership of the European Economic Community - now the European Union - has been one of controversy among the general population. This has been reflected in the Conservative Party more than in any other party. Although it was the Conservative Party, under the leadership of Edward Heath, which took the United Kingdom into the EEC, there was a significant minority within the Party which opposed this move. Many believe that no British Prime Minister other than Heath - noted for his passionate, almost fanatical, desire for membership at all costs - would have accepted terms of entry so disadvantageous to many aspects of the British economy, including fishing, imports of foodstuffs from the Commonwealth and contributions to the EEC budget. The European Communities Bill - the necessary legislation - was carried at Second Reading in the House of Commons by just 309 votes to 301.

The party as a whole began to shift into a Eurosceptical position in 1988 following Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's pivotal speech at Bruges. Like many, she had gone from seeing the EEC as a trading arrangement to realising that its ultimate aim was a political union. Although Mrs Thatcher was deposed two years later, party opinion had shifted sufficiently to provide for a substantial rebellion - both in Parliament and in the country - against the Maastricht Treaty, which came within a whisker of succeeding. In the last decade there has been a clear majority among the Party's membership for fundamental reform of Britain's position in the EU, with a significant number calling for withdrawal.

There have been many books and pamphlets written over the years on the question of how reform or withdrawal can be achieved. This booklet, *Manning the Pumps!*, written by an experienced Conservative campaigner, researcher and candidate, goes into the practicalities of the question to a much greater extent than most. The author demonstrates the need to start with a clear strategy, and gives twenty recommendations towards building one. These range from forming

genuinely Eurorealist teams both in Whitehall and in Brussels; to paying far more attention to the views of ordinary party members and local party associations, allowing them to make local arrangements with the UK Independence Party in appropriate cases; to commissioning a genuine cost-benefit analysis of membership. Considerable detail is provided, from one with practical experience in the matter, as to how to go about achieving these aims.

Rather than the binary choice of “in or out”, the booklet describes several steps in a gradation between total integration and complete separation, and shows how European co-operation can be achieved in far more satisfactory and flexible ways than by a centralised system based in Brussels. It outlines the relationships which Norway, Switzerland and other countries have with the EU, and sets an aim of finding a form of association akin to what astronomers call the “Goldilocks Zone” – neither too close, so as to be weighed down by the gravity of bureaucracy, nor too far away, so as to be frozen out. Fear of the latter has always been the chief weapon of the Euro-integrationists, having nothing more positive to offer, and both the author and Sir Bernard Ingham – who has contributed a Foreword – stress the importance of having a practical alternative available, to counteract the fear of the unknown on which opponents will play. While the booklet focuses mainly on trade and economic matters, its arguments would also have validity for co-operation in other areas.

Whilst this booklet is directed primarily towards the Conservative Party, its message also has a relevance for the country as a whole. The original British entry into the EEC in the early 1970s was highly controversial, with opinion polls mostly showing a majority against. Although a majority of two to one for staying in was obtained in the referendum of 1975, the gross imbalance between the two sides in funding and publicity would not be permitted in a referendum today, and the claims of the victorious “Yes” side in that poll have generally been discredited. Dissatisfaction with the EU is palpable in the general population as well as in the Conservative Party, and while this booklet may be aimed at a Tory target, it would also be useful reading for those of other parties, or of no party.

*MANNING THE PUMPS: a handbook for salvaging the Eurosceptical credentials of the Conservative Party*, LEE ROTHERHAM 50pp. Also available free of charge by download from *The Freedom Association* [www.tfa.net](http://www.tfa.net)

*JOHN RATTRAY has been and continues to be active in a number of Green and Eurosceptic organizations and campaigns*

# TTIP - the Road to Wealth and Happiness?

**LUISE HEMMER PIHL**

According to the EU Commission homepage, “the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a trade agreement that is presently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States.

“It aims at removing trade barriers in a wide range of economic sectors to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services between the EU and the US.

“On top of cutting tariffs across all sectors, the EU and the US want to tackle barriers behind the customs border – such as differences in technical regulations, standards and approval procedures. These often cost unnecessary time and money for companies who want to sell their products on both markets. For example, when a car is approved as safe in the EU, it has to undergo a new approval procedure in the US even though the safety standards are similar.

The TTIP negotiations will also look at opening both markets for services, investment, and public procurement. They could also shape global rules on trade.”<sup>1</sup>

The TTIP negotiations between the US Government and the EU Commission have been going on for some time in deep secrecy. This has caused criticism from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in many European countries, who see this partnership agreement as a threat to the environment because of fear of lowering safety standards in order to bring them in line with those of the US, as well as to democracy because of the irreversible nature of many of the rules agreed on as well as a suspicion that these rules will be dictated by the biggest corporations behind closed doors.

So far, the negotiations have been conducted in extreme secrecy, and it is only quite recently that the EU Commission has published “the directives for the negotiation on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership”<sup>2</sup>

In order to throw light on the worries of the NGOs the Norwegian

branch of ATTAC, the international movement working towards social, environmental and democratic alternatives in the globalisation process<sup>3</sup> has worked out that there are six things we ought to know about TTIP<sup>4</sup>. Here we will deal with first five points, the sixth being only of interest to Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein thorough the EEA Agreement.

The points raised can be seen as questions to the EU Commission. On its homepage the Commission has a Frequently Asked Questions section on TTIP.<sup>5</sup>

**ATTAC 1: TTIP is secret.**

*Big corporations have been involved in the entire negotiation process, but democratically elected politicians have not. After massive pressure one chapter has been made public. Other things that we know have come through leaks.*

**COMMISSION:**

“For trade negotiations to work and succeed, you need a certain degree of confidentiality.

“In the course of the negotiations, though, the European Commission will continue to reach out to trade associations, consumer organisations, industry and other representatives of civil society.

“The European Commission will keep the Member States – in the Council – and the European Parliament of developments. At the end of the negotiations, it is these two institutions – the Council containing representatives of Member States’ governments and the directly elected European Parliament – that will approve or reject the agreement.”

**ATTAC 2: TTIP is not about tariffs,**

*but about the wish of big corporations to mould our policies. TTIP gives the right to big corporations to sue states for laws that may put their “future profits” at risk. This refers to labour market rights, environmental legislation and consumer protection.*

**COMMISSION**

(under this heading: Why is the EU including Investor to State Dispute Settlement in the TTIP?):

“The European Commission, the EU Member States and the European Parliament all believe that Investor to State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) is an important tool for protecting EU investors abroad.

“The fact that a country has a strong legal system does not

always guarantee foreign investors will be adequately protected. A government could expropriate an investor (e.g. through nationalisation) or pass laws which render their investment worthless, for example, by suddenly banning a product made in a factory owned by a foreign investor without paying compensation whilst not banning products made by domestic companies. If investors are prevented from going to local courts or local courts are unable to deal with a claim effectively, then they have nowhere to bring a claim for compensation. In such circumstances, an ISDS provision in an investment agreement provides security for investors because it guarantees them a forum in which to bring a claim for compensation.

“Although the EU and the US are developed economies, investors can still come across problems affecting their investments which their domestic courts systems are not always able to deal with effectively. That is why we believe there is a clear added value in including provisions in the TTIP that protect investors. And, as it brings together the world’s two major economies, the TTIP will set standards for the future.

“Including measures to protect investors does not prevent governments from passing laws, nor does it lead to laws being repealed. At most, it can lead to compensation being paid. The EU’s Member States have been regulating for years although they have around 1,400 such agreements already in place. Eight Member States have investment agreements with the USA. These agreements have not prevented them from aligning to the whole EU *acquis* during their EU accession negotiations. In any event, the EU is working on providing even greater clarity to ensure that genuine regulatory action cannot be successfully challenged.

“The European Commission recognises that improvements to the system can be made and has been very active in developing new United Nations’ rules for transparency for ISDS. In bilateral trade agreements it is negotiating, the EU is aiming to have better rules, e.g. on government control of arbitrators, on a code of conduct for arbitrators etc.”

### **ATTAC 3**

*TTIP will “harmonize” laws and regulations/rules in the EU and the US. This means that the codes of practice should be identical, and in the TTIP the weaker legislation in the US will be the foundation for EU policies and vice versa.*

### **COMMISSION**

(under the heading: Do I have to worry about existing EU standards

of consumer, environmental or health protection?):

“No. We will not negotiate existing levels of protection for the sake of an agreement. Our high level of protection here in Europe is non-negotiable. But let us not forget that the US also takes protection of its citizens very seriously. Both the EU and the US are committed to high levels of protection for our citizens, but we go about it in different ways. The EU sometimes relies more on regulations, the US more on litigation. Both approaches can be effective, but neither is perfect. There is room to learn from each other.

This is not a race to the bottom. Making our regulations more compatible does not mean going for the lowest common denominator, but rather seeing where we diverge unnecessarily. There will be no compromise whatsoever on safety, consumer protection or the environment. But there will be a willingness to look pragmatically on whether we can do things better and in a more coordinated fashion. Obviously, each side will keep the right to regulate environmental, safety and health issues at the level each side considers appropriate.”

(and under the heading: Will the EU be forced to change its laws on genetically Modified organisms (GMOs)?:

“No, it will not. Basic laws, like those relating to GMOs or which are there to protect human life and health, animal health and welfare, or environment and consumer interests will not be part of the negotiations.

“Under EU rules, GMOs that have been approved for use as food, for animal feed or for sowing as crops can already be sold in the EU. Applications for approval are assessed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and then sent to EU Member States for their opinion. So far, 52 GMOs have been authorised. The safety assessment which EFSA carries out before any GMO is placed on the market and the risk management procedure will not be affected by the negotiations.

“The EU and US already exchange information on policy, regulations and technical issues concerning GMOs. Cooperation of this sort helps minimise the effect on trade of our respective systems for approving GMOs. We see the TTIP as an opportunity to support this cooperation.”

#### **ATTAC 4**

*TTIP creates a road for big corporations to form their own lobby council.*

*All countries must report to the so-called “advisory group” when they want to make new national laws and regulations. This means that all new political decisions will have to go through the big corporations before the countries launch them.*

*A sore point for the critics of the TTIP plans is that investors will have a right to sue states for loss of future profits. This will, according to Morten Harper from NO to EU, mean that countries will desist from introducing regulations aimed at safeguarding their inhabitants' health, safety and environment.*

### **THE COMMISSION'S**

Q&A do not touch this sore point. But, according to ATTAC:

*"The Employers organization Business Europe and the US Chamber of Commerce write in an internal document which was sent to the New York Times by mistake <sup>6</sup>(note: Corporate Europe Observatory, Brussels, "TTIP documents released by the european commission") that the agreement "must offer new tools and a process of steering(?) for leading the cooperation on realigning on an interdisciplinary as well as a sector specific basis, something which will contribute to take up deviations in existing as well as future adjustments."<sup>7</sup> (note: translated back from the Norwegian)*

### **ATTAC**

*TTIP will not provide economic growth and more decent jobs.*

*Even the Commission's own report concludes that the result of the TTIP will be an annual growth rate of 0,01 per cent of the BNP. German trade union leaders point out that even the weather will play a greater role for the rate of employment*

### **COMMISSION**

*"... One of the studies on which the Commission's impact assessment was based was an independent report commissioned by the EU from the London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). The study, entitled 'Reducing barriers to Transatlantic Trade', outlines the economic effects of a TTIP for both the EU and the US.*

*"It suggests the EU's economy could benefit by €119 billion a year – equivalent to an extra €545 for a family of four in the EU. According to the study, the US economy could gain an extra €95 billion a year or €655 per American family. These benefits would cost very little because they would be the result of removing tariffs and doing away with unnecessary rules and bureaucratic hurdles that make it difficult to buy and sell across the Atlantic. The extra economic growth that is expected to come from the TTIP will benefit everyone. Boosting trade is a good way of boosting our economies by creating increased demand and supply without having to increase public spending or borrowing. The TTIP would be the cheapest stimulus package imaginable.*

*"Although tariffs between the EU and US are already low (on*



average 4%), the combined size of the EU and US economies and the trade between them means that dismantling tariffs will be good for jobs and growth. ...”

The arguments of those who favour the TTIP (and who are negotiating the treaty) and of its critics are incompatible. But they also seem to arise from completely different world views. On one side the issue is one of economic growth through trade, while the other side is concerned with the consequences for democracy. At present the negotiations are secret. But we must expect that the final agreement will be debated in the EU Council and Parliament as well as in the national parliaments of the EU member countries.

#### Notes

1. <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/about-ttip>
2. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/documents/ST-11103-DCL-1/en/pdf>
3. <http://www.attac.org>
4. VETT 4/2014
5. [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/questions-and-answers/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/questions-and-answers/index_en.htm)
6. Corporate Europe Observatory, Brussels, “TTIP documents released by the european commission”
7. I have not seen the original text. Here it is translated back from the Norwegian. *LHP*.

#### **Last minute addition, January 8th, 2015:**

According to Norwegian daily Nationen the EU has now given in to popular pressure and published part of the TTIP negotiation documents, hoping thereby to “clear misunderstandings” and make the political aims clear.

Today, EU commissioner Cecilia Malmström published 8 of the 24 areas that the parties (EU and US) have discussed, a. o. food safety and animal welfare. At her press conference Mrs Malmström said:

“Some parts must still remain secret as they deal with sensitive information about e.g. access to markets, quotas and tariffs.”

Links: <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1230>  
<http://www.nationen.no/eu/eu-offentleggjer-ttip-dokument/>

LUISE HEMMER PIHL *is the editor of the* NEW EUROPEAN

# Nordic Social Democrats Put their Trust in the EU Single Market

THOMAS VERMES

**I**f the present trends continue until 2030 there will be a risk that the Nordic welfare states are going to crumble away.

This was the gist of the a message from a group of Scandinavian researchers from the *Fafo* research institute to a meeting of Social Democratic party leaders and other prominent party officials as well as the TUC leaders from the Nordic countries. The meeting took place in the Oslo area on November 11, 2014.

The research project called *Normod2030 – Crumble or Renewal in Scandinavia 2014-2030* was commissioned by *Samak* (the Cooperation Committee of the Labour movements and trade unions in the Nordic countries) in cooperation with FEPS (the Foundation for European Progressive Studies).

## **Inequality like in Italy**

“If inequality continues to grow in Scandinavia in the same tempo as during recent years the Scandinavian countries will have as much inequality as France, where the 10 per cent wealthiest citizens own more than one third of the assets,” according to Tone Fløtten, researcher at Fafo, and she continued to say:

“If inequality in Scandinavia continues to grow as it is doing in Sweden, the Nordic countries will be like Italy where 20 per cent live below the poverty level. The wealthiest 10 per cent get 33.9 per cent of the income. Can we live with inequality similar to that of France or Italy without shaking the Nordic model?”

## **Trade Union, no thanks**

“We are seeing a decline in the percentage of organized workers,” continued another Fafo researcher, Jon M. Hippe.

“The drop is greatest among those who most in need of a union. Among those at high education level the situation is stable. Not only is the union movement weakening in the Nordic countries, but it is

also acquiring a new character as a result of this development.”

In 2012 7.3 million persons were union members in the Nordic countries. That is 420,000 fewer than in 1990 – at the same time as the number of employed persons is 1.7 million higher, according to the *NorMod* final report.

In 1990 78 per cent of the people of working age were employed, in 2013 the percentage was 73.7, and if the trend continues it will be 72.2. in 2030

### **Free markets, yes please**

Immigration to the Nordic countries has been more than trebled, and there has been a change from immigration by asylum seekers to immigration of job seekers, and they tend to be in the low income group.

“Has the development within the EU Single Market with its free movement of labour strengthened or weakened the Nordic model?” I asked the Nordic party leaders during a break.

“We are all in the Single Market. I have no doubt that this has made us all wealthier,” replied Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Danish prime minister and Social Democratic leader, adding:

“It is a way of collaborating that suits us. We say yes to international competition, trade and globalization. The strong cooperation in the EU Single Market makes it easier for us to have a strong welfare state.”

And Jonas Gahr Støre, leader of the Norwegian Social Democrats adds: “The European Economic Area made the vision of a common Nordic Market come true.”

This article is a shortened version of an article published by ABC Nyheter at <http://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/2014/11/11/211628/nordiske-sosialdemokrater-fikk-varsko-om-framtiden-stoler-pa-eus-indre>, November 11, 2014

THOMAS VERMES *is a Norwegian journalist*

# They Come to Us because here the Individual Counts

IDA MAGLI

**A**fter the Pope's visit to Lampedusa in the summer of 2013 many of the themes concerning immigration which have for so many years been debated in Italy and in Europe in a useless manner because it has not been possible to find a common point of departure in order to steer the efforts towards an improvement of the situation. A situation which remains anguished because of its precariousness and because of the desire/wish to find for these people who flee from their own countries "true" solutions, that is solutions which would work towards a social and cultural life in Africa in the same way as here. And it remains anguished, even after the emotion raised by the words and the prayers that we said together with the Pope.

This a decisive point which is almost not discussed because it is not visible at the first impression with persons who keep arriving here after having faced the sea by brittle and dangerous means after leaving everything that to us seems indispensable, even for a "poor" person: one's own country, one's own countrymen, one's own language, one's own religious and social customs, one's own work, one's own home ...

Actually, however, these are all things which we, Europe and the Western world in general, have succeeded in obtaining through long efforts of thinking, political struggles, building of societies together with the effort of practical work, of activity in workshops, of learning about science and health. First of all the conviction and the protection of a "value". That of every single person and all that belongs to him and which no one can violate. Without this foundation of "right?" our civilization would not exist: political liberty, the nation's independence, the system of the state, the laws that regulate work and everything that depends on it.

And this is the most important value, the one that attracts all those who venture out to sea in order to come here, even if they would not

be able to express it, even to themselves. The “I”, our being first and foremost an “I” as an individual, as a person of an absolute value, is a certainty which is written on the heart of any human being from the moment of her first wail until her death, in all countries, at all times, in all cultures. Sadly, there are vast areas in Africa where this value has not been clearly worked out and made the foundation of the social order of many groups. This is the fundamental mission that we must develop in Africa, a mission for which we already have many tools, but which the Italian state has until now not encouraged and made use of in a way expressly aiming at this goal. An easy example is found in the fact that men in Africa work very little and leave the working on the land to the women. But in this country Muslim men do work without too much hesitation, and the point is that they should be convinced that they can do it even at home because work is a right, an honour, a “value” everywhere.

Thus it ought to be clear to everybody, but first of all to those who govern us, that if we want to help Africa it is necessary to teach the inhabitants to organize themselves in their own countries according to the value of the “person” and “work”. Immigration to Italy ought to be absolutely ruled out without exceptions of any kind, apart from evident motives of culture, as the population [of Italy] has been tripled in the course of a century and the demographic density puts a an ordered and civil life at serious risk. But we have a duty to convince the Africans to work for their own country, also because the giving up on Africa impoverishes the entire world not only because of its immense extension, its riches, its possibilities (China is already trying to replace the natives), but also for so many dreams, so many hopes for a different horizon.

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*Translation: Luise Hemmer Pihl*

# Europe Deserves Better

**PHILIP LERULF AND JAN ÅKE JOHANSSON**

In our book, *Europe Deserves Better*, we have described the emergence of three parties from different parts of Europe. As a result of differing geography and historical circumstances, the political conditions are naturally different in each country. One could also discuss whether epithets like “national chauvinism” and “extremist parties” are applicable to describe all aspects of the parties’ policies. But despite several significant differences between the parties, they have surprisingly many characteristics in common. Jobbik, the Party for Freedom and the Danish People’s Party have similar and sometimes identical ambitions in several key areas of policy. We have chosen to focus our attention on these.

## **State ownership and privatisation**

Both Jobbik and the Danish People’s Party believe that there is an intrinsic value in the state owning natural resources, energy production and infrastructure. Jobbik undoubtedly has the most ambitious nationalist aspirations. The party wishes to prohibit foreign investment in Hungarian agricultural land. The Danish People’s Party is not as clear, but it also opposes the sale of state assets, including the national postal service, electricity networks and the nation’s energy production.

## **Globalisation**

Both Jobbik and the Danish People’s Party are very critical of globalisation in the sense that national borders are becoming less important and that the laws of the market are taking precedence over political control mechanisms. The opposition to foreign influence differs however. While Jobbik wishes to protect Hungary’s economic interests and opposes foreign ownership, the Danish People’s Party’s opposition is primarily culturally determined and the party is explicitly opposed to a multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

### **Family policies**

The family plays a central role, especially for the Danish People's Party and Jobbik, but the Party for Freedom also wishes to influence family formation. The specific goals of the parties differ somewhat. While the Party for Freedom believes that the Netherlands already has a large enough population and therefore wants to limit child benefit to a maximum of two children per family, Jobbik is ready to provide tax benefits to large families in order to encourage a higher birth rate in Hungary. The Danish People's Party emphasises the role of the family as an important building block of society, regardless of how it is formed and who is included, but at the same time it opposes allowing homosexuals to marry in churches.

### **School and educational policy**

The similarities between the parties are most apparent in their approach to education. All the parties studied want to enhance the role of history teaching in the school. In Jobbik's case, it is about providing greater scope for studies of Hungary's history and culture. The Party for Freedom calls for a mandatory history curriculum with texts that can convey the country's history to schoolchildren, while the Danish People's Party wants to see a stronger focus on Denmark in the teaching of history and major elements of Danish work in music education. Both Jobbik and the Danish People's Party want the teaching of religion to be mandatory. The Party for Freedom wants all school buildings in the country to fly the Dutch flag.

### **Constitutional issues**

The three parties are also united in their belief in direct democracy rather than representative democracy. All parties want more referendums to be held in their respective countries. The Danish People's Party goes furthest and suggests that any matter shall be subject to a referendum if it is requested by at least 50,000 voters.

### **Immigration policy**

Both the Danish People's Party and the Party for Freedom are critical of immigration. The resistance to immigration is partly cultural. The Party for Freedom wishes to emphasise the Netherlands' Judeo-Christian and humanist traditions, and stop the construction of mosques and immigration from non-Western countries. The Danish People's Party has also increasingly turned against Islam over the years. The party certainly claims to support religious freedom, but says there is no "parity of religion". It also wants to preserve the constitutional role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.

Moreover, there is a clear economic rationale for the three parties' attitudes towards immigrants.

In Hungary, however, immigration is not a high priority. Instead, the Roma minority population and their vulnerability is the basis for the widespread xenophobia. Jobbik's criticism of the Roma is also largely based on this group's poor level of education and weak attachment to the labour market. Even for the Party for Freedom, the economy is a key factor along with the cultural motive. The Party for Freedom proposes an end to continued immigration from Muslim countries and the introduction of requirements for immigrants who wish to access various welfare services. In order to qualify for welfare benefits, a person must have lived and worked in the Netherlands for at least ten years. Whether this applies to immigrants from every country in the world is unclear. The Party for Freedom also wants to ensure that immigrants bear the costs of the integration measures offered by society.

### COMMON PATTERNS OF THOUGHT

The three parties have a common perception in several key policy areas. Several of their specific policy proposals are identical. The Danish People's Party, Jobbik and the Party for Freedom all advocate, albeit in varying degrees, a policy that rejects what could be perceived as modern and cosmopolitan. Not infrequently, it is about a deep distrust of international institutions and a strong dislike of the transfer of power from politicians to the market, which is what globalisation has meant in many respects.

This world view is not altogether easy to define according to the usual left-right scale. It is also probable that attempting to place them on such a scale will not contribute to an understanding of the parties. As society becomes more complex, this dualistic view of politics has lost its constructive role. Numerous lines of conflict are becoming increasingly pronounced: state/individual, urban/rural, environment/industry, free-trade/protectionism, state ownership/private initiatives and EU-centralisation/national sovereignty, to name just a few. The signal colours like red and blue mean less and less as political guides in an increasingly complicated world. The division in the first French National Assembly in 1789, when the revolutionaries sat on the left of the Speaker and the conservatives sat on the right, is simply not adequate any more.

It is also worth mentioning that the left-right scale that is common in Western Europe is not automatically applicable to e.g. Hungarian politics. A Hungarian party with traditional right-wing views on



cultural issues may well be a stronger defender of investments in public welfare than a party that is culturally defined as leftist.<sup>2</sup> On economic issues, the configuration is also reversed from a Swedish perspective. While the parties that Hungarians define as being on the left have so far welcomed private welfare solutions and advocated a limited welfare state, parties on the right, such as Fidesz, have in several respects advocated an expanded public sector. The same paradox applies in matters of agricultural policy and natural resources: The left has no difficulty making way for foreign ownership. The right, on the other hand, want everything to remain in Hungarian ownership, from the forests and fields to water supplies and energy resources.<sup>3</sup>

But the fact that it is difficult to classify the extreme parties along the usual left-right scale does not mean that the parties are acting in an ideological vacuum. The national context is crucial for a party such as the Danish People's Party. The conditions are basically the same for Jobbik and the Party for Freedom.

Naturally, the three countries have differing histories and thus the starting point for the three parties also differs. In Jobbik's world, it is the dissolution of Austria-Hungary that forms the basis for everything that has gone wrong. But the list of misfortunes also includes more contemporary changes, from the opening of the financial markets and the privatisation of public services and systems, to the dissatisfaction with the Roma minority population. The Danish People's Party is concerned mainly with the economic outlook for the Danish state and has decided that a large influx of refugees is inconsistent with a generous welfare state.

In the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom reached a similar conclusion. Both the Danish People's Party and the Party for Freedom have increasingly taken an interest in the cultural dimensions of Muslim immigration. Common to all parties is the nostalgia for the past and the conviction that the emergence of an increasingly integrated world is to the detriment of their own populations. Modernity is in stark contrast to the traditional values cherished by all three parties.

This is somewhat understandable. The national context is crucial, for the simple reason that the nation state is still the primary arena for democracy. The Nordic welfare model is a clear example. The tax-funded welfare systems have never been universal. When combined with a labour market that regulates both the influx of new workers and wage levels, the result is inevitably a closed system at the national level.

However, this is not a system carved in stone. In recent decades, the European states have moved away from the notion of the nation-state as the sole framework for politics and to varying degrees have

tried to establish new social and economic systems at a supranational level. But the need for a shared purpose, geographically defined communities and a common unifying concept will not disappear so easily. Many politicians seem to have underestimated the challenge. The efforts to move away from an exclusively national system to a European or international perspective arouse opposition. A political vacuum has opened as the established parties have continued to push for a loosening of the national framework. This gap is now being filled by national chauvinist and extremist parties like the Danish People's Party and Jobbik. Their demands are often the same: opposition to the EU, restrictions on the free flow of capital and restrictions on free trade, criticism of Islam and a positive reappraisal of Christianity, more resources for welfare systems and greater support for indigenous cultural traditions.

From a democratic perspective, there is no reason to question the emergence of new parties. The possibility to form a political party is a fundamental prerequisite for representative democracy being renewed and retaining legitimacy. Concerns arise only when the parties' political agenda challenges our concepts of human rights, the equality of all citizens before the law and attitudes towards openness and mobility. All of the parties studied in this book share a readiness to single out individual groups in society as a problem, instead of changing the political and economic structures that often prevents people from other parts of the world contributing to and creating a future in Europe. In the case of the Danish People's Party, its opposition to immigration is often defined in cultural terms. For the Party for Freedom, there is no place in the Netherlands for Islam. In Hungary, Jobbik has chosen to make the Roma minority its principal target.

### **THE EXTREMIST PARTIES' FOOTPRINT IN THE EU PARLIAMENT**

Jobbik, the Party for Freedom and the Danish People's Party have all been represented in the European Parliament during the current election period 2009-2014. Besides giving parties a platform in Brussels, the seats in the assembly have provided them with an opportunity to influence the policies pursued. However, the impact of these political parties has been limited. Apart from the fact that their small numbers make it difficult for them to exert influence in a parliament with nearly 800 members, their choice not to engage in the group structure in the parliament has marginalised the parties and limited their opportunities to gain support for their policies.

## JOBBIK

Jobbik won three of the Hungarian seats in the elections to the EU Parliament. The seats went to Krisztina Morvai, Csanad Szegedi and Zoltan Balczó. None of the elected representatives joined a group during the entire period.

Jobbik's senior representative in 2009, Krisztina Morvai, who has a background in the UNHCR, has been a frequent speaker during the sessions in Brussels and Strasbourg, frequently on issues related to policy on refugees and migration. She has made a total of about 200 comments.

Csanad Szegedi has also been active in the chamber with over 100 comments. Among the more controversial comments are two on immigration and registration of ethnicity on criminal records. At the session in Strasbourg on 13th December 2010, he made the following comment entitled "Establishment of a network of immigration liaison officers".

*Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the report and the proposal behind it clearly serve, and are intended to prepare, the promotion and facilitation of immigration, which we consider unacceptable. The creation of a network of immigration liaison officers is one more step towards a centralised measure controlled by the European Union that serves the spreading of immigrants and refugees. Furthermore, it is unacceptable that they intend to replace the term 'illegal immigration' with 'irregular immigration,' thereby attempting to further legitimise this otherwise illegal act. The peoples of Europe have had enough of the flood of immigrants, and we would welcome it if the elected Members sitting in this House also acknowledged this. Unfortunately, I can say no more about this report than that it is a caricature of itself. What is embodied in this report is a caricature of the European Parliament*

*At the session in Strasbourg on 19 October of the same year, he made the following comment entitled "Databases in the EU with data on race and ethnicity."*

*Ladies and gentlemen, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) proposed as early as 2006 that it should be possible to indicate a person's ethnicity in the criminal records, so that when applicable, attention can be drawn to Gypsy criminals. We still maintain this position. At that time, the left-liberal media said that Jobbik was an extremist party. Four years on, we see lists drawn up in France in relation to the expulsion of Gypsies. We see that in Holland, they are considered a national security risk, and databases are coming to light there, too. Then we can also see that in Finland, the ethnic origin of Gypsy perpetrators is recorded in detention facilities.*

*And now let me put a question to one of the rapporteurs here, the Slovakian lady who laughed so loudly about the Hungarian victims. I find it extremely*

*hypocritical that she condemns the data collection on Gypsies, while, as a Slovakian politician, she supports a racist language law that punishes people on ethnic grounds for speaking their mother tongue.*

Zoltan Balczó, who in May 2010 gave up his place to Bela Kovacs, became an active member during his brief period in the parliament. Among other things, he was a strong opponent of Turkish membership of the EU, both in speeches on the topic and in a written resolution. Like his party, he prioritised the issue of the Roma. At the session in Strasbourg on 9 March 2010, under the heading "The second European summit on Roma", he made the following contribution to the debate.

*Since I am going to speak Hungarian, my mother tongue, instead of the standard Roma term I will use the word Gypsy, which has no pejorative meaning in my language and it is also used in our Constitution.*

*This item on the agenda is action against the exclusion and discrimination of the Gypsy. The essential precondition of the solution is the social integration of the Gypsy people. School is an important tool for this. In many cases, there is a reason for separate treatment or positive discrimination if you like, in order to eliminate disadvantages. When they hear this, minority rights activists immediately cry segregation, even though the objective is rapid inclusion.*

*Generations of Gypsy in certain regions of Hungary have grown up in families living on benefits rather than earning a living. There is no way out without creating jobs. This is why we must break away from neoliberal economic policies. Even the difficult social situation cannot justify the violation of the law. In Hungary, Gypsies are involved in a very high percentage of crime. We have to act against this not only for the benefit of the majority of society, but also for the benefit of the honest Gypsy people. We have never specified genetic or ethnic labels as a reason. So there is no mention of racism, we only mentioned special socio-cultural circumstances as a background. If we routinely stigmatise persons stating this as racists, we only pursue an ostrich policy.*

*We need to find the way out together. In order to do this, it is imperative that Gypsies have leaders recognised by their communities and by society as a whole. Indeed, we need a common European strategy, but this should be a strategy which faces all aspects of the issue and intends to find a solution by examining them with honesty.*

## **THE PARTY FOR FREEDOM**

The Party for Freedom won four seats in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009. When the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011, the party gained an additional seat. The turnover in the delegation has been large and during the previous term of office, several people have come and gone as a result of elections in

the Netherlands. Today the party is represented by Lucas Hartong, Patricia van der Kammen, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen and Auke Zijlstra. All are non-affiliated. Daniel van der Stoep, who also has a seat that belongs to the Party for Freedom, now represents the own party, Article 50.

The Party for Freedom's representatives have kept a relatively low profile during the session. However, they have submitted many questions to the EU Commission. Altogether during the past five years, the party produced almost 800 written questions on issues ranging from alleged corruption scandals in Turkey and human rights in Muslim countries to racism and asylum policy.

This figure does not, however, include Daniel van der Stoep's activities. He has single-handedly made nearly 100 comments in the chamber and submitted more than 100 written questions.

On 19 April 2011, before the session in Strasbourg, van der Stoep wrote to the European Commission on the subject of immigration.

*On 1 April 2011, hundreds of immigrants with no prospects broke out of reception camps on the Italian mainland. The immigrants had originally come from Lampedusa, which is overcrowded. Completely illegally, these opportunists have set off for other European countries, such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands.*

- 1. Does the Commission share the view that, to a large extent, the vast influx of immigrants from North Africa is made up of persons seeking to improve their economic prospects?*
- 2. Does the Commission share the view that a halt must immediately be called to the vast influx of illegal immigrants from North Africa? Can the Commission say what plans it has to bring this about? If not, why not?*
- 3. Does the Commission share the view that these illegal immigrants should be accommodated in their own region and under no circumstances be accommodated in the European Union? If not, why not?*

## **THE DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY**

The elections to the European Parliament in 2009 gave the Danish People's Party two seats for Morten Messerschmidt and Anna Rosbach. At first, the two representatives belonged to the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group, but in early March Anna Rosbach decided to leave the Danish People's Party and joined the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR). According to her press secretary, the change was for "personal reasons, not political." During her time as

a representative of the Danish People's Party in the assembly, a large portion of her speeches in the House concerned climate, support for Western Sahara and violence against women in India.

Morten Messerschmidt is one of the Danish People's Party's promising young politicians. During his five years in Parliament, he has managed to make around 70 comments in the chamber, ranging from the need to reduce the EU's budget, criticism of the European Commission's proposal for a quota on private company boards and criticism of the system of subsidies to EU parties.

But Messerschmidt has also criticised EU labour mobility which he says leads to social tourism. In a written question to the European Commission on 8 October 2013, signed along with several other members of the EFD group, he demanded answers about how the European Commission regards the concept of social tourism.

*The freedom of movement is one of the EU's founding principles and is widely seen as a valuable asset for EU citizens. More than 13.5 million EU citizens are living in another member state. A large number of these citizens move to wealthier member states in order to take advantage of more generous social benefits, especially with respect to education, housing and healthcare. According to Eurostat statistics, the unemployment rate among migrants in member states with generous social benefits is about twice as high as among the national citizens of the same State. The amounts paid in the form of social benefits can differ by more than a factor of 12 within the EU, resulting in a situation where the existing principles of free movement can be abused. Social protection systems are very different in different member states, making it possible for immigrants from other member states to fraudulently take advantage of host countries' social benefits. The current situation has led to an increasing number of member states receiving a large number of migrants. It has also led to a decline in confidence in the advantages of the right to free movement of labour, which is fuelling demands to take back national sovereignty.*

1. *Does the Commission accept that the phenomenon of social tourism exists in the EU? If not, how can the Commission follow this up?*

2. *Does the Commission reconsider its current position and introduce a balanced policy to promote the benefits of free movement of labour, while dealing with the unintended financial burdens EU host countries have to bear?*

3. *Does the Commission intend to develop a consistent and cooperative approach across the EU to ensure that the abuse of the freedom of movement is minimised and that it is not used by migrants with criminal intent?*

In a debate during the session in Strasbourg on 22nd October later the same year Morten Messerschmidt followed up the issue during in a debate on the theme "EU citizens free movement and Member States 'welfare system'".

*Mr President! Thank you, Commissioner Andor, for coming and participating in this important debate today. I must admit that I knew we lived*

*far apart, but it is new to me that we are actually living on two completely different planets. However, that must be the conclusion after hearing what you have said.*

*Freedom of movement is good. Nobody is questioning that, you say. Yes, but what is freedom of movement other than the recent decision of the European Court of Justice, which we are compelled to follow without any democratic debate and without any democratic mandate? What was free movement a year ago is not the same as today in relation to the right to receive student grants, social assistance and what not - rights to welfare benefits in general. It is not the same as it will be in four years or five years, because the Court constantly moves the limits for what we out in our Member States may reserve for our own citizens.*

*They say there is no problem. They have had consultancies produce a report that shows - consultancies that over the past six years have received half a billion kroner for services from this house, from your house, from the EU system in general. Pure commissioned work, which only exposes how outrageous is the attitude of your Commission to this problem.*

*They say that we who point out that we want to keep welfare benefits for our own citizens and ourselves who have paid taxes in our own countries, are just Eurosceptics and populists. Well, if so, then the British government, the Dutch government, the Austrian Government, the German Government are nothing more than populists.*

*I hope that at some point - perhaps after the next elections to the Parliament, when you are no longer serving in the high office you have today, you will be mortified about the manner in which you have handled the freedom of movement and the right to welfare benefits in the EU!*

During the 2000s, The Danish People's Party has competed with Folkebevægelsen mod EU (Popular Movement against the EU) to establish itself as one of Denmark's sharpest critics of the EU. But its time as a support party to the centre-right government in 2001-2011 has contributed to a certain displacement. New studies have shown that the party is really not quite so critical of the EU as previously thought.

Rasmus Brun Pedersen and Flemming Juul Christiansen, both researchers at the Institute for Political Science at Aarhus University, note that the Danish People's Party differed little from other parties in the centre-right government in its approach to the EU. Since the party supported the centre-right government in 2001 in the Danish parliament, the party's elected representatives voted in favour of an overwhelming majority of the proposals that were linked to the EU.

The survey, which is based on a review of 2,057 legislative proposals linked to the EU that were up for consideration by the Danish parliament during the period 1997-2007, showed that the Danish People's Party

voted in favour of the majority of these. During the period from 2001 to 2005, the Danish People's Party voted yes to 89.5%, and from 2005 to 2007, the figure was 86.4%.<sup>4</sup>

### A CONSTANTLY CHANGING CONTINENT

In recent decades, the world has undergone a profound social and economic upheaval. The oil crisis of the 1970s, the collapse of communism a decade later, changes in populations' migratory patterns, increased competition when trade barriers have been dismantled and financial markets have been opened up to foreign capital, economic progress, especially in the coastal areas of East Asia, changes in the Earth's climate, growing tensions in the wake of the war in Iraq, Islamist terrorism in the United States and Western Europe and turmoil in the financial markets are some of the events that have shaped and continue to shape our daily lives and the policies pursued by governments.

None of this has left Europe unaffected. People who previously lived in poverty but without competition behind the Iron Curtain, now find themselves in a constant competition for jobs and economic development. Western Europeans, who just a decade ago proclaimed the end of history and welcomed eternal peace, are now subjected to demands for change and adaptation when globalisation makes itself felt. The result is that previous political and economic privileges are questioned. Maintaining the level of wealth that was previously taken for granted now requires that time-honoured truths must be reconsidered, a trend that is likely to intensify in the wake of the debt crisis now affecting Europe.

In many ways, it is understandable that many people experience the situation as more troubling than the Cold War. When the Soviet Union was in opposition to the West, at least the lines of conflict were clear. There were clearly defined roles and the opinion-forming role of politics was also clear. Now the landscape looks very different. The formal power of politics certainly still exists, but its influence over society and its role in human life has decreased in several respects. Many people have found that earlier certainties are no longer reliable and that "development" in the world of politicians is the same as the loss of opportunities and meaning. There is also an ongoing trend here which simultaneously evokes both hope and mistrust.

One way to understand the emergence of the extreme parties as depicted in this book is to consider them as reactions to what is taking place. The world that grew out of the ruins of World War II created conditions for an exceptional rate of development. Economic growth surpassed all records and optimism for the future flourished. Growth occurred not only on the financial markets: the domains of politics also



grew. In Western European countries, the welfare state, in the sense of a comprehensive tax-funded public sector, became both the means and the goal for all policies in the '50s and '60s.

Development was not consistent however. At the same time as the European countries obtained the resources and opportunities to increasingly provide for welfare for their populations, a process was also initiated shortly after the war ended in 1945 to gradually transfer political power from the national level to the European level. In retrospect, it is possible to understand the ambition. The dream of a united Europe, a political and economic integration which would prevent further conflict on European soil was understandable, given that many of the responsible decision-makers had their own experience of the horrors of two world wars. For many, the nation-state symbolised the cradle of the chauvinism that has caused such unimaginable devastation in Europe and it was hoped that new wars could be prevented, especially by integrating France and Germany.

It did not take long before European cooperation bore fruit. For a long time, the EU played an important role in efforts to remove trade barriers and promote economic growth. But no matter how successful parts of the project may appear, it is difficult to ignore the growing lack of popular support. European voters have only rarely had an opportunity to express their feelings on the speed and extent of the integration process. Nor has there been any real ambition among the politicians to let Europeans decide how and in what direction the EU should develop. Rather, the architects of the European project established early in the transition process from a national system to a supranational order that a provincial form of internationalism, Europatism, was far too delicate to be tested on the people.

When we now see how the distance between politicians and voters is growing in Europe, the story of how and by what means the EU developed is an important part of the effort to understand what is happening. In their enthusiasm to unite Europe and relegate nationalism to the history books, the legislators forgot one of the most important prerequisites for a functioning democracy - that all politics is ultimately local. This glaring omission is now demanding its price.

In light of this, it would be beneficial for the parties who are sceptical and critical of the EU to gain power. Europe's current crisis is the result not only of a political reluctance to reform the member countries' economic and political system, but to a growing extent also the result of an excessively driven process of political integration in the EU. Although Europe's prosperity is the result of both mutual trade between individual states, who challenged each other in economic and institutional competition, European cooperation is now increasingly

being driven in a strongly centralist direction. Democracy and market principles are being forced to take a back seat while grandiose plans for a United States of Europe, which can act in tandem with the U.S. and China, are being realised.

But for a growing section of the European electorate, it is the extreme parties such as the Danish People's Party and Jobbik who have the solution to Europe's problems. By advocating what can be likened to national parks, communities closed to foreign influence and competition, the parties are holding out the prospect that there is a credible defence against the way society is evolving. If only we were able to close our borders to the rest of the world, we could recreate a society where life seemed simpler and less threatening, is their message to the voters. The risk is obvious that such a policy, rather than making countries richer, would instead undermine the conditions for entrepreneurship and competitiveness. The poverty that would result from this introversion would impact hardest on the very voters who voted for these parties.

This is a development that both EU critics and EU supporters have reason to fear. A fair criticism of the political and economic integration process within the EU must not turn into a repudiation of the vision of a liberal and open society. Europe deserves better than that.

## Notes

- 1 Körösenyi (1999), p. 55
- 2 Ibid., p. 58.
- 3 Brun Pedersen & Juul Christiansen (2010)

*The above text is the final chapter of EUROPE DESERVES BETTER, A Study of Extremist Parties in Hungary, the Netherlands and Denmark, by Philip Lerulf and Jan Å. Johansson. ISBN 978-91-637-5554-5.*

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# Armand Petitjean, French Ecological Pioneer

INTERVIEWED BY DIANA SCHUMACHER

**T**he French editor and philosopher, who retreated into the country in Southern France after deliberately giving up a successful business career and dazzling literary fame in Paris, has in fact been one of the major influences on French and European ecological and environmental developments

*Diana:* After your exceptional background and your astonishingly successful early career as a writer, what made you retreat into silence, and become a recluse?

*Armand:* Three shocks, during the Second World War, changed the course of my life. In June 1940, when I was 27, the collapse of France under German invasion. To this war I had committed myself entirely. I resented the surrender of my country as a personal disaster: how could the France of the *Marseillaise* bow down to Hitler? Auschwitz hurt even deeper: how could one of our most cultured countries be led to such a crime against humanity? The bomb on Hiroshima came as the final blow: how could the West, herald of human rights, use science for mass extermination? Sure, I had been acclaimed as a young writer, one of the hopes of French literature. But then, in 1946, I couldn't think of going on with the promotion of products of my own mind. To try to answer these fundamental questions would be the quest of my life.

And mind you, these are not things of the past. In sheer will to power and ferocity, Stalin, and then Mao, have surpassed Hitler. On our television, we can see images as awful as those of Auschwitz - children starving to death in the Third World - and then turn on to Madonna. The atomic risk for our species, far from being reduced by the end of the Cold War, is disseminated through the whole planet. And now, trapped into a world of our own making, with artificial life, artificial intelligence, and "virtual reality" shows, we are taking the final step of our sleep-walking to the void. Genetic engineering

is heading towards the fabrication of man by himself, severed from all ties with "God", by whatever name you call the Initiator of all things, with Nature, His manifestation in the universe, and with the Spirit, the ordering principle of Nature's Revolution.

*Diana:* I know that your life's work is devoted *exclusively to thinking and writing about ecology* and to bringing together leading scientists and thinkers around this theme. Could you please tell us about your early background and how your own thinking evolved, from a remarkably successful literary career when you were young to becoming one of the earliest ecologists in Europe?

*Armand:* I was born in Mons (Belgium) on the eve of the First World War, of a Walloon mother and a father from the Vosges. I still dream of my childhood - especially between the ages of five and ten in Santiago, Chile, where we then lived - as a Paradise: "the green Paradise of children's loves". I was the only son (with a sister) of a mother who was love herself, and the "sunny boy" and "little man" of an English governess.

As for my father, he was the most remarkable man I ever met. He could risk and win in all of his business enterprises in Europe and South America; and at the end of his career, when he built from scratch this jewel of perfumes and cosmetics, Lancôme, he was called "Armand le Magnifique" (after the nickname of Lorenzo de Medici).

Under his shadow, I was getting accustomed to being first everywhere: at home, with the others (especially with girls), and at school. But then came the crisis of adolescence, which in my case was overwhelming. I was beginning to judge this father whom I so admired. About things and people, his opinions changed according to his interests; even in his radiance, he was self-centred; he knew no other law than his own. I had no religious education whatever, but one fateful day it struck me as an arrow from the blue. Frail as I was at 16, I faced my father in his full mightiness, shouted out at him: "There are things you shall never understand". I would from then on seek for a meaning in my life other than his. There is a transcendent order, above all of our interests and only by bowing to this can one hope for fulfilment. Till the eve of his death, when we made peace forever, my father kept wondering how he had begotten a son, not without talents, who did not care for promoting himself.

This was not the easiest way to adulthood. With no values that I could respect, either in a declining society, or in a magnificent father, I slammed the door at the *École Normale*, the greenhouse of French intellectuals, and my total revolt would have led me to no man's

land, and the borderline of the abyss ... However, I did put to use my literary talents, and they were quickly acclaimed. My first essay, written both in English and French during my military service, was "On the situation of James Joyce". I still think of him as the great prophet of our times. And my first book, *Imagination and Realisation*, a savage attack on all classical ways of thinking, earned me the title of "the Rimbaud of philosophy". I then could have all the success I didn't really care for, with writing, with journalism, with young and less young beauties.

However, something was missing in this literary fiesta: I was a rebel without a cause. War was at our doors, and we were not preparing. I could see it coming - I had been caught on the spot at Danzig, from which I narrowly escaped. I appointed myself, in articles and meetings, as a sort of herald of France, drawing much applause and little following. When war did break out, I rushed to the front at Lorraine, in high spirits.

*Diana:* Knowing that you are now a man of peace and ecology, I can't quite understand how you could then put all your faith and energy into war.

*Armand:* You know, I wasn't exactly what you would call a peaceful young man. Peace came to me the hard way, through war for my country (or my ideal of my country), and then war with myself.

This war I fought as best I could, in the front line of infantry, where I was wounded; in the underground, where I was investigated by the Gestapo; and again, though invalided through my wound, with the Moroccan shock troops of the French army during the last phase of the war. I lived through the miseries and thrills of fighting - the thrill of risking one's life and don't remember ever hating. But I did once fall into anger and made the worst blunder of my life.

In May 1940, after days and nights of *Blitzkrieg*, our platoon was still holding its position, against waves of Germans shouting: "Surrender!" Few of us survived. All of a sudden, a hand-grenade fell into our shelter. I managed to send it back, but it exploded just out of my hand, tore it apart, and with my blood gushing out, I swooned into a strange sort of bliss: this, I dreamed, is my wedding to France.

The awakening was a nightmare. Through the windows of my hospital in Biarritz, I could see the Flood coming: half of the population fleeing on the roads, two million prisoners of war, "the best army in the world" smashed in five weeks.

"The moment of shame" I called it, in a widely circulated paper. Malraux wrote to me: "You are the only one who tried to say

something". But one cannot live long with shame, one looks for scapegoats.

Mine turned into anger and despising: anger against all those who had led us, unprepared, to such shame; despising of those who were captured without fighting. Possessed by my ideal of France, I acted on one single idea: to rehabilitate her through her youth, restore her to her glory. Blind to the fact that since June 1941 the whole world, outside France, was at war, deaf to the plight of my countrymen under German occupation, I was sliding from normal, if exalted patriotism to extremes of nationalism.

I wrote violent articles, and a collection of essays, *Preliminary Fights*, which shocked all parties, alienated me from our intelligentsia, but found a wide hearing in the vanguard of our youth, burning for action after the stunning defeat. I would have led them to nowhere, or worse, to a French kind of Jacobin totalitarianism ...

Fortunately. in October 1942, the Allied landing in North Africa, followed by the total occupation of France, led me to more sobering thoughts. I went underground, the only decent place now for action, and from there managed to channel this youth towards the "service of protection from the events of war". This meant, for thousands and thousands of them, going out under more and more severe Allied bombing, to rescue the civilian population. From adolescent defiance, they thus turned to human solidarity, and discovered for themselves the "moral equivalent of war". I believe that today, when military conscription is falling off in the West, a sort of Civil Service ought to be organized, in prevision of the social and ecological disasters which are to be expected, At the same time I got those who were ready to fight trained by the Organization of Armed Resistance; and they were the only ones, together with the young Communists, to take an active part in the liberation of Paris.

But this was no excuse for my blunders until October 1942, and on returning to civil life I first had to come to peace with myself. How could I have craved for a new France, in a more than-half-occupied country?

But there was more to it than a political mistake. Who did I think I was, to despise my fellow-countrymen? After all, by refusing to fight, perhaps they knew better: a popular investment in the Second World War, after the carnage of the First, would have bled France white. I had to learn that dedication to a cause by no means justifies it; that by wanting to make it sacred one falls into the trap of totalitarianism; and that, by sacrificing oneself to it, one may still be inflating one's ego. I had forgotten my challenge to my father .. ,

This I tried to explain, in 1946, in my last published book: *Mise a nu* (Stripping Bare). It fell completely flat, and so I was led into silence. The taming of one's ego is a demanding task, and can only be pursued in the secret of the heart,

*Diana:* What did you do during this time to earn a living? and how did you manage to settle in the Cévennes?

*Armand:* Well, I had to make two parts of my life. The first, the "secret" one, was for my "Quest". I never relented, even in days of despair. Part two went to journalism, under a cover name: editing and reporting for *Constellation*. This magazine, with a sale of more than 600,000 copies competed with the French edition of *The Reader's Digest*. Thanks to it, I could travel throughout the world, study the common interests of ordinary people in their different cultures, and learn what kind of useful information our public could accept.

However, with Collette, my new wife, an unfailing source of inspiration, I was longing for more time and peace for my research. The chance came to me through my father. I knew, since my teens, that I would never follow in his steps. But now, in 1961, after hoisting up Lancôme to the summits of luxury, he was running it down into debts. One day, as I was finishing a paper for *Constellation*, his bankers rang me up: "Lancôme is on the red list of the Banque de France. It is a family business, and if you don't try to take over, we will cut credits in the next 48 hours." I had no choice - this would have meant ruin for all of us and found myself at the head of a company of which I knew practically nothing, with the two billion francs of income, and two billions of debts. The challenge excited me and I was rather pleased, when, after less than three years, I had doubled the income and repaid the bankers.

But I knew all along that I could not be distracted from my Quest. And when my father, who had first beamed at the return of the "prodigal son", could not bear any more to see me succeeding and successful at his desk, we decided to sell Lancôme, for a good price, to l'Oréal. This allowed me, together with Collette and Clara, the child of our love, to prepare our landing in the Cévennes, the farthest possible from Paris and its pollutions of all kinds. And so in 1970, close to my 60s, began my full life with the friends, the animals, the vegetables, and of course the books I care for, in our haven of peace, La Baume.

*Diana:* Now returning to your seclusion after the war, how did you proceed in your research?

Armand: For years and years, alone, with no other guide than Conscience, I tried to pick out the red thread, in the so brilliant tapestry of our civilization, which led to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. I had to find a clue, through the whole history of our religion, our science and our mores, through its divergent assessments by our philosophers, and through the different interpretations, Jewish and Christian, of our sacred book, the Bible.

I then compared my findings with the development of the other main types of society, be they older than ours, such as India and China, or totally alien to our sense of history and time, as the “primitive” ones.

I began to look at the West with the eyes of its competitors, its contemptors, its victims. And I came to the conclusion that our civilization is unique in our religion, which from the start branded all others as idolators; unique in our science, which for three centuries has derided as superstitious all other approaches to this world; unique in our pretence to be universal and to impose this singularity on all other peoples, allowing them human rights while chasing them out of existence. “

All other societies either found a balance, at whatever level of development, between the natural resources at their disposal, their use of these, and their population - or they disappeared. Not so with us. Since our beginnings, we have turned against Nature our very means to come to an understanding with her: a brain more powerful than that of all other species, a reflective mind, in which Nature, for the first time in her evolution can mirror herself, and human conscience for transcending Nature and answering the call of the Spirit.

By doing so, we have acquired a power over this world, of wealth and welfare, and of rights for ourselves no other society dreamed of - but at the expense of Nature at hand, and of all other cultures. The whole planet, from Gaia’s biosphere to the starving children of the Third World, is groaning under the impact of Western civilization.

To build what would be our ultimate folly, a world entirely of our own making, our hightech is grasping all Nature’s available resources, and the invisible hand of the market, all those of people of other cultures. If in the few next generations we don’t reach a balance between ourselves and Nature, and between ourselves and the others, we shall make an end of our existence as the black hole of our Earth.

*Diana:* We know that you were one of the founding fathers of ecology in France and that you translated and published some of the first



ecological books here. When did this interest develop?

*Armand:* I was acquainted long since with ecology as a science among others, which studied the relationships of vegetable and animal species to their habitat. When it turned to the impact of our human activities of all kinds on our environment, this came closer to my interests.

The spark that set me on fire, in 1968, was the uprising of the students in Western Europe and America. In France they shook all structures of authority, in public, social and personal life, and de Gaulle himself had to bow to "the mob". But what they were shouting for was "Licence for everything" - while there is no such thing, in Nature, as a free lunch. By contrast, in the States, respected ecologists such as Paul Ehrlich and Barry Commoner spoke out on the campus. They not only supported the students in challenging the establishment and its war against Vietnam. They warned that we all share the responsibility, through our way of life, for the degradation of our environment. If we can't stop our plundering of natural resources, our economic growth, and the population explosion in the world, we are heading for disaster.

This, I immediately felt, could mean the beginning of an answer to my Quest. For if, in the present state of our politics, our ethics and our religion, we can find no safeguards against the explosion of Western power, then Nature is going to impose them Upon us. And here ecology steps in. Its very name says it: ecology points to the logos, the wise administration of Our *oikos*, Our dwelling and building space in the universe. By studying and respecting the conditions Nature puts to the development of Our biologic, psychic and spiritual being, we may still have a chance to reverse our catastrophic trend.

*Diana:* This was 25 years ago. How, after the impulse of 1968, did you want to go to the public with this extended idea of ecology?

*Armand:* My first idea was to edit for the French, who couldn't care less for their environment, such solid works as those of Paul Ehrlich, Rene Dubos, Sir Fraser Darling .... To find a publisher for the first collection of ecology in France was like running a marathon trial.

I finally picked out one, with Fayard, who because he was dying of cancer was ready to take the risk.

Then I saw that, with the Conference of Stockholm making headlines, ecology was quickly moving from purely environmental considerations to economic, social and political ones. It was

beginning to be a new way of assessing our relation to this world: by feedback, rather than by command.

To spread this new way of thinking, and to show its convergence in many quarters, I remember getting on the same platform, for my first and only show on television, people who seemed worlds apart like Aurelio Peccei, the founder of the Club of Rome, and Ivan Illich, the first speaker for the Third World; Bertrand de Jouvenel, the initiator of political ecology, and David Brower, the father of the Sierra Club

....

With a solid publisher, Le Seuil, I began a new collection called *Equilibres* (Balances) with three bestsellers: *The Limits to Growth* (the first report to the Club of Rome); E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* (for which we found no French title: petit is still too small for our dreams of grandeur); and Edward Goldsmith's *Blueprint for Survival*. By the way, I remember pleading by letter to Teddy for a bit more patience: He was announcing the end of the world for the next three years. I received his splendid reply: "I don't want a single word of the *Blueprint* to be changed." This was 20 years ago. In 1977 some of the leading figures of European ecology met at La Baume to found the ECOROPA association, and I was asked to join the group, *Science-Culture*, probably the best think-tank in France on human ecology. For five years they have published a bi-monthly review, *Transversales*, where I regularly explain my views - or at least, the less unacceptable of them.

*Diana:* I even hear that, after so many years without publishing anything yourself, in the same way as Schumacher in *Guide for the Perplexed*, you are now distilling your life's work in a definitive volume. What brought about this change of mind?

*Armand;* Well, also in 1977, the chairman of Le Seuil, an old friend of mine, called on me for a rather serious briefing: "It's all very well to promote the ideas of others. But it is now your duty to say what you think." This would have reminded me, if I had ever forgotten it, that I was going to die with my life's labour lost, or at least unfinished. But Shakespeare said it in three words:

"Ripeness is all". Perhaps I did not feel ripe enough at the time - and perhaps I am not even now, for what has to be said. Anyway, I won't be bothering my readers, if any, too long. I will be happy if, eventually, I have managed to compress into 200 pages my 20,000 sheets of notes over half a century.

*Insh'allah!*

Ever since it was founded the New European has been Green minded. However, it has kept its distance from the Green parties as many of the leaders have had a fundamentally different view of how to achieve objectives in Europe.

They believe that advances should be made supergovernmentally rather than intergovernmentally. The former makes the European ideal an ever closer union. This must lead to a superstate and superpower. Studies of history tell us that such monoliths are prone to lead to imperialism and economic warfare; thereafter one false step can bring an ugly collision with devastating consequences for the planet.

Now it seems that many Greens have veered away from the ideal of an ever closer union. In particular they have found how the great multinational corporations have such an influence with the European Union and that no change of policy is achieved unless they agree to it.

The TTIP negotiations between the EU Commission and the US Administration are being heavily influenced by the big corporations while everything is kept secret from the general public.

From now on we hope the New European will be able to voice the concerns of the green parties. We want to show how international cooperation can succeed in protecting our environment. The necessary policies will require new laws and more expenditure. Experience in the last 40 years has shown that these can be more readily available by the nation states. Our belief in this alternative is grounded upon the principle that the essence of democracy is the diffusion of power. That principle demands international rather than supranational cooperation

Moreover, the succession of EU Treaties have concentrated ever more power in Brussels, so that now more than 100 areas of policy have been transferred to its supra governmental institutions.

None of this has really been of benefit to Green objectives.

On the other hand the Economic Commission for Europe, an Agency of the United Nations, and the Council of Europe, neither of which have any formal connection with the EU, have achieved more for the environment since 1957, when the ECE agreed to its first program for the environment. As these two organisations work intergovernmentally ordinary people in Europe can feel they can have some influence over what is decided.

There have been several occasions when an ordinary individual who is articulate and able to give his time to a cause has succeeded in influencing the government of his country, which is something that is really impossible if he or she is just one of some 500 million in the EU.

A growing number of government activists appreciate that the EU is top heavy We hope that the leaders of the Green Parties on the continent will begin to agree.

# NEW EUROPEAN



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