



Europe's Struggle for Survival

EUROPE IS DYING AND NOBODY IS SHOUTING:
"LONG LIVE EUROPE"

SINCE THERE IS NO EUROPEAN PEOPLE,
LET EYES OF EUROPE CREATE ONE.

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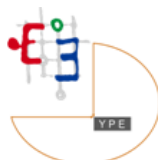
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By Marc Guiot

If Europe is not capable of providing material aid to its member countries most weakened by the covid crisis¹⁹, if after the pandemic it is not able to present all its states with an effective economic recovery programme, then there will be no Europe, because the street will be responsible for undoing the founding treaties, at best through the ballot box and at worst through insurrectionary demonstrations.

Giuseppe Conte the Italian Prime Minister on Friday 27 March 2020
Old Heidegger confided to Der Spiegel magazine *that only a god would be capable of saving us*. The now much decried but brilliant Roger Garaudy thought that *only a prophet would eventually rescue us*. As for Edgar Morin, the Nestor of the Wise Men in Europe, he believes that only *the unexpected* will help us out and he cites the turning point of Stalingrad in 1942 as an example. And here comes this *unpredictability* in the form of a virus with a Latin name which, like Athena, emerged helmeted from the thigh of Jupiter and everything is unhinged, upside down.

As a European by heart and conviction, I am dismayed to note that the Europe of the couple Michel/von der Leyen is even more ineffective than in its Juncker, Barosso or Prodi version, and I am not even mentioning former Jacques Santerre.





Help us, Jacques Delors, come back quickly for they don't know what they're doing.

But what crime have these Italians committed so that more than tens of thousands of dead are not enough to attract the undivided support of their European peers? And what more is needed for the word "greatness" to be substituted for "rigor" this time around?
(Béatrice Delvaux in Le Soir)

For the past few weeks, bans and dogmas have been falling one after the other. The Stability Pact? Out! The Maastricht criteria, the 3% deficit and the 60% debt to GDP bar that must not be exceeded: gone!

The German Parliament, who would have thought it, voted almost unanimously to approve to increasing public deficits and, in the wake of this, decided on the largest budget increase in the country's history.

Jacques Delors, 94 years old, has come out of a his twenty-year-silence. The mythical President of the Commission has published a murderous sentence: "*The climate between the Heads of State and Government and the lack of solidarity put the Union in mortal danger.* »

2 We have for decades experienced a German-style Europe ruled by Angela, who has no angelic charisma other than by name. Fallen angel, Merkel turned away from Europe, leaving *carte blanche* to the French Macron who, as Jupiterian king of the chessboard, hastened to place his pawns: queen Ursula at the Commission, the Lagarde tower at the European Bank and the bishop Charles Michel at the Council. The game, to say the least, got off to a very bad start. White is paralyzed when the illiberal blacks (Orban in the lead) advance everywhere and influence the game to their advantage. The *Corona Circus* is forcing Brussels to get down on its knees, the major migratory crisis that is coming and above all the financial collapse and the recessio/depression are likely to deliver the final blow to a





moribund morbid Europe that has stopped fighting to assert its civilisational fate.

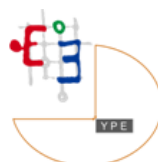
We are living in an era of *unpredictability*, or *uncertainty* to put it in the words of Prigogine and Stengers. Europe is dying and nobody except Guy Verhofstadt is shouting *long live Europe!*

Will Europe have an upsurge or, as the first Italian minister Conte was suggesting, or otherwise there will be no Europe at all because the street will be undoing the founding treaties, at best through the ballot box and at worst through rebellious demonstrations.

This wishful breakthrough will either be ethical by nature or it will not be. The illiberal populist nationalists and identitarians are waiting for their hour to come lurking in the shadows. If such would be are often virulent polemicists, they always prove to be poor managers, especially when it is essential, as today, to manage uncertainty. They will inevitably force Europe into decline.

Paul Valery wrote at the end of the Great War *We civilizations now know that we are mortal*. He had obviously Europe in mind. He understood that Europe was beginning its long decline- *der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Spengler)- with the Treaty of Versailles.: " *Will Europe become what it actually is : a small cape of the Asian continent, or will Europe remain what it seems, that is to say: the precious part of the terrestrial universe, the pearl of the sphere, the brain of a vast body?*

3According to the Belgian philosopher Lambros Couloubaritsis, the post-war Europe of the daring founding fathers is the most daring and ambitious idea in history after the creation of the Olympic Games in 776 BC (when, with the Olympic Games, the Greeks replaced bloodthirsty and warlike competition with sporting emulation) and the founding of the the Lodges in 1717 (to put an end



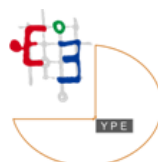


to the bloodthirsty miseries of the wars of religion and to establish tolerance, debate and democratic dynamics).

In a subtle article published in *Ulenspiegel*, professor Couloubaritsis explains that a multicultural, community oriented and identity-focused Europe, that is to say, one that is willingly centrifugal, will only be saved thanks to a true intercultural dynamic, the only one capable of overcoming the terrible tensions that are tearing it apart. I definitely support this thesis and I am not giving much thought to the future of my beloved Europe, which has still not understood that it cannot really exist without a European public opinion, which is the only entity capable of creating such thing as a European people. The *Corona Circus* crisis shows that an every man for himself attitude rules out collective effort, which is extremely sad and dangerous. Eyes of Europe could have largely alleviated this, in particular by taking over from the schools that were closed due to general lockdown

4 If there is such thing as is an American people it is because it has been forged over decades and centuries in the melting pot of the American dream which today is turning sour into a nightmarish Trumpean caricature. But there is still no such thing as a European people. And that is the reason why since 1997 we have been working on building the self-active platform called Eyes of Europe, a kind of virtual Erasmus as a pan-European dialogue of all *not against all* (Hobbes) *but with all*. Since there is no European people, let's create one with the help of Eyes of Europe. Europe is dying and I do not hear anyone, anywhere shouting long live Europe!

.5 We must acknowledge with sadness and anger that in the long and painful Eyes of Europe saga we have been constantly rebuffed in the many contacts we have established over more than twenty years with high-ranking European Union officials who have on various occasions kindly received us but who have never supported us financially to give a concrete shape to our project of a self-actualised teaching





platform which would have proved most useful first of all in creating a genuine European public opinion among young people.

Subsequently, and more importantly, it might have been capable of taking over from the schools that have closed doors, abandoning the youth of Europe to itself and its own fate.

It is clear that Europe has been disappointing everyone, especially its young citizens, and essentially teenagers. Most consider that :

Urasula von der Leyen and Charles Michel do not have the stature to take the continent by the hand. The European Union is doing its best, but even in this crisis it is largely behind the times. It's not because the coronavirus is quarantining a few hundred million Europeans that politics is no longer being done. (Knack)

6 PEDRO SANCHEZ: "EUROPE IS GAMBLING ITS FUTURE"

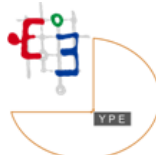
Europe is experiencing its greatest crisis since the Second World War. Europe is facing a war different from those we have managed to avoid over the last seventy years: a war against an invisible enemy that is testing the future of the European project.

Because solidarity among Europeans is a key principle of the Union's Treaties. And it is at times like these that it proves most evidently.

Without solidarity there will be no cohesion whatsoever ; without cohesion there will be disaffection and the credibility of the European project will be seriously jeopardised.

Europe must build a war economy and promote European resistance, reconstruction and recovery. This must be done within the framework of a "new Marshall Plan" with the support of all the common institutions.

Europe was built on the ashes of destruction and conflict. It has learnt the lessons of history and understood something very simple:





if we do not win the battle together, we will all end up losing the war against the virus.

We have to stop thinking small otherwise we will fail.

In the coming months, it will be inevitable that Member States will accumulate more debt in order to deal with the consequences of a health crisis, but also an economic and social crisis. If the virus knows no borders, neither do the financing mechanisms.

The huge challenge we are facing is unprecedented. It requires a united, unified, extreme and ambitious response to preserve our economic and social system to protect our citizens.

Spaniards have always stood up for and protected the European project. Now is the time for reciprocity. With us, with Italy and with each of the 27 countries of the Union.

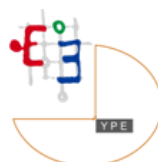
It is high time we acted in solidarity: to create a new debt pooling mechanism, to act as a single block for the acquisition of basic health products, to establish coordinated cybersecurity strategies and to prepare a major plan of attack to ensure the swift and steady recovery of the continent.

Millions of Europeans support the Union's project. Let us not forsake them. Let us give them reasons to continue to believe in it. It is now or never: Europe's future is at stake.

Pedro Sanchez, head of the Spanish government

7 « AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS, WE WILL NEED TO FIGHT THOSE WHO MAY COMPELL US TO DO THINGS AS WE DID THEM BEFORE » Cynthia Fleury

The difficult period we are going through should be conducive to a reinvention of our societies. (Isabelle Stengers and Cynthia Fleury,





Newsletter La Première). *It is essential to encourage and support a sustainable citizen action force,"* states Cynthia Fleury, the rising French philosopher-psychoanalyst.

"How are we going to use national and international tools to manage future crises?" "The only viable option for reinventing tomorrow's world," she suggests, "is to create something new and fairer so that tomorrow becomes more enjoyable.

This means inventing new ways of working, of teaching above all, of protecting health and promote research. »

At the moment, we need a powerful lever to finally create and foster a strong European identity, a lever to revive love for democracy. We are in the process of rediscovering that collective attitudes protect us better from individual vulnerabilities.

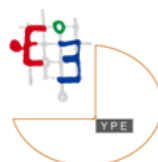
This lever among many seems definitely be Eyes of Europe, the self-active educative platform that aims not only to transmit to our European youth the quintessence of the European cultural heritage (the humanities) but also to organise a radically new virtual agora, a kind of real-time dialogue in English of all young citizens on a pan-European scale on all the burning issues that concern them and the challenges that are threatening humanity in its survival.

*" We are at a decisive turning point for the future of the world as we know it. It is basically a question of redefining the **meaning** we want to give to our way of living together on this earth.*

We really need to bring to power a sustainable citizen action capacity.

We will have to fight those who are already telling us that we must keep doing what we've been doing for ages. "

We need to re-appropriate the capacity and the power of futuring our lives and environment. We are facing a period where we feel both





tremendously connected to others and terribly isolated.

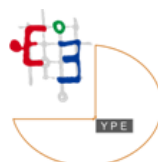
It's high time we refused to find normal what is presented to us as normal.

Can we accept that those who govern us should lie as shamelessly as they do with total impunity ? This situation must definitely end.

We need a culture of "no impunity » for those who make cruel and abnormal situations seem acceptable. Things must be done collectively.
"

Eyes of Europe is precisely one of those levers, possibly the most effective one, that will allow us to finally move from the individual isolation of citizens to a collective perception of our European society by learning to live together differently. It is nothing less than a revolution, or more exactly a metamorphosis as Morin says, a new beginning as Hannah Arendt dreamed of it.

8 NOAM CHOMSKY ON CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND WHAT'S AT RISK?





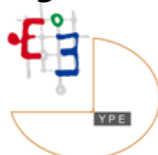
The social, political, psychological, cultural and economic impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will only completely reveal themselves after a long time- at least decades- from now, but they have already begun to change our global human civilisation.

The cause of this pandemic, many of our government's humongous failure in containing the spread of the virus, and our fragile health care structure are questions that have to be thought about deeply and sincerely, since the very survival of humanity depends on it. The ongoing pandemic, accelerating climate change, ongoing ecological collapse, the economic crisis, the historic levels of economic inequality, and the rise of far right governments around the world are signs of a failed system.

Where we go from here is the question that will determine the future of human civilisation or, at least, whether it will have one. One person who's been raising these issues for a long time is Noam Chomsky.

9 How do you look at the current corona virus crisis? is it an unprecedented historical event, is it something which surprised you?

NC: *In fact, today there are two immense threats that we are facing. One is the growing threat of nuclear war, which has been exacerbated by tearing what's left of the arms control regime, and the other of course, is the growing threat of global warming. Both threats can be dealt, but there isn't a lot of time and the coronavirus is a horrible plague and can have terrifying consequences but there will be recovery, while for the others, there won't be a recovery- it's finished. If we don't deal with them, we're done. Last year it was 2 minutes to midnight. If we are leaving our fate to sociopathic buffoons, we're finished- and that's coming close. Trump is the worst, that's because of US Power, which is overwhelming. The crisis, the civilizational crisis of*





the West, at this point is devastating. If we want to deal with the crisis we have to move to something like wartime mobilization.

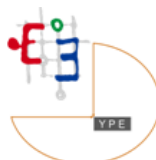
We need a social mobilisation to try to overcome the short-run crisis.

This *global social mobilisation* can realistically be envisaged through the implementation of the self-educational platform Eyes of Europe.

The corona virus is very serious, we can't underestimate it, but we have to remember that it's a small fraction of major crisis, that are coming along. They may not disrupt life to the extent that the corona virus has done today, but they will disrupt life to the point of making the species un-survivable and not in the very distant future. So, we have many problems to deal with- immediate ones, like coronavirus is serious and has to be dealt with and much vastly larger ones, they're looming.

If we overcome somehow, there will be options. The options range from the installation of highly authoritarian brutal States all the way over to radical reconstruction of society and more humane terms concerned with human needs of private profit. There is the possibility that people will organize, become engaged, as many are doing, and bring about a much better world, which will also confront the enormous problems, that we're facing right down the road, the problems of nuclear war, which is closer than it's ever been and the problems of environmental catastrophe from which there is no recovery once we've gotten to that stage, that it's not far in distance, unless we act decisively.

There is a way to proceed and a method to avoid these disasters : it is to eventually involve and mobilise the collective intelligence of citizens, especially the young. It is to finally create a critical and



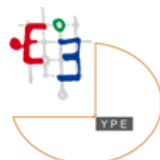


committed European opinion. In other words, now is the ideal moment to give a chance to the self-active educational platform Eyes of Europe which is capable of channeling in real time the collective intelligence of the youth in the form of a permanent dialogue of all with all on all these issues arbitrated by teacher-moderators specially trained for this mission. It could even have been used during all these weeks of confinement as an alternative to school education. It is not a question of replacing the school by Eyes of Europe. We must keep our school organised by the States and increasingly by the regions and cultural communities.

So it's a critical moment of human history, not just because of the coronavirus, but to bring us, should bring us to awareness of the profoundly flawed, deep, dysfunctional characteristics of the whole socio-economic system, which has to adjust if there's going to be a survivable future.

What would be your advice to activists, students, workers, how to organize in this new situation? And could you perhaps tell us whether you see a hope, that instead of going into a global authoritarianism, this open historic situation might go in a radical transformation of the world, which would be green, equal, just and full of solidarity?

*First of all, we should bear in mind that in the past few years there has been a form of social isolation, which is very damaging. Now you go into a McDonalds and take a look at a bunch of teenagers sitting around the table, having a hamburger. What you see is, two conversations are going on. One sort of shallow discussion among them, another the one, that each one is having on his cell phone, with some remote individual, who is a friend. This has atomized and isolated people to an extraordinary extent. The Thatcher principle, that there was no society, has escalated. **The misused social media** has turned people into very isolated creatures, especially young people. There are actually universities, now in the United States, where the sidewalks*



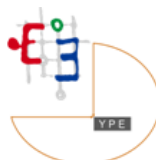


*have plaques on them saying "look up". Because every kid is walking around, is glued to his cell phone. That's a form of self-induced social isolation, which has been very harmful. We're now on a situation of real social isolation. **It has to be overcome by recreating, social bonds in whatever way can be done, whatever kind that can be, helping people in need, contacting them, bringing people together as you can in the internet age, to join, consult deliberate to figure out answers to the problems that they face and work on them, which can be done, it's not face to-face communication, which for human beings is essential. We will be deprived of Face to-face communication for a while- you can put it on hold, find other ways and continue with it, and in fact, extend and deepen the activities carried out. It can be done.** And it must be done and henceforth it will be done by Eyes of Europe.*

10 ALL THAT CAN INDEED BE DONE BY EYES OF EUROPE.

Europe needs a new beginning dramatically. Eyes of Europe is definitely in a position to provide it. The human privilege of making new beginnings has challenged natural limits to the point of threatening the future of life itself. According to Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of the contemporary predicament, Promethean powers releasing processes with unfathomable consequences are being exercised in a society of beings too absorbed in consumption to take any responsibility for the human world or to understand their political capacities. Her object in thinking aloud was to encourage thought in others.

Only the experience of sharing a common world with others who look at it from different perspectives can enable us to see reality in the round and to develop a shared common sense. Without it, we are each driven back on our subjective experience, in which only our feelings, wants and desires have reality



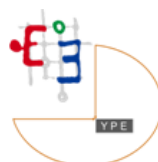


Since the gap between power and responsibility seems wider than ever, her reminder of the human capacity for action and her attempt *to think what we are doing* are particularly timely. Her message is for humanity to rise from its torpor, take charge of events and consciously make our own future.

The most heartening message of her *Human Condition* is *the miracle of beginning*, in sharp contrast to Heidegger's stress on our mortality : *Sein zum Tode*. New beginnings cannot be ruled out especially when society seems locked in stagnation. Her observations on the unpredictability of politics are being strikingly confirmed by the Corona crisis. Her analysis of action is unquestionably a message of hope in dark times.

When plural persons come together to bind themselves for the future, they become capable of throwing islands of predictability into the ocean of uncertainty enabling them to exercise power collectively, the open future is the becoming an arena of countless human initiatives

The vitality of a democracy is measured above all by the freedom of speech and information it allows in its public spaces. No important information should be withheld, especially when financial and personal interests are at stake. No important information should be withheld, especially when financial and personal interests are at stake. Just as scientific expertise should not replace democracy, especially in times of health crisis, it is not desirable to put public opinion out of the picture at a time when scientific expertise is required. According to Professor Jean Marc Ferry, *three poles of a deliberative "triangle" must be distinguished: scientific expertise, political decision-making and public opinion. Public opinion articulates what is desirable; scientific expertise states what is possible; and political decision-making achieves the compromise of reason between,*





on the one hand, what people would expect, demand or hope for and, on the other hand, what a possible consensus among scientific experts would consider feasible, here and now.

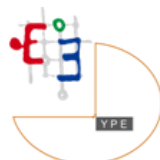
The aim is not to prevent decisions, but to inform them. This is part of what Jürgen Habermas calls "discussion ethics" Ethics of discussion is the first pillar on which EOE is based ; the second is ethics of responsibility.

In a context of crisis, but perhaps also to deal with climate change, who is the most legitimate? Public opinion, scientific experts or the politicians? The answer, since Max Weber, has been political responsibility according to what he calls "*ethics of responsibility*". This is second pillar whereby public opinion expressed, through Eyes of Europe is absolutely necessary as a regulatory element.

We are all currently asking ourselves what place the state is taking in our lives during this pandemic, when it asks us to follow its injunctions restricting our personal freedom.

We freely agree to restrain our freedoms. Self-limitation urges us to accept today the painful conditions of confinement and tomorrow perhaps the even more delicate conditions of *tracing* or even *tracking*. But this demands a prerequisite: a dialogue in the form of a virtual discussion, in particular of young citizens with young citizens, ideally on a pan-European scale. Eyes of Europe makes this necessary virtual dialogue possible, stimulates and organises it without influencing it. Eyes of Europe is therefore today more welcome than ever.

It is essential that our public, truly political freedom, the freedom of civic autonomy, should remain inalienable. Approaching this ideal requires a free functioning of our public agoras : the social networks. Freedom of information is the key to this. People want more transparency. E.o.E. as a virtual democratic agora is a lever and probably the best lever to help create what does not exist yet and





which is essential to create Europe: a European public opinion. Having said that, EoE is neither a substitute for European public opinion, nor for schools. Education must continue to be organised and provided by states and regions.

In the best of hypotheses, European E.o.E. education is added as a complement aimed at awakening young people's awareness of citizenship and Europe. The school with its buildings, its revered ancient facades, its teaching staff and its internal organisation must remain the school.

EoE will under no circumstances become a supplementary subject-matter to the curriculum. Not at all, rather it should be seen as an addition to stimulate a state of mind, critical thinking and more than anything, like the famous Erasmus programmes encouraging European citizenship, cross-cultural and resolutely cosmopolitan. E.o.E. is a virtual Erasmus open to all European teenagers.

In any case, in the short and long term, we need to invest in education today and in the years to come. This is the only way to protect economic and human capital. Everywhere, including in the rich countries of northern Europe, governments must maintain and increase the budgets allocated to education. The right to education is a right for all children, before, during and after a crisis. It does not stop during the crisis. Children and young people cannot wait. Their need to be educated and to learn has never been greater. No child should be left behind. But investing is not enough, it is essential to fund the right projects. Eyes of Europe is clearly one of the best opportunities in this respect.

MARC GUIOT

Brussels, 1 May 2020

