

The REAL Reason Europe Destroyed Itself | Dr. Ulrike Guérot

The Europeans are committing a form of collective self-destruction. And there is a very bad reason for that. Kyoto University Symposium 2026: "Geopolitics in the Time of Monsters" Keynote 2 (Presentation 6): Dr. Ulrike Guérot Ulrike Guérot examines Europe's political crisis, arguing that economic integration advanced without the democratic institutions needed to sustain it. She traces tensions between European independence, American influence, national governments and the euro, then questions the power of corporations, censorship and cultural decline. The discussion turns to colonialism, capitalism and the limits of liberalism. In conversation with the Kyoto audience, Guérot outlines her alternative: a European republic built around equal citizenship, democratic representation and a renewed commitment to the common good. Ulrike's Links: Official website: <https://www.ulrike-guerot.de/> Endlich Europa! (book discussed): <https://westendverlag.de/Endlich-Europa/2437> Kyoto Symposium programme: <https://neutralitystudies.com/events/kyoto-symposium-2026> Neutrality Studies Links: Neutrality Studies Substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Support Neutrality Studies: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Neutrality Studies shop: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Time Stamps 00:00 Europe in a time of monsters 06:12 Economic integration without political union 07:44 Support Neutrality Studies 10:02 European independence and American influence 20:30 The EU's institutional and democratic crisis 35:24 Corporate power, censorship and culture 50:46 Q&A: pragmatism, Americanization and austerity 1:08:28 Q&A: colonialism, liberalism and a European republic

#Ulrike Guérot

Yeah, I'm very happy to be here and to speak about Europe, although I wouldn't know these days what Europe still is, whether Europe is the EU, more than the EU. I mean, I think we can agree that Europe is in big trouble, whatever—economic, geostrategic, political, social, economic trouble all over the place. So, but first, yeah, okay. I think it was said yesterday, sort of the times of the monsters, yeah? And I just had a little reflection whether, if you go through European history, you couldn't make the point that basically at the beginning of nearly every century, we had something like 30 years of war.

Remember the religious wars in the 16th century? Remember 1618 to 1648, when we had the Austrian Peace? Remember the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the Napoleon era? So you may say—and then, obviously, last century, and now this century—I mean, the war is sort of sneaking into Europe, but it's not yet there. But you may say that at the beginning of each century,

there are troubled years, 10, 20 years, which are always the times of the monsters. So, just that as a reflection. So what you're looking here, just to say this upfront, is my beloved oldest map of Europe.

She's, she's Europe. She's Europa Regina, Prima Pars. So she is a queen. Regina means queen in Latin, and she is beautiful. And this is Mrs. Europe, the first map of 1534. So I like this map because it was found in Lower Austria when I was teaching in Lower Austria, and then the little town in which it was found built a little museum around the map, and I had the pleasure to inaugurate this little museum, which is a tiny house around the map, if you want. So, 1534, in the midst of religious wars, when Christianity split into Protestantism, Luther, and Catholicism, basically that was the first imagination of European entity and wholeness.

And it comes in the image of a female body, which I think is important. I will come back to this map, but just while I speak, what are you looking at? You are looking at the queen, the Regina of Europe. And I think it's important to say that there were, throughout the centuries, many attempts to unite Europe, and probably the last attempt failed with Charles V in the 16th century. And because he failed in uniting his empire, basically he went to a monastery. So he was very sad that he couldn't unite, that he couldn't give a political structure to the wholeness of Europe. So just to say that now, 500 years later, we are still coping with unifying the continent in a political structure that apparently doesn't work.

Nobody says, or is pretending, nor am I, that the EU is a structure that makes Europe work and function. Start with this: there is a long centuries-long struggle for uniting Europe in a political structure, and we never came there in Europe. In a way, it's a disaster because we are a very rich continent, a very smart continent, many good universities, many smart people. But during centuries, we couldn't give to Mrs. Regina a political institutional form or a body that is functioning. If we say that the EU is not an appropriate body that is functioning for this part of the world. So now we are talking here about geopolitics in times of monsters, the global order and international perceptions. Well, the first thing is to say: is there any perception of Europe out there these days?

I mean, I'd like to ask my Chinese colleagues or my American colleagues. The Americans would say, 20 years ago, Europe is going down the toilet. So I know that the Americans give a, sorry to say, damn shit about Europe. That's it, sort of standard opinion. I do think or feel that some other countries, like the Chinese, like the Russians, like the Iranians, are still looking a bit on Europe, and that the Latin Americans are also looking a bit on Europe, whether Europe as a continent can work it out and can come back to democracy and social and whatever. But the people who are actually looking on Europe, most of them are puzzled, because what is happening is not nice.

And between triumphalism that you may find in the U.S. and concern that you may find in other countries, the geopolitical perception of Europe is: there is a continent out there which, in essence, is a rich and wealthy continent, which doesn't get its act together, which can't, you know, I mean. And then the question is: will there be Europe in the multipolar world? Because what we are

describing here in this conference for three years and three days is basically the shift from Pax Americana to a multipolar world. And so the question is out there: will there be a politically and institutionally united and functioning Europe that is one pole in the multipolar world?

Or will Europe be staying with all these nation-states, small states, whatever, problem there, and will not become a pole of the multipolar world because it's just, you know, 3% of world population, falling apart, no more decent industry, and so on and so forth. So I will be arguing that obviously Europe should strive for becoming a different entity and make its way to a multipolar world. But for the moment, it doesn't seem that we are on a good track for this. So if we go here, we need to first—I will basically, in the first part of my presentation, address the mistakes that were made in the past 70 years of EU integration, then come to political economy of France, Germany, and some current European countries and their current difficulties.

And then at the end, talk a little bit about culture and what is really philosophically happening in Europe. So let's stay for the first part with what went wrong. More or less everything went wrong from the European institution of coal and steel. You know, I mean, the thing is, we did now this thing called European integration since 70 years, basically starting in 1950 and then with Jean Monnet and the whole thing. And then Treaty of Rome, '57. Then we did the single market. Then we did the currency thing, and so on and so forth. So there are 70 years of an institutional attempt of what we call in political science, neofunctionalism, which is that economic integration would trigger political integration.

70 years later, we come to think it never happened. So we had a lot of economic integration without ever doing real political integration. And this is basically the biggest flaw of a system that doesn't correspond to citizens, to citizens' interests, which is just a yellow submarine up there in Brussels, Belgium, which doesn't function in a way that we used to see institutions function. I mean, just to say that the European system's called *sui generis*. We invented this system of nation states being with a commission. It's totally unnatural for an institutional system called democracy.

#Pascal

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#Ulrike Guérot

And so there are many, many, many flaws. The interesting thing is that there were times and moments in Europe when we tried to cope with it. I was working for Jacques Delors in the '90s, and I can remember a time when Juncker and Helmut Kohl and Mitterrand and Jacques Delors—I mean, different tempi passati, different time in history, different men—all children of war, who had the ambition to basically truly unite the continent, and failed. There are many reasons why they failed.

But still, if we remember the Maastricht Treaty, there was an attempt to create political union. There was an attempt to do social union.

That was basically torpedoed by Margaret Thatcher. But there were attempts to unite, to do European security without NATO. I mean, there were lots of attempts in the '89-'92 period to go over the wall. The Berlin Wall came down. Now we do Europe. We get emancipated from the US. We do Saint-Malo. Even the Brits were on board. Even the Brits talked about joining the euro in 2001. We wanted to do that sort of emancipation project of Europe. The euro was part of it, you know, because Kissinger told us in the '70s, "The dollar is our currency and your problem." So we invented this common currency.

And then, you know, it was a whole 30 years of, you know, emancipation, political union-making. And I know it's hard to understand from now, but I'm 62. Looking back, the discussion in the '90s was totally different. You could not make one argument against Europe. None of the parties could. Everybody was pro-European. We do now peace over '89. I mean, there was a huge, huge—all the writers, all the, you know—I mean, there was, with Delors, launched a lot of, you know, artist projects to do European novels and to find the European identity. I mean, it was just very, very different from today. And the thing is that I think that the project partially was torpedoed by the U.S. I mean, there were a lot of interferences.

When the moment came that we nearly got it, nearly got it in 2001: Putin, Bundestag, understanding with Russia; 2002, euro-making; 2003, Constitution; 2004, enlargement. It was a moment of, we had it all, nearly we had it all, you know. So we had all the grand projet, the big projects Jacques Delors talked about, were nearly there. And then 2004, it just went down roller coaster, yeah. So enlargement basically became the Trojan horse of the Eastern Europeans that basically positioned themselves against the Western Europeans. It was yesterday, it was mentioned that it was this new Europe, old Europe, you know, so the Americans basically went to Iraq and then divided Europe.

I remember the article in the Wall Street Journal, George W. Bush Jr. basically saying there's now new Europe, and new Europe is the East, and the old Europe is Chirac and Schröder. We had some doubts about Iraq. So it was nicely played to split Europe at the moment of enlargement. And it was a disaster for European unity. Consequently, the Constitution failed because with these ten new, twelve new members on board, the Constitution had no more chance. I worked by then for Jacques Delors. I could tell you endless stories about the Americans interfering into, for instance, the sheer wording of the European foreign minister, because Joschka Fischer wanted to become European foreign minister.

But then it was called the High Representative of Foreign and Security Policy. And this is a no-title. It's a no-brainer. So, I mean, all this was voted down. The European Constitution was voted down. And the euro turned neoliberal because the social architecture failed. Delors had a project about a social Europe. So you can see that there was a moment in time when Europe was sort of nearly

there in institutionalizing itself with a constitution, with a currency, with an enlargement, with doing peace architecture with Russia in the years 2001 to 2004, and then roller coaster there. Yeah. And since ever then, it never came up again. Because from there, the politically non-united Europe stumbled into banking crisis, basically an American mortgage crisis that was pushed into the European stomach.

We then called it a euro crisis, and we blamed the Greeks. But essentially, American banks are to blame for the European crisis. Yeah, which is an untold story. But this banking crisis showed that, you know, the Americans were smarter than the Europeans by then because they basically knew very, very at the beginning that it's the lack of political capacity there. Because we, the Europeans, needed six years to get over the distortions of the so-called euro crisis, which actually was a banking crisis. And the Americans could fix it pretty quickly. After two years, the U.S. was done with, you know, the banking crisis stuff. But we were still with this spread of interest rates and the lazy Greeks and whatever. So there was a huge thing of European chauvinism.

So that was the biggest, say, distortion of the European Union project, because by then you could, in terms of semantics, you could replace chauvinism, nationalism, and so on, in the midst of an unfinished European project. I was just saying that in 2002, 2004, we tried, it failed, and from there we went into banking crisis, and banking or euro crisis was the second, you know, like waterboarding, of a project that was about to, you know. But then the second sort of waterboarding was the years 2011, 12, 13, 14. Why? Because first the BRICS countries were founded in 2009. Remember this? Yeah. And German industry, for instance, was very keen to go east, to go east. Yeah. Because in 2011, the whole share of German trade with China out of the European share was 45%.

So Germans had 45% of export share in the whole European export share with China. So German industry was totally keen to go east. It was the moment when the banking crisis, or the euro crisis, Germans said, "Okay, leave us alone with the Greeks and these PIGS, like we called them, you know, Portuguese, Italy, Greek, and leave us alone with these PIGS. Yeah, we go east." But then came the diesel scandal, which was also leaked by the U.S., if you remember. And by then we also had John Cryan, whatever, we had a British banker at Deutsche Bank who said—what I was trying to say, there were lots of interferences which basically cut Germany off going east. Because we tried. Also the Nord Stream pipeline, you know this project, which is now highly debated. Who blew it up?

But Nord Stream was built in 2010, gave us the low energy prices. So we were at a moment in time when you see the moment of 2011 to 2014 as a moment when Germany wanted to drop Europe, but go east, go BRICS, but then was cut off to do so. And I can tell you, out of the EU Commission, that in these years, 2012, '13, you would say, "I'm doing a conference with Chinese and Russians," and so the Commission would say, "No money for this." So there was a clear interference in doing so. And then came Maidan. And Maidan, in my reading, was a little bit—because the years 2011 to 2014, three years again, are, in my opinion, a little bit the years in which the Americans interfered—

in a way that Maidan was the glue to keep Europe west, to basically keep it west and to make it align in this anti-Russian spin.

So the geopolitics and the geoeconomics was to keep Germany and keep Europe away from going with China, going with the BRICS, going with Russia, build a pipeline, and so on and so forth. So that was the second moment in a decade, 2004 to 2014, when the European, say, emancipation project could not unfold. I'm not saying that the Europeans are totally irresponsible for acting like they acted, but I think there was a dialectic between American interference and a non-performance of Europe. So it's always both. So let's now move away, because this is what is and was happening since ever then. You see... Today, with the new American security strategy, you see a clear ambition to build what they call the Western Hemisphere, from Greenland to Argentina, Milei.

And you see that half of Europe, the red line that goes through Europe, is basically today's NATO line. It goes from Finland and Sweden, that joined NATO in 2022 under the pressure of the war, goes down to Turkey. So basically, the western part of Europe is hanging in the American bed. And this is why we are now having, in most European countries, a pretty open, open as never before, discourse about: are we becoming satellite states of the U.S.? Because we had a transatlantic alliance, and we loved the U.S., and they fed us, and they gave us Marshall Fund and whatever. So there was for long a very, very positive narration about what the U.S. is doing.

But this narration is shifting in Ireland, in Greece, in France, in Italy, in Germany, is shifting towards: are we going to become satellite countries and vessels of the United States? So just to take this sort of picture here. Now, beyond this, because there's always two points. The one is the geostrategy. I showed you the map. But the other is the internal dimension. So we have two questions on the table. One question is: is there any political and institutional structure for Europe other than the EU to organize politically and institutionally the continent? That's sort of shaping Europe beyond the EU question. Yeah.

And the other question is: is there any place for Europe in the multipolar world? So Europe has a double goal here, which is to fix its internal structures and, at the same time, to fix its role, if any, in a multipolar world. And I think this is very important, that in this respect, I think Europe is in the worst condition. Because whatever you say about the U.S. or China or Russia or Iran or India, at least they have somehow functioning states. We may discuss whether they are authoritarian, what we think about China. We can discuss. I wouldn't agree with that argument. We can discuss about the U.S. and whatever, but at least they have steering capacity.

Yeah. Europe has none because we are politically not organized domestically. And therefore, it's very hard to shape our role in the multipolar world. So in a way, we are worse in that situation and squeezed totally. First was the war, Ukraine and Russia, but also this Chinese-American dynamic. And so the only way we have is to pretend that we are the best. That's still what we are doing. And because we are the best, all the others are evil. So the Chinese are evil, and our competitors now, and Russia is anyway evil, and the U.S. starts to be evil, and Iran is anyway evil. So we are the

good, and the others are evil, which is a very, very non-intelligent position to take if you are sucking in nearly every policy field. So anyway, but that's what we are doing. So now I point you to the book of Thomas Fazzi.

I guess most of you know Thomas Fazzi, was a colleague of mine, also publishing at Westend, and he just published this very, very good book. And so what we are in in Europe now, and that's very important to understand, after having 70 years of discussion in which basically the consensus held that we talked about the new can't be born and the old can't die. And I guess you must understand that for years and decades, because it was obviously propaganda, European sentiment: the EU is good, Franco-German relations function, we need to defend Israel, the U.S. is always good, the Russians are always bad. You know, there is a consensus. And now the time of crisis is that we are breaking through this basic consensus. It's in a way like Hannah Arendt said, a crisis is when a society drops its prejudices.

So prejudice, in Hannah Arendt's reading, is a positive thing, saying that a society needs prejudices, like it needs fences. And that's how the society can understand how it functions. So there was a huge European consensus that we need Europe. Europe is good. The euro takes us to economic fortune. The single market is necessary. We are liberal democracies. We are Atlanticist. Huge consensus. And this consensus is now really breaking up. It's breaking up with respect to Israel. You know why. It's breaking up because the U.S. is now drawing the red line and basically dividing Europe, trying to divide Europe. It's breaking up with respect to Russia. Are the Russians really evil? It's breaking up with respect to China because the Chinese are basically lifting two-thirds of the population out of poverty, have the best car industry now.

You can't basically say that the Chinese are not running a good societal model, right? And in that respect, Europe is totally lost. And it's not only lost geostrategically and socially and economically, but also by the mindset. Because we need to let go of the framing of the EU and basically the framing of 70 years of European integration, and deconstructing sort of what did that do to us? Was it really good? What did we miss out here? And you do this with 27 countries and 27 languages, and you... You know, there's not an easy way to do this discussion. Yeah. Because what happens instantly is, again, blaming each other. Yeah. For instance, just one example. Take Mr. Merz's sentence.

Germany is now working on the biggest conventional army. Yeah, that's what he said. Yeah. So you take this sentence in France: the Germans are building the biggest conventional army of Europe. And in France, you feel like, what are the Germans doing again? Did we have that for three times already? You know, so what I'm saying is, the moment, in the Hannah Arendt sense, that the prejudgments break away, it's very hard to understand or to keep the European spirit alive that we had for long, which was minimum base: together we are strong. That was, even if you had problems with the EU, the minimum was always, we need Europe. We need to be together strong.

But even that consensus is now breaking apart, and the consensus is, if it breaks apart, national regression, you know, because you go back to the national level of when you think that things were functioning. So the national regression means that we have throughout Europe discussions about the sovereign nation state, and the French—I don't know about the Belgians—but, you know, the Germans have a strong discussion about the nation state, and the French and the Italians. And everybody is now back to the nation state, totally ignoring that the economic and monetary sort of field is already European. So you could say Brexit, but the Brits were not in the euro.

So they had a big deal to withdraw from the single market. But if you say Dexit or Frexit, it actually means, are we giving up the euro? I would argue we should not, although I don't like the governance structures of the euro. But the moment you give up the euro, the real question is, because we, again, invented the euro as a trampoline for independence. The dollar is our currency and your problem. So we wanted a strong competitive currency on the global market against the dollar. That was the goal. It's now we are giving it up, and you go back to the seventies, and to lira, escudo, whatever, francs. The first question for me would be, are we getting our national currency back?

I would argue no, because the Americans would sneak into the political vacuum. And the moment we turn around ourselves, the Americans have the dollar in Europe. That's what they want. You know, I give you this example: yeah, we have NATO, we have the dollar in Europe, we have a GAFAM complex in Europe, so Europe is ours. Yeah, it's basically what Trump was saying. Trump was saying German companies are now American companies. Yeah, and all these energy deals with, you know, buying now fracking gas from America, cutting off Nord Stream, was a strategy to get lots of especially German companies to move plants to the U.S. because energy is cheaper.

So it was a huge strategy behind to basically dry out Germany from competitiveness, from big industry, big companies, and so on and so forth. And it's a disaster. And the disaster is the real thing, this economic downturn, social downturn, and so on and so forth. But the other disaster is the intellectual vacuum, sort of. Are we just seeing this and observing it, and we see that Europe is, you know, sinking? Or is there any strategy intellectually to revive the European spirit, sort of, we must move out of this? And if so, can one country—I mean, what I'm trying to tell you is, is there any other option than the EU and the return to the nation state?

Because the EU doesn't function. I showed you Thomas Fazzi's book. The structures are totally flawed: no democracy, no participation of citizens, no democracy. I will detail. But the turn back to the nation-state in times of a multipolar global paradigm change doesn't seem an option either. Even if the Germans may think, "We are super, we are 80 million," and the French may think this, and the Italians perhaps. But you think of Portugal or Finland or Malta or Luxembourg, and you feel like, "Okay, happy time with your nation-state." Yeah, I agree. You see my point. Yeah. So, and there's a real question, sort of: can we find a third option? Yeah.

Now, let's come again to the institutional flaws. Read the book of Thomas. I will be very short on it. Yeah. But after 70 years of brainwashing that the EU is a system *sui generis*, and we invented it, and we did the referenda, and all is fine, social science has done its work. I mean, now there is plenty of analysis that basically what the so-called populists say, which is that the EU is flawed, it's a bureaucracy, it's a technocracy, it's no democracy, there's a democracy deficit, is basically what European social science also says. So we blame the populists for saying it because it's politically unwanted, but social science says the same thing.

Well, now there is a real sort of opening here, sort of: can we basically discuss the structures? And the thing is, as I told you, the moment the constitutional project failed in 2003—that's 23 years ago—we never ever went back to that. We never ever said, look, can we do a second attempt? We need to build something around the single market and something around the euro. Because you cannot live in a single market and in a common currency if you don't have an embedment in a democracy and in a social structure. You know, Jacques Delors, for whom I worked, would always say, "On peut pas tomber amoureux dans un marché unique." You can't fall in love in a single market.

So in terms of political science, we are living as European citizens. We are always called European citizens, although we are still German, French, Finnish, Portuguese citizens. We are just market citizens. We have the same regulation and the same technocracy, and we eat the same EU-regulated potato and the same EU-regulated tomato, and whatever. We do regulations about these things not falling from a bottle. But the EU is totally incapable of doing the real things, meaning peace in Ukraine and the big things. So we are doing all the small things, and we are sucking citizens into policies they don't like.

But on the real stuff—European infrastructure, European AI, European high-speed train networks like the Chinese—we can't even build trains from Copenhagen to Rome, from Paris to Budapest. So we cannot lift the economic potential. And much of this is because we always need to go through a Council vote and 27 and veto and whatever. So it's a totally institutionally flawed system. But in a way, you can't sneak out, you know. I know these discussions because I wrote a couple of books about the European Republic, which, by the way, the Chinese liked a lot, yeah. But the Europeans say, "Oh, you want to destroy the nation state. You want to destroy the nation state." You know, I love my nation state, yeah.

I will come to this a little later. But we need to accept that the system of the EU now is so flawed, and there's so much resentment against the EU, that with this system, there's just one chance to stabilize it, and that is violence and authoritarianism. And that is what is happening. Because in political science, you say you have two pillars to stabilize the system. One is violence, and the other is consent. And if consent is not there, violence stays. And so the European Digital Services Act, and what we are seeing, and these oligarchic policies and this war laundering are basically means to stabilize the system that is now fueled with resentment and has no more consent among citizens.

Yeah. And because we intellectually cannot move out, because there's no project out there, I'm very fearful at the end that there's David Betz, King's College London, writing about the latency of civil war in European countries, that we are all divided: rich and poor, rural, urban, young, old, digital, analog, and so on and so forth, that Europe will really go through troubled times. Because if there's institutional meltdown, because if the European countries in their institutional setup don't hold, you know, what is left in Europe? So there's a real problem in Europe's crisis management capacity because the EU institutions don't work.

But because the EU has squeezed the political fabric of the EU countries, the political and party systems of the EU member countries don't work either. So my point here is that the very fact that we were living in a common single market and euro structure without democracy and social [inaudible] on the European level, the EU single market structure basically destroyed the fabric of the EU member countries, the social and democratic fabric of the EU countries. And this led to what we are seeing. What we are seeing is social unrest in France, polarization of party systems, you know, no coalitions in Germany, elections and elections, no coalition comes out, you know, so incapacity of the party systems to rule and govern the country.

And so we are basically flawed at the two levels. The EU member countries are flawed, and there's institutional meltdown in their state and political and party structures. And at the same time, the European system cannot repair this or substitute it because the EU system in itself is flawed, and it's getting ever more authoritarian, you know, in interfering in the Romanian elections, being very outspoken that it might not be only Romania, but perhaps that they would interfere in France, you know, if the wrong party may win, and so on and so forth. So the tendency is that basically nothing is functioning any longer, not the EU member states in the polarization of the party systems, not the EU level in itself. And, you know, I'm European. I mean, what do you want me to say?

This is really, in French, I would say, lamentable. So there is no fix. There's no quick fix. And in addition, obviously, the national reflex, let's do it on our own, is the biggest reflex you can encounter. But I honestly think it's the wrong reflex because we should basically understand that we move out of this together and not alone. But what I want to say is, you know, things like Canada joins now the European Union. It's one of the most helpless statements that you can produce if you have a European Union treaty which says that those countries can join the European Union which are European countries. So now, is Canada a European country? Probably not, yeah. But we have a serious discourse that Canada now joins the European Union and Ukraine joins the European Union.

So we have a completely unrealistic discourse now, which, in addition, um, is, I think, the best expression of what is happening in Europe these days, is loss of reality. Loss of reality, yeah. Canada and Ukraine joining the EU. If you want to make the EU dead, then please, Canada join, Ukraine join, then the EU is finished. I would love to see it, because we need something different anyway. But, um, it's very hard to be in that situation when you are a heartfelt European, because you do not want to return to the 20th century, and you do not know how to organize a cross-border discussion

among civil society that we need to stick together in the times of the monsters. That is now, I think, the very delicate part.

So now, coming a little bit to the political economy, 10 minutes left. I think—personally, I think that, for instance, France will have a hard time surviving a presidential election in which the polarized candidates are Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen. Yeah, because this is just against the Republican tradition. And there is a more fundamental thing here. And I look to Nell, yeah, because of these times of the monsters. And I think I said it yesterday, and most people do not remember that states can die. Yeah. I mean, perhaps not the United Kingdom: 1066, who will I conquer? Whatever. But if you look at the history of the German Federal Republic, or Germany, you would see that since 1800, we had seven changes of Germany.

Deutscher Bund, Deutsches Reich, Weimarer Republik, Hitler, small Germany, united Germany. So seven ruptures, seven state ruptures. Look at France. France is the Fifth Republic. And I know that there's a lot of talk in France, because the system is dysfunctional, that there's talk about the Sixth Republic. In Italy, there's news about la Terza Repubblica, so Third Republic, because the Italians also smell that this Meloni sort of polarization won't carry them long. So I would issue the hypothesis that these states' constructions, I mean, the sheer belief that in Europe, these sort of nation states as they are today, that we may see changes.

Because the resentment and these layers of civil war, and then we have separatism in Catalonia, we have separatism in Scotland, we have separatism in Corsica, in Tyrol, you know, so there's a lot of regional separatism. Then you have social cleavages all over the place, which is the fundamental problem: that it's no longer France against Germany, but it's wealthy against the lower income everywhere throughout Europe. So there is a Marxist sort of thing here. And to think that this could all be dealt with if we only stick to the sovereign nation-state, I think is totally illusory, because the sovereign nation-state, again, Luxembourg, will bring us any— whatever progress for Luxembourgers. So there is the foreign policy dimension.

There is the economic dimension. There's a social dimension. And what is happening in Europe, and that's what I want to come to, is that we are now living, I would argue, in more or less oligarchic structures, which have been building what Bruno Amable is calling the bloc bourgeois. So the party system is totally shifting away from left and right. This is *passé, tempi passati*. But what you see throughout societies is that you shifted a system from left and right 90 degrees to up and down. And this is what Bruno Amable calls the bloc bourgeois. It's above and low, high and low. And that means that all the coalitions that we do, like in Germany, we do cross-programmatic coalitions.

The SPD with the CDU, normally these are cross-ideological coalitions, which cannot come up with anything. That's what we see in Germany now. We have a coalition which is programmatically and ideologically so against each other that they can't govern, because the SPD wants left and the CDU wants right-wing economic policy, so there's no more program. But the bloc bourgeois means that they are stabilizing the system because all the NGO money goes there, and it's about not losing the

jobs, not losing the seats in parliament. So we have the firewall of the cordon sanitaire, or the Brandmauer, as we call it, to basically protect the system against the down.

So there is a people-against-elite thing throughout Europe. And the people-against-elite thing is that you call it firewall, you call it Brandmauer. The AfD must be kept out. The people must be kept out. Marine Le Pen must be kept out. So the lower must be kept out against the bloc bourgeois. And you see this, for instance, in France, when MEDEF, which is the industrial sort of association, is now sliding towards Marine Le Pen. In France, there's discussion that Mélenchon might be forbidden, like AfD shall be forbidden in Germany. So there is sort of the people's protest, contest, the social protest.

The system wants to shut it out either by lawfare. Lawfare is forbidding the parties, yeah, or by basically—now in Berlin, you have seen that the Left won 25%, but everything is done to not have the Left in Berlin because it's about the socialization of real estate, yeah, so cheap apartments for citizens. So there is the money lobby against it, and this is why everything is done under the pretext of anti-Semitism, like with Corbyn, that the Left is out, yeah. So I think, and again back, this is the map for Germany of what is called the censorship complex. And the censorship complex is the complex of what we call the bloc bourgeois, which is the so-called classical parties.

And the whole interest of the censorship complex is to do discourses which blame the right for this and this and this, and trying to keep the sort of people's interest out of the political system. And this is basically an inbuilt stabilization system, because what you see is state money, you know, in the upper right, upper left, state money flowing to all these NGOs who produce this hate speech, NGOs, whatsoever, stabilizing that critical voices or dissident voices on the social, on migration, on wokeness, on climate, on whatever, that these voices are kept out to stabilize the agendas. And the agenda is climate and migration and wokeness and all these things, yeah. And it brings me to argue a little bit like Thomas Fazi that essentially most of the European countries have now an oligarchic structure, essentially in four industry pillars.

One is armament, the second is pharmaceuticals, the third is the digital complex, and the fourth is energy. And these are structures in which state money is spent for state goals like climate protection, energy. We need to mint bills or a corona vaccine. We do need to spend state money for the vaccine or armament. Putin is Hitler, so we need to spend money on armament or digital, the whole complex, you know, digitalization. So we need to spend money on the digital complex. And this is normal competition. This is basically state money flowing to big sections of industry.

And to organize this, because in a way it's proto-fascism. In the definition of Mussolini, if you have corporate structures where you have a merger and a fusion between state and the economy, and the state fuels the economy without competition, then it's not a normal market economy. So it's basically proto-fascism in the definition of Mussolini. If we do have this in four strategic industrial sectors now in Europe, then this is the map that shows you what the discourses are organized

around. The discourse: you are a Putin understander like me. I need to be thrown out because, um, the armament industry needs money. So I am deranging their meta-narrative. So I must be moved away. Yeah.

So if I say Corona perhaps was not as dangerous as that, then the pharmaceutical industry wants to move me away because they need to sell the vaccine. Same for digital regulation. You know, we need to protect our children from pornography on the internet. So we need the Digital Services Act, and you promote the digital service industry, and so on and so forth. Yeah. But what I'm saying here is that that is what Europe is in. And that's because then, if we have oligarchic structures and we need to produce the discourse that serves one of these industry segments, freedom is gone in Europe. Dissident voices are gone, which they are because they are put on EU sanctions lists.

And the problem is that if this should stabilize, and I'm fearful that it will, because it's not only state money of Italy, France, and so on, but it's also EU money on top of it that stabilizes all these oligarchic structures, then there's no escape. Every citizen in Europe needs to earn a salary, has a husband, has a wife to feed, or kids, or whatever. So if you're a schoolteacher, you can't sneak out. If you're a professor, you can't sneak out. So the control features are very sublimated and go to the churches, go to the trade unions, and go to every sort of civil society part. And if you're not sort of behaving in terms of war with Putin, Corona, digital, whatever, climate, because these discourses are now institutionalized also in schools.

And so there is no escape for citizens in terms of freedom and freedom of speech, which is a huge problem in Europe now, across the European Union. So I think I'll stop with this. Just the last—I think I started five minutes late—so perhaps two sentences about culture, cultural progress, and how Europe basically lost its thinking. Because we can talk geography, and we can talk geostrategy and social and economy and everything. But the worst for me is that we lost our capacity to think in Europe. There's a clear philosophical problem which is coming with these discourses of cancel culture, of shortness discussions, you know, and identity politics. And we need to see. And this is why there's no quick fix. I'm not standing here to say there's a quick fix for Europe. I mean, I guess Europe is lost, at least for the next 20 years. Why?

Because you can measure now that the anti-pluralist tendencies in German universities are highest. So you have—if you question, I mean, you can measure how people react to different arguments. And you can measure that especially at universities, there's 60 to 70 percent of faculty people who basically are offended when somebody has a different argument. Yeah. So it's precisely the elites which we are losing, because the people at university will be our functional elites in, say, 10 years' time. And you can basically measure this. In addition to PISA results that we have, which are awkward, math, all these things, you can measure that jobs will be gone.

There's no more mathematics. I mean, 100 years ago, Germany had more or less all the Nobel Prize winners. I don't need to enumerate them. Now, normal math, normal philosophy, totally disconnected from history. This is a problem now when we are talking about this Ukraine war, that

most students—there's polling—that 16-year-old Germans in school do not know that the Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union, and not inversely. So Hitler is back, the Soviet Union is back, so Russia is back, means that there is a perception among 16-year-olds in schools that Russia invaded us in 1941 and not inversely.

So what do you do with pupils who are disconnected from history, from contextualization, who are brought into identity discourses and think wrongly that these identity discourses are left, you know, progressive, although it's structurally right discourse because they point to distinction between you and me, which is anti-egalitarian. So it's nothing to do with the left, but these progressive, so-called progressive left think that they are left. Yeah. So it's like you go with a mixer through their heads and there is total confusion. Yeah. But this is happening, and it's very, very hard to break through. I mean, obviously, we have discussions. There are alternative fora everywhere, but there is a lack of theory.

There is a lack of history. There is a lack of mathematics. There's peace studies. So, you know, you do not even know where to start. So, you know, I don't want to end on a very pessimistic sort of token here. But honestly, honestly, you know, I'm 62 years old. I've never seen the European continent at large in such bad shape. And again, it's not only the real economic data, social data, geopolitics, and so on. It's the confusion of the mind, just the confusion of our students. It's the general sort of *état d'esprit*. Last word, Pascal. And that is why I think, that is why I think that much of the policy done by Macron and by Merz, especially Kaja Kallas and others, is nihilism. It's, you know, I quote Rimbaud, those who cannot create need to destroy.

And Europe is, I think, in a psychological way, in such a shame that we, as a rich continent, smart continent, good faculties, whatever, I mean, we were—we were a good continent for long years, including colonialism. But that we cannot confront our own mistakes and responsibility to build that EU structure, of which we knew it wouldn't work, living under it 70 years, now going, stumbling into this war. And I think perhaps Matthias can tell us, but such a psychological sort of nihilism pressure that the only way is to blame Putin, escalation into nuclear war, then there's destruction, and then at least I am not guilty. Yeah. And if I'm fearful about the future of Europe, then I'm most fearful about this nihilism, which is sort of sneaking into society. Yeah. Thank you for listening.

#Pascal

What a tour de force. Wow.

#Ulrike Guérot

I even missed my PowerPoints, but, you know, basically this is what is happening. Yeah.

#Speaker 1

Thank you very much for the very informative lesson. I really learned a lot. From the trade perspective, we often have one thing that we never understand, is that we thought that Europe has a very long tradition of pragmatism and a long tradition of realpolitik and whatever things. And it seems like right now, let's say, the Americans also say a bunch of pretty things, but they always use those pretty things to lecture other people, and they don't do that. They don't believe that. And that's why they're always very pragmatic. They tell you, like, "I don't trade with Putin," but they talk to Putin too. But Europe, on the other hand, it's like they actually seem like they believe the things they're saying.

And, you know, like, I was educated in the United States. They use air conditioning extremely wastefully. And then they always say, like, "I love the planet," and then it's like their AC is cold. And Europe this year, people died because of heat. And it seems like they're really believing those liberal things that you have been talking about, even though it is contrary to the common people's interests. So we fail to understand where is this pragmatic tradition, intellectual thought in Europe going, and why do you think there is a difference between European, this type of mentality, and American mentality? While the people are talking about the same thing, why is it that Americans don't believe that, while the Europeans seem to be really serious? Yeah, thank you.

#Ulrike Guérot

I mean, at first, I think that I told you that Europe is in sheer loss of reality. I mean, there is really an epistemic question here. You sit in the European Parliament and you have 70 deputies voting for a war against Russia and armament, as if we have no intelligence. I'm totally convinced that the BND also knows that this war is lost. I mean, there must be some German high-tech satellites, you know, so there is a complete loss of realism. It reminds me, like, you know, in April '45, we still thought that the Wehrmacht would basically win it. I mean, that's how propaganda works. Yeah.

I mean, remember the last months of sort of this, a little bit: don't throw bad money after good money. If you have so much invested and ideologically overwhelmed this—what is this war about? Defending freedom, blah—you cannot find a face-saving solution. And this is why the Americans can now be pragmatic: let me do my deals. Donald Trump: I want money from Russia. I want the resources. I want whatever, my deals and the rare earth. But the Europeans have ideologically blown up the whole story. And because of the ideological overwhelm, I think there's no more pragmatic solution. It's really ideology at work and propaganda at work.

But the good news is, on this side, Europe, the EU countries, is not united on war. That is also what is overestimated. The only countries that do that war is basically Kaja Kallas, Ursula von der Leyen, and Germany. That's the biggest anchor, and perhaps the Baltic countries. But look at Greece, look at Italy, look at Spain, look at Ireland. France is shaky. So to imagine that there is a war coalition united—yeah, I mean, the German radio station recently said that Merz will be compared to Churchill, once, who united Europe in a war. And I felt like, if Merz is compared to somebody, then probably to Brüning, but not to Churchill.

But here's the thing. Imagine that this is told on German TV. That's how far the propaganda goes here. But that's the good news. The EU countries are not united on this war. There's a total loss of reality, and... We won't discuss now where the war is standing, but we see now that the Americans have been giving up on Zelensky, I guess, on supporting his intelligence. So perhaps it's a couple of weeks that Europeans will realize that there's nothing to win any longer. So in Germany, there's a saying: if you do not want to hear, you need to feel. So if you can't find your face-saving solution before it ends, then it ends. Yeah.

#Pascal

Okay. Yeah, I'll just make one observation and hear your comment. Listening to your talk, I guess what I'm hearing is a kind of thread that shows the result of intended and intentional Americanization happening at multiple levels. The most notable one, obviously, the application of neoliberal economic policy, which is, you know, Europe can't do a lot of things. You know, they can't build infrastructure, it can't even improve education, but one thing it does do quite well is austerity, and they're very well structured around austerity and certain stances that promote financialization, something very much following on the American model.

And the ideology of the old liberalism, again, accompanied by players like the University of Chicago and the Mont Pelerin Society, a very kind of American character. Another one, obviously, is militarism, and we're used to that, accelerating the tendency towards austerity, because after all, you have guns instead of butter. And the idiotic purposes of identity politics, a very strong lecturing and self-righteous style, shall we say. Again, coming as Americanism with gender studies, with pronouns, and that concept of Americanization. Yeah, it's an American system that, you say, is actually full of heart.

The idea that you'd want to basically imitate the United States. Anybody who goes there, you could fly into, let's say, Los Angeles International Airport or fly out. It's one of the worst airports in the world. It's emblematic of complete collapse of its infrastructure. Yeah. Oh, you know, it's amazing. It's appropriate to a much poorer country. It wasn't built that way. The mass of homeless encampments, all the cities and country, right in front of my house in Tucson, Arizona. So why Europe would want to do this, why they would want to claim a seat on the Titanic if the iceberg eludes me. And nevertheless, that is the course they've chosen.

What's very striking is how exceedingly much it's failing. You see, in Europe, it has declining economic performance. Generally speaking, the EU and its associates have declining economic performance, demonstrably so. You have increasing social problems, riots in France taking place in Austria. And some of the key figures in the European hierarchy, Emmanuel Macron and previously Starmer, had some of the lowest approval ratings in the history of polling, literally. And so we're seeing a failure of this policy. But nevertheless, for some reason, as the policy fails, they seem more and more desperate. We're committed to it. Your thoughts?

#Ulrike Guérot

Well, my thoughts are that we lost the republic in the sense of the word. But, I mean, you're right. I mean, there is a liberal, neoliberal, neo-feudal, I would even argue, order that has been sneaking through the single market and has been basically destroying the social fabric of all EU member countries. Yeah. It's important because in the Italian, the French, the German, Federal German constitutions, we are not only a Rechtsstaat, a law state; we are also a social state, Rechts- und Sozialstaat, which is, by the way, in a way, the translation of what *res publica*, the republic, is.

So you see the... I'm very attached to the notion of republic, *res publica*, an order that produces the common good, including infrastructure and the social sort of nivellization, in a way, because we know that tendencies of aggression—you know, the Stiglitz book, *The Price of Inequality*—that aggression, and then everybody takes drugs, and then you need to come and fight drugs, whatever. So social aggression climbs when social inequality is climbing. And this isn't an American structure, because we care for the social, and we do have healthcare, and now we can no longer afford it because we are shrinking. And so our populations are not accustomed to see all these people, you know, looking for bottles in the waste and so on and so forth.

So it's a very strange feeling for Europeans to have the tents in Paris also, like you were describing. You have the tents of the homeless, you know. And Berlin, I can tell you, it's also, you know, the social crisis is huge. And then you're talking the social crisis in the towns. But if you go, for instance, Lorraine, you know, all these rural regions, the flyover countries, what you call flyover countries, we do have the flyover zones too. And the flyover zones, for instance Lorraine in France, are those countries left by liberalization, where the single market didn't bring any progress and which is now turning into political protest vote in the so-called populist party?

So the equation of the, say, the overfly map of Europe: the rural areas, which the political map of so-called populist vote is more or less identical. It's the south of Italy, it's the east of Poland. You go France, then you have Normandy, Brittany, and Alsace, and so on and so forth. So the rural areas. And it's only the towns like Paris or Barcelona or Milan which are still in the global value chain. And so we do have a true rural-urban problem. And that is a problem of the single market, which basically produced this disruption between cities, the towns, and the rural areas that now turns into a political problem.

And it has to do with that. We only did, as you say, liberalization policies. Yeah. And they basically added to the value added of the towns, and the rural areas were neglected, created a social problem, created the political problem. And now, in a way, it's too late. Yeah. All these little towns would need WLAN, they would need trains, they would need infrastructure, but people have already left. And this is why, you know, you have towns without a bakery, you have towns without a butcher, you have towns without, you know... So there is a social distress in the whole European society. And now we have a political problem.

So I agree, and there's a very big question: how liberal Europe can be. I would also argue that Europe, by tradition, has no liberal tradition, which is very distinct from the US. If you go to the history of Europe, and that is why the single market destroyed EU member states and their social fabric so much, is that we come from, in a way, say, the French Revolution: Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité. So what we come from is an egalitarian spirit. And the egalitarian spirit has two legs. One is Christianity. Everybody has a soul and is a child of God. So interestingly enough, the Catholic Church could be both the church of aristocracy, but also the church of the poor, Francis of Assisi.

And it's only because of this the Catholic Church, in a way, could survive. It was never only the church of the noblesse, but always the church of the poor, Francis of Assisi. And out of this, everybody is a child of God. In 1789, you could say that the recent—or the, say, the socialist century of Europe, which is the 19th century, Jean Jaurès and everybody—was the secularization of Christianity. Because this 1790 moment, when we said everybody is born free and equal in rights and dignity, the Declaration of Man, is a secular translation of everybody's a child of God. So Christianity and socialism are standing on the two legs of égalité, one more lefty, one more righty, but it's that.

And no liberalism because the church is a community, and the socialists are also a community. And interestingly enough, Respublica Christiana, the church would always call themselves Respublica Christiana. So the public of Christianity, Respublica Christiana. And the socialists were always fighting the republic. So the republic, Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, which is not Liberté, Liberté, Liberté, but Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, is the socialist sort of reversal of feudal order. And that's why I'm always showing this really nice map of Honoré de la République in 1848, which is the sort of second wave of revolution, 1789 and then 1848, because this is Miss Republic.

Like Europe is a woman, but the Republic is also a woman. And the Republic, Miss Republic, is breastfeeding the citizens. And that's a very strong imago. Respublica is taking care of the citizens. So breastfeeding has nothing to do with liberalism. You don't tell your baby, "Go find your milk and be competitive. Find your best mother," whatever. So the Republic nourishes its citizens. And because we are talking about this, it's a very different imago from Hobbes' Leviathan, the state, Mr. State, which has a sword, which has—sorry—a sword, and which has this, you know, I mean, this masculine sort of thing.

And what you see, and this is because this is the Hobbes-Leviathan sort of von der Spitze. And the interesting thing is that if you look closer, this is the Rideau, the Vorhang, which covers that there is a town. But the moment you build this state in this translation, the citizens, because everybody is the other's wolf, we need to transfer our sovereignty to a state. It's abstract, this transfer of sovereignty. And Hobbes basically painted the town empty. There's no citizen in the town. And the moment you do the fictive transaction from people's sovereignty to state sovereignty, the body of Leviathan is filled by heads.

I don't know whether you can see this, but the arms and the body of Leviathan are the heads of the citizens who are leaving the town the moment they surrender their sovereignty to the abstract state. And so, you know, I do not want to do too much political theory, but all this state, nation-state, transfer sovereignty—I think that the European, and it has much to do with liberalism, that the European jewel of political thought is the republic. Because you go to Plato and then to Aristotle and then to Cicero and to Jean Bodin and Kant and Rousseau. You talk 18 centuries about the republic, and then comes this nation-state, blah, blah, blah. But the republic is the normatively higher notion because the republic means the common good. It's not only democracy: we can vote.

The republic wants to organize the social. So that's a big difference between democracy and the republic. And so in Europe, we basically created just a single market. We created just a euro, not embedded in any social structure, not embedded in any democratic structure. So the EU project is doomed to fail. And now we are experiencing this. But the more complex answer is that Europe has no liberal tradition per se, because what we do have is a conceptual tradition of the republic, which is organizing a society around a common good, independently of whether that's a monarch, whether that's aristocracy, or whether it's politeia, whether one governs or a few govern or everybody governs. The only question is: is it good for the people?

And so in the Aristotelian sort of matrix, there is the king who governs well, is the king. The king who governs badly for the republic is the tyrant. The aristocracy which governs well for the people is the nice aristocracy, like the Medicis, who founded those piazzas and everything. And the bad aristocracy is what we have today, is oligarchy. But democracy is on the same level with tyranny, oligarchy, democracy. So this is why I feel like all this talk about, "We need to rescue democracy," is totally crap. We need to rescue the republic.

#Speaker 2

Thank you so much for the fascinating, insightful talk. I had one quick comment and then the question. My comment is that your industry-driven policies remind me of Jeffrey Sachs, who often says that in the U.S. we have a Department of State and Department of Defense that are run by the military. That's real complex.

#Ulrike Guérot

We have a healthcare system that's... I don't know if this is working. Is this...? Okay, now it's working.

#Speaker 2

All right. We have a healthcare system that's driven by the pharmaceutical and health insurance companies, and so on and so on. Just want to echo that also in terms of what David just said. My

question is more about this progression, the 70-plus years that you've described, the sort of making of this common European project, and the way in which at least a period of the Cold War also coincided with a period of decolonization, and whether there are actually deeper links there: that once Europe sort of loses hold of all of these other places around the world where it can kind of extract natural resources and so on, now it's on to a new sort of way of improving its economic conditions by this common European market. And now it's lost, right? Now it's like, what's next? What do you do next to kind of figure out, like, I'm not in disagreement here by European wonderful.

It's obviously wonderful, but it's also not exactly large. It's also not exactly rich in natural resources. It has some real, I think, pressures and some real challenges. And I wonder whether some of what we're seeing is actually a kind of more long-term thinking of: you do want to destabilize Russia because eventually we would like to have access to those natural resources on your own terms, right? Clearly, you know, most of us here are going to agree that they could have accomplished that—not accomplished that by taking over Russia, but by collaborating with Russia—that they could have had a much better situation. But are they actually—has the strategy been to address some of these economic challenges that, in some sense, you couldn't address post-decolonization?

#Ulrike Guérot

So let me go, if I can go back to this. Yeah. So, I mean, my argument, and the one I make in my new book, is with this red line being there, Europe has no chance. Yeah, because it's just a satellite state of the U.S. And it's basically what the U.S. is trying to do. Poor Canada, poor Brazil, but all the others are already in the U.S. You know, Venezuela, Cuba, they are all basically smashed. Yeah. So, yeah, my goal, if I had the dream of an emancipated Europe, including geostrategy, geoeconomy, and so on, is to move the red line to the Atlantic and to say we have a peer partnership, you know, eye to eye. And we are obviously friends with the U.S. I like the U.S., you know, I just don't like the deep state. But the red line must move into the ocean, just because—and that is where I want to come—what is the perspective to my map?

Because if you put the red line from the other map, the red line would go basically below the navel here. So just imagine you are cut below the navel, the torso falls into the Atlantic, and it can't survive. So this map, I think, is very instructive for what Europe should do because you say we are in a new era, we are cut from resources, and we are losing basically our grounds of what we were. And again, I mean, if I had to think about what Europe should do—not saying that it can do or will do, but should do—is look at the map and say, what tells us this map from 1534, which is not trivial? It's the first sort of image of what Europe would be, right? So it stands on Russia's—by the way, here's Russia—and it stands with the feet on Eurasian soil.

So first thing is to get your orientation, sort of. If I don't stand—if I have a red line here and my torso is coming to the Atlantic—I'm not standing. So I need to get my feet back on Russian soil. First thing to do. Second, you see that Mrs. Europe is not turning her head to look to Washington, but she's basically looking to the Orient. Yeah. And in cultural terms, I think it's very important for

Europe, in my opinion, that we get a little bit over this, you know, Islamophobic discussion, and to understand that the Arabic societies, in a way, are also anti-liberal societies, as we are. And that there was also an Occident-Orient mirror. I mean, we got the figures, I mean, from the Arabic world. I mean, the progress of Europe was always looking, taking the Orient—the Orient—as a mirror. So today we do Frontex. We have a migration problem. Yes, we do have a migration problem.

But we do not understand that the total destabilization of the Near East is American democracy promotion. And be it on purpose or unintended consequence, I couldn't care less. But the, at best, unintended consequence, if not purpose, of this democracy promotion is to destabilize European societies by migration. And then understand that we had the question of liberalism, that Arabic societies are basically conservative societies, as are, in a way, European societies with no liberal tradition, means that the American economic liberal tradition has more or less destroyed the Arabic societies and the European societies, and has destroyed the cultural bond between Occident and Orient.

So if there is a perspective for Europe, I think we would need to refine the Eurasian thesis, and we would need to refine a different look on Maghreb, on the Orient, going beyond Frontex and these things. And the third, and that's not trivial either, because we were talking about liberalism and the republic. But if you look at this, it's the Reichsapfel of Respublica Christiana. So basically, Europe tells us that she's a republic. Because this is the insignia, which is not the state and the nation-state. It's just the republic, which is a different model. Then also an economic model, basically res publica for everybody.

So there is also an economic connotation in how liberal or non-liberal, in the American sense, how non-liberal by tradition Europe is. This is a very important discussion because there's a book of Pilkington now, *The End of the Global Liberal Order*. And I think this book is very, very important for Europe, that we understand that also what we now say is the civilizational powers, you know, like China or India or Iran, coming with this civilizational impetus in the multipolar world. We can, you know, it's a long argument to make, but the short story is they are not liberal countries. The Chinese is a Chinese People's Republic in the best European tradition, in a way. Yeah.

In the best European tradition. Yeah. So they changed the empire to a republic. But the republic means that they have an equilibrium between the I and the we. And that's what we have been giving up in the American tradition of liberalism. If you can make it there, you can make it everywhere. I'm Rockefeller. If you are not a millionaire and you don't pray for your money and you don't have a million, then you are a loser, and that's your fault. I mean, this is just not the European tradition. And therefore, I say, instead of all this discourse we have now, we need to rescue democracy, we should think about rescuing the republic. And that's why this map is very dear to me.

#Pascal

Last four minutes.

#Speaker 3

Is it last four minutes? Oh dear. Because the question I have is a really big one. So I wanted to first of all congratulate you on identifying liberalism as the core of the book. This is very important. But if you think about it, what is liberalism? Liberalism is the organic ideology of capitalism. And what you are saying by identifying this as a problem is that capitalism in itself is such a problematic social form that Marx and Engels themselves understood this very well.

Polanyi restated it many decades later, that you can never have a purely liberal society. That liberalism can only exist by taking existing society and distorting it in various ways. Liberalism is also something that is imposed on other countries as part of imperialism in order to open them up, in order to dominate them, in order to allow— So, I think this is a very important thing to understand. And I just wanted to say a couple of things, and then I have a question. You know, it's ironic. So, Karl Polanyi says, for example, that purely liberal societies can never exist. If they— because it would destroy society if they were committed to it.

#Speaker 2

So liberalism in itself is, yeah, it's it.

#Speaker 3

Secondly, Marx and Engels also, in The German Ideology at least, they say that there is no such thing as pure capitalism, and we'll never let it get to that. That is to say, they will transform capitalism into something else well before it gets there. And another point I wanted to make is that, you know, I remember reading somewhere ages ago that in Europe you have proportional representation as your electoral form because liberalism was such a minority creed that the parties of the bourgeoisie would not have existed were it not for PR. Yeah. You couldn't possibly hope. So I just wanted to say that.

And also in the case of the UK and the US, which you regard as more purely liberal societies, I think that again in the UK, also, the socialism part did become quite dominant, you know, in the post-Second World War period in particular. And Karl Polanyi, he actually says, very interestingly, that until the early 20th century, you couldn't possibly say the United States was even capitalist, because, he said, land, labor, and money were, as he says, free. They were not treated as commodities until the early 20th century. The question to you is the polity. You say that you don't want the nation-state system, you can't have the EU, you want something in between as your solution. Can you say something more about how you envisage this solution?

#Pascal

You have to get the answer within three minutes.

#Ulrike Guérot

Okay, so first, I would thank you that you are in agreement with me about this non-liberal tradition of Europe. I think it's the most important thing to address, and it's very hard to address in a society, or in societies plural, where we are also proud of our liberal democracies, yeah? Yeah, liberal democracy is a bullshit term because either it's democracy or democracy. And if democracy is voting a majority, and if 80% of a given group should vote for a socialist democracy, then you get socialist democracy. So the combination of liberalism with democracy is completely flawed and explains, for instance, Orbán and all these people which we call illiberal democrats, right? But the wording is basically very telling because we don't say that Orbán is not a democrat, but we say he's illiberal, and we don't like his illiberalism.

The European Union, on the opposite, is very liberal but not democratic, but we like it very much. So nobody comes to say, okay, let the EU go because it's liberal but not democratic. But Orbán needs to go because he is not liberal. So it's the liberal thing that we are fighting. And therefore, the combination, the sheer combination of always saving our liberal democracies is, in semantic terms, theoretically bullshit. And it's very important to make this discussion. But I can tell you, it's very hard to make this discussion because we have all these youngsters who are sort of no theory. And they feel like liberal democracy is liberal freedom rights, like diversity, gender, transgender, 56 sex, and so. And if you go against, then you are illiberal.

And because we are so accustomed that liberalism is it, the discussion makes it really... To your credit, and I totally agree, let's remember that until the early '80s, we had something like 30% to 35% of socialists and communists in the European system, Berlinguer and so on. They were all wiped out; Thatcher and Kohl did it in the '82 period. But until then, we had 30-35% communists, European communists and socialists in the system. And these people were, I would say, progressively moved out because then came identity discourses and so on, this liberal democracy. I mean, this was brainwashing people with problematic stuff, right? And yes, you are right that today Thatcher has proven right. There's no such thing as society.

And Matthias gave us yesterday the result: everybody lonely, everybody in anxiety, and so atomized society, and liberalism has done its work. I think Hegel already said that capitalism will destroy the state. So here we are: only citizens, everybody in anxiety, everybody lonely, and where is community, right? So where's my solution? Well, I have a book on the market just right now. It's a very, basically utopian book, but I basically said Europe should become a state. It should constitute itself as a republic, and it should basically lift the poverty regions and go beyond capitals and make an economic system that is even, and a political system that is based on regions and on, you know, representation of the regions.

And that gives the money to have a levelized sort of growth instead of only having the capitals like Barcelona, Paris sucked into the global value chain. And then I built from this economic analysis, I

built a totally different fantasy, if you want, political system, which I call European Republic, in which Europe becomes a full-fledged democracy with a two-chamber system, a Senate and a citizens' assembly. And that's my little dream because I'm so sad that this nice continent couldn't get its act together.

#Speaker 1

Thank you so much.