

Another Deal

The sword of Damocles

On February 26 in Amsterdam, Paradiso Diem25 kicked off the Dutch branch of Diem25 and presented a first version of the New Deal, the proposal by Yanis Varoufakis to pull Europe out of the doldrums. The meeting was well organized, the atmosphere perfect, the turnout - over 500 people - excellent and there was great enthusiasm. But who tried to transcend this warm bubble also saw something else: There was tension, anxiety. There was hanging a sword above the meeting. And that sword was called 'Wilders' (the Dutch nationalist). And the fear was that, like Trump, he would sway it at the elections of March 15 in the Netherlands. The sword of nationalism is not only hanging above the Netherlands, it is hanging above all of Europe. And the strength of it increases decisively.

Insecurity and polarization is growing everywhere. Nationalists and the political establishment (populists and the elite) are diametrically opposed. More and more communities are pitted against each other. Will the future Prime Minister Wilders ban Muslims and return the migrants? Should the three million EU citizens leave Britain after Brexit? Will in the future citizens with dissent opinions be imprisoned by the government like Turkey? It seems incredible but the power of the sword continues to increase.

Can the New Deal save Europe?

Regardless how the fight between nationalists and establishment will turn out, one thing is clear, it will be at the expense of citizens and society. Whether we end up in a dictatorship or anarchy peaceful living together in Europe will be over. What can we do to prevent this kind of future? The establishment will keep us telling that things will not happen. In a discussion paper on the future of Europe Juncker outlines five scenarios, none of which hit the real issue: the relationship between Europe and the nation state. The perspective of the nationalists is shortsighted. They are obsessed by an opponent, and guided by emotions. They opt for protection and walls, and do not look at what is happening on the other side of those walls. The proposals of Diem25 presented in the New Deal, try to find a solution within this force field. Can the New Deal proposals reduce the growing polarization? The answer is unfortunately: no.

The proposals of the New Deal are good. The plan is courageous. It is not easy to keep a balanced story that goes against both the nationalists and the establishment. The proposals are practical, they can be executed immediately. That should appeal to the establishment. At the same time we must disobey. Otherwise we cannot give enough pressure. It is a balanced piece, but something is missing: Emotion.

Who are we?

I quote from the New Deal discussion paper (version February 9):

But DiEM25's narrative "let's stick together, put forward proposals for saving Europe while disobeying the establishment and preparing for Europe's disintegration" is the greatest enemy of both the Nationalist International and Europe's culpable establishment. It is also

the cement and the glue of the transnational European movement that will oppose barbarism after Europe's collapse.

My question is "how do we stick together? And who are we?". The term "transnational progressives" sounds nice but anyone and everyone can among crowds there. And because we do not know who we are, because we have no identity, we have no power (we are only a small movement). The reality is that Diem25 is a small player in the European field, which will be crushed between the nationalists and the establishment. Disobedience will not help. What Diem25 need is something nationalists have: it are emotions, but these emotions should be associated with a progressive story.

To achieve this goal we have to create a whole different deal. A deal that just evokes such strong emotions as the nationalists (appealing to the heart) and at the same time outlines a new direction for Europe that cannot be ignored by the establishment (appealing to the head). I propose to close a deal with the nationalists. It is a simple deal. We (Diem25, Europeans, trans-nationalists, progressives) recognize the efforts of nationalists to win back their local communities in Europe. We accept the possibility that nationalists re-introduce a new local currency. We even accept the possibility that nationalists will leave the EU. But in return we demand the possibility that national citizens who want to become Europeans, can "leave" the nation state they live in. We will create a new identity. A real European identity. All European citizens can participate in them. Any citizen who wants to exchange national passport to a European passport must be able to do so. This new identity also includes a new Europe. A true European state. **Diem25 should proclaim at March 25 (the 60th anniversary of the EU) a new European State and appeal to all citizens of Europe to throw off the chains of the nation state and join this new European state.** Of course, this is a highly symbolic act. There is no European State and there are no exclusive European citizens. It only sets a goal. Members of DiEM should subscribe this goal and act on it.

New States

The new European state is a fully-fledged state, like a nation state. The European state has its own currency: the Euro. It can have its own tax system, social security and labor system that distributes employment. The state shares the ground with the nation states of Europe. Indeed, Europeans live anywhere. The idea raises many questions. If the land is shared who will build houses and roads? The nation states or the European state? Will there be separate enclaves of Europeans? How do you split tax systems? And the social security? Has the European state a constitution? What about the administrative organization? Do Europeans vote only European politicians? Will there be a European and a national police? Who will maintain order? Will there be a European TV? A European cultural policy? Can local currencies be converted into Euros and vice versa? Who determines the exchange rate? Are there shops where you can pay only in local currencies like guilders? Must Companies choose whether they will be national or European companies? Must Europeans have a work permit to work in national companies? These and many more technical questions will be solved in negotiations between states. I have investigated some strategies and guidelines (see article neo-states). These issues are all solvable, and are not really relevant at this point.

Here we should focus on emotions. This deal will call very strong emotions. The declaration of the European state is pure identity politics. What I propose is to divide the population of a nation state in two groups: a group that finds its identity in the national state, and a group that identifies themselves with the European state. These two groups live together because they share the ground but retain experience and develop their own identity.

Every citizen has a free choice. You can choose whether you belong to a National State, a European State or ... a new Regional State. For example, citizens of Scotland or Catalonia may establish their own neo-state. Which means Scotland, Great Britain and Europe will share the Scottish ground because they live Scottish, British and European citizens on it.

Shake up relations between states

Presently Member States and the EU are caught in a deadly embrace. The freedom of choice for citizens to choose their state creates new space and movement. Some nationalists and members of the establishment of this agency will be shocked by this freedom. Nationalists will call the people that 'leave' the national state traitors. They believe it is not possible to exchange national pride and identity for a new European identity. The establishment is suddenly saddled with a group of people who really want to do something with Europe, and which cannot be referred to a Nation State. This idea creates other words, a completely new "frame" that requires new relations, solutions and creativity. It is an idea with great potential. Nobody can really predict the impact of this revolution, but one thing is certain, it is contrary to our current course the potential to grow into something beautiful.

To others, the idea will be very attractive. European federalists can embrace this idea because it actually maps out a route to a European state. Some nationalists will say, when the leftist elite have left the national state the nation-state will be more homogeneous and national identity can be preserved better. Both, however, should realize that they are no longer exclusively entitled to a piece of territory. Although they have their own state, they will have to share the land.

But above all, stands the new freedom of European citizens. Ultimately they determine the relationship between the nation-states. Every citizen, every Diem-er will have to make a choice: Do I want to stay within a nation-state, or do I want to be a European? These choices realize the power relations between states. These relations are dynamic. People can change their mind, and switch states.

Cultural and economic pluralism

We live in uncertain times. Citizens are afraid and angry in northern Europe, and poor and unemployed in the South of Europe. We fear other cultures and migrants. We fear for the loss of our work by globalization and robotics. In these troubled times new ways are required. There does not exist a unique holy path or truth. So let's give space to identity, culture and new states. Allow new communities to be created, large and small, with its own currencies, its own economics, its own norms and values. Internet and ICT can facilitate these changes. Europe can be an example for a new flexible world order, which is no longer

rigidly fixed at 200 nation-states. Let us create new states. Let us opt for pluralism which has made Europe great.

March 4 2017, Johannes WH Janssen