



NEWSLETTER

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CEE NETWORK FOR GENDER ISSUES WISHES YOU A HAPPY, HEALTHY, SUCCESSFUL AND PEACEFUL 2020.

Dear reader,

The first Newsletter in 2020 is somewhat different. It includes information on gender equality and references that may be of use to our readers. But this time we have decided to include a number of articles and opinions that may be relevant to progressive parties and politicians. We encourage you to share any articles you might want featured by sending them to us at: ceegendernet@gmail.com.

We would like to use this opportunity to inform our readers that the CEE Network has become Ambassador for the European Pillar of Social Rights. While we shall circulate information and articles regarding the Pillar we encourage you to send us any relevant information, studies and analysis on the same to the above email address.

We apologise that this number is in English. We do not have the resources to translate the text.

Editor



Beijing + 25

The Civil Society **Advisory Working Group** (AWG) of the Beijing +25 review process has shared the minute of their last call on December 23th. The minutes are attached to this email. The next call of the AWG is Tuesday January 7th at 5pm (EST). If you want to join this group comprised by more than 280 activists, send a message to beijing25@ngocsw.org.

Among the various parallel initiatives reported, we want to highlight the progress and next steps of the **Feminist Women's Movement Action Plan (FWMAP)**, which is the women's organizations' initiative built upon existing legal obligations and international consensus to assert women's human rights throughout the review process and beyond. As women's human rights is also at the core of FAR's work, we want to invite our members to actively engage with the FWMAP.

In the past months, six thematic groups were formed to organize themes in order to address issues and achieve the goals of the FWMAP:

- Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation
- Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes
- Poverty eradication, social protection and social services
- Inclusive development, share prosperity and decent work
- Peaceful and inclusive societies
- Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

As we are entering to a second stage, we have been invited to participate in virtual conferences using *VoiceVoice* calls and *Maestro*, to discuss topics and issues under each thematic working group during January and February. *Check out the [schedule](#) and save the date.*

The first conference, which is taking place on **January 7 3:00 pm EST*** (**check your time zone*), is called ***Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work***. Critical areas of concern that will be addressed include:

- Women and poverty,
- Women and the economy,
- Human Rights of Women,
- Human Rights of Girls
- Women and health + CEDAW + SDG targets

You can register [here](#) to the next Maestro conference.



<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/03/bosnian-women-balkan-war-no-justice-and-no-political-power/>

Bosnia - For Women, No Justice & Limited Political Presence¹

In the Balkan wars, women were targets. In postwar governments, they've been pushed out of sight.

BY [RIADA ASIMOVIC AKYOL](#)

October 3, 2019 - Both men and women suffer the consequences of wars, but conflicts and humanitarian disasters around the world tend to disproportionately affect women and children. Additionally, women's voices are regularly excluded or ignored during peacemaking.

In the wake of political deals agreed between men, women tend to remain underrepresented in decision-making roles. This is clear from data compiled by UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations [showing](#) that in major peace processes between 1992 and 2017, women made up just 3 percent of mediators, 3 percent of witnesses and signatories, and 9 percent of negotiators. The problem lies not just in the numbers, but in women's influence on political decisions. Women first have to struggle for inclusion, then for the recognition of the benefits of it, and even then, they rarely have much political power to exert real influence.

The specific challenges that women face after the bloodshed has stopped is a whole different story. In my own country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, [no woman](#) was among the negotiators, mediators, or signatories of the internationally brokered Dayton agreement in 1995.

During the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence, leading to a bloody war between 1992 and 1995 in which at least 100,000 people were killed. Of a prewar population of 4.3 million, 900,000 became refugees, and a further 1.3 million were internally displaced. Both the International Court of Justice and the United Nations war crimes court for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague [ruled](#) that the slaughter of 8,000 Bosniak men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995 by Bosnian Serb forces was genocide. Families of at least [7,000 missing persons](#) still haven't even found their loved ones to bury.

Today, 24 years after the war ended, there are many reasons why the country is still drowning in inertia, insecurity, and instability.

Fundamentally, the political structure that was set up by the Dayton Peace Agreement created [arguably](#) "the world's most complicated system of government," as the *Guardian* put it. It created two entities, Republika Srpska (populated mostly by Serbs) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (with mostly Bosniaks and Croats).

Multitiered, inefficient structures also include parliaments at state and lower levels, the self-governed Brcko District, and 10 cantons in the federation. The Dayton agreement affirmed ethnic power-sharing among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats as three constituent peoples, "along with Others." Jews and Roma, for example, don't have the right to be an equal part of the tripartite presidency. The European Court of Human Rights ruled back in 2009 that Bosnia's constitution is [discriminatory](#).

¹ See. CEE Network Chair, Dasa Silovic, study on the Dayton Peace Accords and gender equality, 1999



It suits all nationalist elites to keep ethnic tensions alive, as it helps them remain in power. According to the most recent [European Islamophobia Report](#), besides the continuation of the denial of genocide and war crimes by the Serb authorities, there is “a large increase in anti-Bosnian and anti-Muslim bigotry by the Bosnian Croat and Croatian political establishments and also by regional political actors.”

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, no woman were among the negotiators, mediators, or signatories of the Dayton agreement in 1995.

In such a volatile environment, it's not easy to find much of an audience interested in discussing gender issues or the peculiar problems that women have faced after war. This is both sad and disgraceful, particularly considering the atrocities and savageness many women survived in the 1990s.

Mass rape was used as a military tool—predominantly against Bosnian Muslims—alongside forced impregnations of women and other brutal forms of [sexual violence](#). Today, there are still legal discrepancies with international standards, and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women recently [recommended](#) the amendment of the Bosnian Criminal Code and a definition of wartime sexual violence “including a specific definition of rape as a war crime and as a crime against humanity, in order to adequately reflect the gravity of the crimes committed.” But, in post-Dayton Bosnia, in which different narratives of the past dictate today's realities, many rape survivors have had to fight with authorities to even get the status of civilian victim of war.

Moreover, as in many other countries around the world, sexual violence survivors in Bosnia still deal with additional [stigmas](#) in their communities. They also have little legal protection. Following the closure of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in December 2017, the war crimes trials were left to the national courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia. It all went downhill from there.

A guide to risk assessment and risk management of intimate partner violence against women for police

Almost 1 in 3 women in an intimate partner relationship in the EU Member States has experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and globally 38 % of all murders of women are intimate partner femicides (33). Both figures indicate the deep societal roots and persistence of gender-based violence in particular and of gender inequality in general.

Risk assessment procedures and risk management strategies, when properly implemented, can efficiently protect female victims of intimate partner violence and prevent their revictimisation.

This guide is specifically centred on intimate partner violence, since it is the most widespread form of violence against women, affecting women's well-being, autonomy and equal access to opportunities. In particular, it focuses on risk assessment and risk management processes and practices implemented by the police.

The police are considered to be a key actor in the criminal justice system of all EU Member States, since they are often tasked with the front-line management of intimate partner violence, taking the lead role in formal risk assessment processes

Risk assessment and management of intimate partner violence in the EU



Police officers play a leading role in reducing violence against women by an intimate partner. They are often the first authority victims turn to for protection, especially in countries where police are trusted. Risk assessment and risk management strategies are two vital steps that ensure the immediate safety of victims and prevent further violence.

Protecting and supporting women who are victims of intimate partner violence is a priority for the European Union. The Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) sets out a framework for risk assessment by promoting the individual assessment of victims, based on a case-by-case approach. While steps have been taken to improve institutional responses and strengthen prevention measures against intimate partner violence, risk assessment and risk management practices remain fragmented across EU Member States.

https://www.2030spotlight.org/sites/default/files/spot2018/chaps/Spotlight_Innenteil_2018_sdg5_simeoni.pdf

Women, macroeconomic policies and the SDGs

Why inclusive macroeconomic policies are important for the SDGs Issues of economic growth and rising inequality are slowly taking centre stage in the realm of development, together with an increased focus on the need for economic policies centred around human rights. African economies have grown progressively over the last decades and now rank among the fastest growing economies of the world.

However, not all segments of the African population have benefitted. Africa's economic growth has been accompanied by a rise in both gender inequality and income inequality. Worldwide, there are more and more questions around ensuring equal access to resources, opportunities, dignity and voice. It is crucial that these conversations be inclusive and just for both women and men.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") is an ambitious attempt at setting a global policy framework that, if fully implemented, looks towards achieving gender equality in a transformative manner.

However, UNECA (2017). despite some progress, there is still a long way to go in areas such as improving access to health care, education, sanitation and women's overall quality of life. Moreover, there has been a trend to relegate the issue of women's economic empowerment to micro level analysis and intervention. To achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda, women's economic empowerment must be understood as far more than a woman's ability to compete equally in existing markets, or as the beneficial outputs of her contribution to growth. It must include women's access to and control over economic resources, including land; access to decent work, small medium and large markets and entire value chains; control over their time; and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions and policy spaces.

Often, particularly with respect to women in rural areas, interventions do not approach the issue from this perspective, but instead adopt patronizing policies that do not recognize women as equal and view them as less than full agents of development. Current approaches to mainstream economics remain excessively narrow and continue to reinforce gender inequality. Examples include definitions of 'production' and economic analyses that do not include women's labour in care work, instead systematically undervaluing – often erasing – it as a contributing component to GDP growth. This is especially true for women in rural



areas who are full time care-givers for children, the sick, disabled and elderly, who are also responsible for building and repairing homes and sourcing and gathering water...

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/01/03/globally-women-are-younger-than-their-male-partners-more-likely-to-age-alone/?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=11fad8b85a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_02_06_40&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-11fad8b85a-400118105

Globally, Women Are Younger than Their Male Partners & More Likely to Age Alone

Across religions and regions, women are younger than their male partners

Muslims have the widest spousal age gap (6.6 years between men and their wives or partners), followed by Hindus (5.6 years), Christians (3.8), Buddhists (2.9), the religiously unaffiliated (2.3) and Jews (2.1).

Large age gaps are especially common in sub-Saharan Africa, including in Gambia (14.5 years between men and their wives or partners), Guinea (13.5) and Mali (12.9). There are much narrower gaps in European countries such as the Czech Republic (2.0), Slovakia (2.1) and Estonia (2.2) – though the United States and China (both 2.2) also are notable examples of small gaps.

Within individual countries, the size of the spousal age gap can vary by religion. For example, Christian men in Nigeria are 9.2 years older than their female partners, on average, while Muslim men are 13.0 years older. Nigeria's population is about [half Christian and half Muslim](#).

Older women are more likely to live alone

The pattern of spousal age gaps – and the fact that women tend to live at least a few years [longer than men](#) – helps explain another universal theme: Across the world, women are about twice as likely as men to age alone. One-in-five women ages 60 and older live in a solo household (20%), compared with one-in-ten men (11%).

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/816281518818814423/pdf/2019-WDR-Report.pdf>

The Changing Nature of Work

At a time when the global economy is growing and the poverty rate is the lowest in recorded history, it would be easy to become complacent and overlook looming challenges. One of the most critical is the future of work, the subject of the 2019 World Development Report.

“Machines are coming to take our jobs” has been a concern for hundreds of years—at least since the industrialization of weaving in the early 18th century, which raised productivity and also fears that thousands of workers would be thrown out on the streets. Innovation and technological progress have caused disruption, but they have created more prosperity than they have destroyed. Yet today, we are riding a new wave of uncertainty as the pace of innovation continues to accelerate and technology affects every part of our lives.

We know that robots are taking over thousands of routine tasks and will eliminate many low-skill jobs in advanced economies and developing countries. At the same time, technology is creating opportunities, paving the way for new and altered jobs, increasing productivity, and improving the delivery of public



services. When we consider the scope of the challenge to prepare for the future of work, it is important to understand that many children currently in primary school will work in jobs as adults that do not even exist today.

That is why this Report emphasizes the primacy of human capital in meeting a challenge that, by its very definition, resists simple and prescriptive solutions. Many jobs today, and many more in the near future, will require specific skills—a combination of technological know-how, problem-solving, and critical thinking as well as soft skills such as perseverance, collaboration, and empathy. The days of staying in one job, or with one company, for decades are waning. In the gig economy, workers will likely have many gigs over the course of their careers, which means they will have to be lifelong learners.

Innovation will continue to accelerate, but developing countries will need to take rapid action to ensure they can compete in the economy of the future. They will have to invest in their people with a fierce sense of urgency especially in health and education, which are the building blocks of human capital to harness the benefits of technology and to blunt its worst disruptions. But right now too many countries are not making these critical investments.

Our Human Capital Project aims to fix that. This study unveils our new Human Capital Index, which measures the consequences of neglecting investments in human capital in terms of the lost productivity of the next generation of workers. In countries with the lowest human capital investments today, our analysis suggests that the workforce of the future will only be one-third to one-half as productive as it could be if people enjoyed full health and received a high-quality education.

Adjusting to the changing nature of work also requires rethinking the social contract. We need new ways to invest in people and to protect them, regardless of their employment status. Yet four out of five people in developing countries have never known what it means to live with social protection. With 2 billion people already working in the informal sector—unprotected by stable wage employment, social safety nets, or the benefits of education—new working patterns are adding to a dilemma that predates the latest innovations.

This Report challenges governments to take better care of their citizens and calls for a universal, guaranteed minimum level of social protection. It can be done with the right reforms, such as ending unhelpful subsidies; improving labor market regulations; and, globally, overhauling taxation policies. Investing in human capital is not just a concern for ministers of health and education; it should also be a top priority for heads of state and ministers of finance. The Human Capital Project will put the evidence squarely in front of those decision makers, and the index will make it hard to ignore.

The 2019 World Development Report is unique in its transparency. For the first time since the World Bank began publishing the WDR in 1978, we made an updated draft publicly available, online each week, throughout the writing process. For over seven months, it has benefited from thousands of comments and ideas from development practitioners, government officials, scholars, and readers from all over the world. I hope many of you will have already read the Report. Over 400,000 downloads later (and counting), I am pleased to present it to you in its final form.

Jim Yong Kim
President
World Bank Group



- FROM THE PRESS -

Who votes for you?

The interesting question is whether, in the heat of battle, the exhausted voters can get over their fatigue, cynicism and timidity and take their own side in a fight.

The overarching geographical narrative of the elections are telling. Are urban areas more open to your ideology and ideas? Who votes in rural areas? Where, today, lies the socialdemocratic electorate, which was traditionally among workers and those disposed? Has the shift been decades in the making? Is there a disconnect between the labour unions and socialdemocratic parties?

But the industrial communities that gave rise to the birth of the labor movement no longer exist. In line with neo-liberal economics economy's industrial grounding was more or less abandoned as a lost cause especially in Eastern Europe and countries in transition. The final destruction of the mines, factories and shipyards resulted in social devastation. As these workplaces disappeared, so too did the surrounding community infrastructure including weakening the trade unions. This also meant the isolation of these areas from the country's economic development causing feeling of anger about socio-economic marginalization. The issue is can socialdemocrats and progressive re-empower and re-engage with its constituency. Socialdemocratic parties must try. If they do not, they may remain on the political margins and have to say goodbye.

But there are, basically, two power blocs driving politics today. First, there's the proletariat. These are the working-class voters. Second, there is the precariat. These are the young and educated voters caught in the gig economy, who see no career security ahead. They want leaders who will promise enveloping policies — free college, free internet, free child care — to give them some sense of safety.²

² David Leonhardt



These two groups are different in some ways. When the proletarians attack their enemies, they do so from a position of perceived social inferiority, so their attacks are resentful and brutal. When the precariat attacks, it does so from a position of perceived moral superiority, so its attacks are filled with ridicule, mockery and scorn.

But the movements do have parallels. Both are driven by a fear of the future, and of each other. Both have a tendency to embrace catastrophic, apocalyptic visions of the ruin around us. Dystopia has become the opiate of the activist class.

Haunted by economic insecurity, they will tolerate any sin in their leader — racism, anti-Semitism, dishonesty — so long as that person is willing to fight and be on their side. They both support massive, unrealistic policy proposals, because they reject the idea that politics is simply the muddled way we settle differences with people we disagree with.

These two power blocs are driving the debate and setting the agenda. But there's another group of people, who have become the most interesting part of the electorate. It's the exhausted 75 percent, people who are defined not by any common ideology but by an affective state — they are simply worn out by the endless war between these two armies. Exhaustion has become an independent force in modern politics. Many people are voting for whatever candidate will exhaust them less.

People in the exhausted camp are tired of having politics thrust in their face every hour. Those who are exhausted have other things to do. They want to restore politics to its rightful place, and find meaning, attachment, entertainment and morality in something else besides Twitter wars and election campaigns.

Years and years of exhaustion have also made these people weary, cynical and disgusted. Exhaustion, as always, induces a sort of pessimism, a feeling that we are living in terrible times, a sort of weariness of the soul.

But the chief feature of the voters in the exhausted group is timidity. They do not get energy from conflict, the way, say, Trump does. Their instinct is to keep their heads down and just get through this craziness. In this way, those in the exhausted camp perpetuate their own misery. They complain about the terrible choices each election cycle, but never organize enough or become imaginative enough to offer something they themselves might want.³

Addressing rural areas

A strong progressive platform with realistic plans for rural areas would focus on four themes:

- demography
 - infrastructure
 - farm sustainability
 - environmental practices that can help combat climate change
-



As young people flee for jobs elsewhere, many towns are dying or already dead. What lies ahead for rural areas is more school mergers and less hospitals with rural poverty on the rise. A political push is needed for local and state governments to direct infrastructure improvements and the like to “opportunity zones” with growth potential. Those communities are often the ones that have a thriving hospital and an institution of higher learning.

Rural hubs will survive with investment. Communities that want to invest in themselves, develop creative strategies for growth, and partner with regional development efforts should be supported.

Rural infrastructure offers great opportunity for jobs and development: invest in farm-to-market roads, the lock and dam systems and the rapid development of rural broadband.

Equally important is inviting farmers to lead the charge in fighting global warming. Farmers can help keep carbon out of the atmosphere through a process called carbon sequestration, a natural result of the right farming practices. These include planting cover crops, leaving organic matter in fields after harvest, rotating in additional kinds of crops and managing grazing.

The people in the two big power blocs are not good at winning the war against each other, but they are really good at intimidating the moderates on their own side. The interesting question is whether, in the heat of battle, the exhausted voters can get over their fatigue, cynicism and timidity and take their own side in a fight.

Engaging with civil society

“Democracy is a muscle. Just as babies have to strengthen their leg muscles to walk, we all have to develop the skills we need to act collectively to achieve our common interests. We must invest in the organizations and movements that can equip people in that way. Only then will people become the source of resilience we need to protect democracy.”⁴

People around the world are angry. They don’t have a say in things that matter in their lives. So they protest, sign petitions, call their lawmakers and organize sit-ins. Despite this enormous energy, their actions can often feel futile. How can we make them add up to something more, so people have power over the things they care about?

It turns out that even three million people marching down a boulevard may not bring about change. Raising more money or shifting public opinion to your side may not either. Just amassing resources, in other words, is no better than flipping a coin. Instead, people’s power depends not on *what* they have, but how they *use* what they have. To build power, outrage needs organization.

Success of civil society groups needs leaders who are strategists. They act like generals, corporate executives or football coaches navigating complex and uncertain environments to win. These leaders build organizations designed to strengthen relationships with and among members. At the center of the

⁴ Hahrie Han (@hahriehan) is the director of the [SNF Agora Institute](#) at Johns Hopkins University



organizations are after all people with real-world problems that the leaders are committed to solving, instead of meeting donors' arbitrary "metrics for success." These strategists know that *people* are the source of their power and none of this can be done by sitting behind a computer or with a couple of one-off rallies. These organizations succeed because their leaders feel a desperate urgency to change the status quo, an urgency that comes from being accountable to members who need to solve concrete problems in their lives.

Successful leaders are successful strategists because they are not working to move up the party establishment hierarchy, make a donor happy or satisfy someone else's vision. Such people are often unwilling to take risks or reject their party orthodoxy. Being accountable to real people with real problems not only creates urgency but also sparks creativity.

Disinformation

"Politicians must play some defense by understanding what information is out there that may be manipulated..."⁵

Few politicians have teams to spot false statements about them online, or to fight back before it spreads. Still, few politicians or their staffs are prepared to quickly notice and combat incorrect stories about them, according to dozens of campaign staff members and researchers who study online disinformation. Several of the researchers said they were surprised by how little outreach they had received from politicians.

Campaigns and political parties say their hands are tied, because big online companies like Facebook and YouTube have few restrictions on what users can say or share, as long as they do not lie about who they are. But campaigns should not just be throwing their hands up instead, they said, there should be a concerted effort to counter falsehoods.

Political groups are not ignoring false information.

- Advice should be developed on when and how to respond.
- Campaigns must decide when the costs of ignoring a falsehood outweighed drawing additional attention to it by speaking out. Facebook does not remove false news, though it does label some stories as false through a partnership with several fact-checking organizations.
- Even more important for politicians is pushing "high-profile and consistent informational campaigns."

Academics and researchers say it is surprising how little outreach there had been from campaigns that faced disinformation operations. Many of the researchers can dissect when a false idea first appeared online, and how it spread. One side will accuse the other, and then disinformation itself is weaponized.

⁵ Joan Donovan, a research director at Harvard University's Shorenstein Center.



Democracy Today⁶

In its 2019 report, Freedom House notes that last year, more countries became more oppressive than more free — the 13th consecutive year of more decline than progress.

[Larry Diamond](#), a respected political scientist at Stanford, in his impassioned book “Ill Winds,” proves a stalwart, persuasive champion for democracy at a moment when its reputation has been fouled by Britain mauling itself with Brexit and by the United States electing someone as morally, intellectually and literally bankrupt as Donald Trump.

In their chilling recent book “How Democracies Die,” the political scientists [Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt](#) argued that the main threat to democracy today lurks within: from elected autocrats like Viktor Orban in Hungary and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, who hijack the courts, stifle opposition parties and muzzle the press. For Diamond, the menace also comes from the outside: a transnational surge of authoritarian populism across Europe and the United States, along with a rising China and an assertive Russia that are “avidly undermining democracies and liberal values around the world.”

Despite the current gloom, the world has become far freer over the past two centuries, driven mostly by domestic politics but influenced by the international rise and fall of great powers. Diamond was one of the first democracy experts to warn that this third wave was expiring; he now fears that a deepening democratic recession since about 2006 could devolve into an era of tyranny.

Welfare state

Most Western systems were not designed to confront the kind of poverty prevalent today. When these systems were put in place in the 1950s and '60s, unemployment was more often a temporary thing that happened between the time you got laid off from a big employer and the time you got hired by a new one. Now, economic insecurity is often a permanent state, as people patch together different jobs to make ends meet. Health issues for people in the welfare system are often chronic — obesity, diabetes, many forms of mental illness.

Our legacy welfare structures are ill suited to today’s poverty. In the old welfare model, social workers are detached professionals and overwhelmed, bound by bureaucratic rules and often slipping into emotional permafrost. The old legacy welfare programs were designed for people enmeshed in thick communities but who had suffered a temporary setback. Today many people lack precisely that web of thick relationship. The welfare state of the future has to build the social structures that people need to thrive. This is one way government can build community.⁷

⁶ Ill Winds - Saving Democracy From Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency By Larry Diamond

⁷ David Brooks has been a columnist with The Times since 2003. He is the author of “The Road to Character” and, most recently, “The Second Mountain.” [@nytdavidbrooks](#)



Coalition building - There's strength in unity

Every party entering the coalition must agree to painful compromises.

This doesn't mean that the politicians who are part of the coalition pretend that there are no differences between them. On the contrary, they are well aware that they constitute a diverse grouping. But by putting their disagreements aside and speaking not with one voice but with many voices, all expressing the same message, they are making stronger.

If there is one thing that the rightwing politicians invariably seem to be good at, it is grasping that in the age of social media politics is entertainment. They know how to hold an audience's attention and with a mix of humor, derision and venom, they are able to frighten citizens or amuse them — or do both at the same time. These politicians and their parties offer passionate politics, based on strong identities, radicalism and polarization.

- Politics isn't about casually held opinions on a wide range of topics, but [focused prioritization](#) of specifics. In order to win, the center left needs to discuss topics and policies, like ecology, health and child care, welfare, women's rights.
 - At the same time, it is essential to think in the longer term. Sometimes you need to turn your phone — and your politics — on "airplane mode," take a break from refreshing your feeds and really build a democratic agenda.
 - Progressives need to be creative in adapting to the new challenges of 21st century politics. The right traffics in fear and nostalgia; progressives must offer hope instead of cultivating defeatism.
 - Shallow center left coalitions do not work unless they prioritise and focus on a small number of issues they all support.
 - It's important to keep fighting the right on the internet by responding to their provocative posts.
 - Protesting violations of the rule of law and corruption, however justified, is reactive. Rather than accusing their fellow citizens of being "clients of fascists," they need to make the case for why an independent judiciary is in their interests. That is what will win the day — not name-calling.
 - Only by building a rich democratic agenda can we reverse the damage done by right wing governments. This forces the right wing to be reactive. Bottom line – fight on substance and be forward looking and on the offense.
 - Voters need a sense of optimism and purpose. Progressives should campaign on positive programs, on issues that people care about.
 - The center left needs to build forward-looking movements that appeal to broad sections of citizens and voters.
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Why I Am a European Patriot⁸

The bond that binds the West is freedom. Patriotism is to nationalism as dignity is to barbarism.

When I covered the war in Bosnia I got to know Nermin Tulic, a prominent Sarajevo actor. He had his legs blown off by a Serbian shell on June 10, 1992.

He raged. He begged me not to look at his stumps. He wondered how he had ever taken his wife, who was half-Serb, in his arms. He told me how he had wanted to die as he lay in the hospital and, on the floor below, his wife gave birth to their second daughter.

Only his father's words gave him the will to live: "A child needs his father even if he just sits in the corner."

I am a European patriot because I witnessed how nationalism could turn a cosmopolitan European city into the place where Tulic lost his legs. Nationalism, self-pitying and aggressive, seeks to change the present in the name of an illusory past in order to create a future vague in all respects except its glory. Pregnant with violence, manipulating fear, it is an exercise in mass delusion. I hate it with all my being.

As François Mitterrand, the former French president, observed in 1995, prejudices must be conquered because the alternative is nationalism — and "[nationalism is war](#)."

Almost a quarter-century later, nationalism advances. The American president [declares](#): "You know what I am? I'm a nationalist. O.K.? I'm a nationalist." This is how dangerous words achieve banality.

From Hungary to France, from Poland to Britain, nationalists pour scorn on the European Union and seek its unraveling.

I am a European patriot because I read the war diary of my uncle Bert Cohen of the 6th South African Armored Division, 19th Field Ambulance. He reached Italy's Monte Cassino on July 21, 1944. His diary entry:

"Poor Cassino, horror, wreck and desolation unbelievable, roads smashed and pitted, mines, booby traps and graves everywhere. Huge shell holes, craters filled with stagnant slime, smashed buildings, hardly outlines remaining, a silent sight of ghosts and shadows. Pictures should be taken of this monument to mankind's worst moments and circulated through every schoolroom."

That was Europe not so very long ago. I would also send to every schoolroom a [photo of Willy Brandt](#), the West German chancellor, on his knees in the Warsaw ghetto in 1970 ("I did what people do when words fail them"); Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl, the French and German leaders, [holding hands](#) at Verdun

⁸ Roger Cohen has been a columnist for The Times since 2009. His columns appear Wednesday and Saturday. He joined The Times in 1990, and has served as a foreign correspondent and foreign editor. [@NYTimesCohen](#)



in 1984 in the place where hundreds of thousands of their countrymen died fighting in 1916; Muslim refugees from the Bosnian [town of Srebrenica](#), women and children, their menfolk executed by Serb nationalists, clamoring for help from United Nations forces in 1995.

I am a European patriot because I have lived in Germany and seen how the idea of Europe provided salvation to postwar Germans; because I have lived in Italy and seen how the European Union anchored the country in the West when the communist temptation was strong; because I have lived in Belgium and seen what painstaking steps NATO and the European Union took to forge a Europe that is whole and free; because I have lived in France and seen how Europe gave the French a new avenue for expressing their universal message of human dignity; because I have lived in Britain and seen how Europe broadened the post-imperial British psyche and, more recently, to what impasse little-England insularity leads; because I have lived in the Balkans and chronicled a European war that took 100,000 lives; because “plain-routine, rut-living Bertie Cohen of Johannesburg,” as he put it, came to Europe to save the continent along with the young Americans whose graves I have gazed at in Normandy. Not least, I am a European patriot because I am a Jew.

I am a European patriot and an American patriot. I am not from one place but several. The bond that binds the West is freedom — the cry of revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic. There is no contradiction in my patriotisms. Patriotism is to nationalism as dignity is to barbarism. As nationalism equals war, so contempt for the law brings savagery.

Will anyone remember Europa? As the Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska wrote of the [aftermath of war](#): “Those who knew/ what was going on here/ must make way for/ those who know little./ And less than little./ And finally as little as nothing.”

European patriots do remember. They are multiplying in the face of danger. Writers including Milan Kundera, Elfriede Jelinek, Ian McEwan, Anne Applebaum, Salman Rushdie, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Herta Müller, Adam Michnik and Orhan Pamuk [have just published](#) an important European manifesto, drafted by Lévy.

Europe, it declares, “has been abandoned by the two great allies who in the previous century twice saved it from suicide; one across the Channel and the other across the Atlantic. The continent is vulnerable to the increasingly brazen meddling of the occupant of the Kremlin. Europe as an idea is falling apart before our eyes. ... We must now fight for the idea of Europe or see it perish beneath the waves of populism.”

We must. European unity is a peace magnet. I am a European patriot for my children and grandchildren. It is they who will pay the price if the most beautiful postwar political idea dies.