THE UNDERDEVELOPED DUTY DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

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Abstract

There is a linkage between the way we use our idiom of citizenship, our views of the city as an order of freedom, and the importance we give to the duty dimension of citizenship as it is linked to the defense of such order. Many Europeans have a limited understanding of the Europan city as an order of freedom to be defended. The author suggests reasons why the duty dimension of European citizens may be underdeveloped as a result of several cumulative historical experiences.

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ASP Research Papers

1. Introduction: In a spirit of Euromoderation

Today, Europe's enlightened classes talk and act as if 'Europe', by this possibly meaning 'the Europeans', had wholeheartedly decided to build a politically united Europe. But for this to be true there should be a European political culture of active citizenry, which is still missing. The European public space and the European demos, which are two key and interrelated components of a European *civitas*, remain elusive loci and characters. There is evidence of the Europeans' malaise regarding what actually goes on in the European Union. Many seem detached from the workings of the European institutions, if not from the institutions themselves, nor do they seem to understand the maze of regulations and directives emanating from them. Sometimes, when summed to referenda to confirm the results of the on-going bargain among the European political elites that goes as European politics, the European public refuses to go along, as happened in Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden on different occasions, and almost happened in France at the time of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Euroenthusiasts may disdain these signs and adopt the motto of 'pushing forwards no matter what', as suggested by today's reaction of the political elites to the low turnover in the latest European elections, as they rush into approving a Constitution people barely know. But these moves intimate a deficit of democratic leadership, as they demonstrate the leaders' limited respect for the demos they are supposed to lead.

In time, this overeagerness to lead 'no matter what' is bound to be counterproductive. Instead, pausing for a reappraisal of the conceptual and historical basis of the European process seems to me a wiser strategy, and particularly so in times such as the current ones, of external aggression, internal division and general confusion. This is why, in a spirit of Euromoderation, I will apply a dose of critical thinking to a crucial, but still missing, component of the political culture which should lie at the basis of any democratic construction of a united Europe. I will point at the limited understanding many Europeans have of the European city as an order of freedom and of their European citizenship as including their duty to defend that order. I will explore some of the causes of this limited understanding which are rooted in a relatively recent past, while I leave for another occasion the discussion of its consequences in regard to our current dangers, in particular to the war on terror, and to the future.

My argument proceeds in two steps. Firstly, I analyze the idiom of citizenship and emphasize the duty dimension of citizenship as it comes out in the classical discourse. I hold a view of the *civitas* as an order of freedom, and I point out that this order is neither self-perpetuating nor self-defending. From a normative viewpoint, it should be built and re-built once and again, and actively defended, and here lies the importance of the duty dimension of citizenship. But ideas and discourses have to be seen in context. Thus, secondly, I move to the historical terrain of modern, contemporary Europe and look for the context of plausibility of that discourse. My story suggests, in broad outlines, some of the reasons why the duty dimension of

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citizenship may be underdeveloped in the European continent, and has made peoples and governments used to an attitude of free-riders in matters of security and external defense.

2. The European idioms of citizenship, and the duty to defend the city as an order of freedom

Idioms of practical reasoning and ways of life

Alasdair MacIntyre (1988: 389ff.) suggests that our idiom of practical reasoning follows from tacit presuppositions embedded in our way of life and fits the kind of people we understand ourselves to be. We cannot invent or decide on our idiom as we wish, just by thinking deeply about it or by changing our mind set. The idiom has to fit our actual experiences. One particular idiom of practical reasoning in politics, that of citizenship, belongs in the practice of living in the city and attending to the rights and duties a citizen is supposed to care about, and to the common good.

The idiom of citizenship admits a range of variations. That of our modern city, which is the Western style political community of the last two to three centuries, has evolved around a complex compromise, a blend of sorts, between the classical idiom of the ancient city and a new range of arguments which emerged in early modern Europe. It is deeply influenced by the classical idiom of the past and remains so until this day, but the implication is that, in order for this idiom to persist, a significant fragment of the classical way of life has to persist too, encapsulated within (MacIntyre 1988: 391), or in connection with, the new life forms of a modern, open society, that is, those corresponding to the liberal , and not the communitarian, principles of a market economy, a plural society and a diversity of world-views.

Europe as a system of European cities, and the emergence, in some of them, of an order of freedom

The very idea of 'Europe', and of 'Europe as a system of cities', or autonomous political communities, came into being at roughly the same time. According to historians such as J.G.A. Pocock (1999: 20), the term 'Europe' slowly replaced that of 'Christendom' between the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (about 1713) and the American and French Revolutions. At that time, Europe gradually became a system of competing states linked by a community of trade and manners. In England and, in time and to some extent, in other countries as well, a commercial and polite society came to exist under the rule of law and a government able to ensure internal peace, with relatively little interference from the Church, religious congregations or sects. The conditions were set for a revival of the idiom of citizenship, which was adopted from a very old and distinguished tradition which, by many different routes, including those of

Christianity and of the legal and civic humanism so prominent in the history of the Italian cities, could be traced back to classical times.

This idiom was based on the definition of a citizen as a member of a *civitas*, a political community of a certain kind. While this membership afforded the individual an array of rights, it also made him subject to certain duties. In the classical city, the right to rule was counteracted by the right to be properly ruled. This implied the duty to obey while making it contingent on certain conditions, including the rulers' submission to the laws of the city. In the classical vision, the 'many' could make their voice heard, and possibly elect their leaders, while the 'few' ruled but were accountable to the 'many', and all of them should perform their roles within the framework of fairly stable and predictable rules (Aristotle 1941 [4th century BC]: 1212ff.).

The *modern* political community which corresponded to a polite and commercial society, *à l'anglaise*, introduced an understanding of the rules as subject to strict limits, as their scope was restrained by a range of citizens' rights. These rights intimated a general right to the 'negative liberty' (Berlin 1969:118ff.) that allowed for the individuals' freedom from external coercion in the disposal of basic resources and attributes such as physical security, private property, honor or religious beliefs. Each of these liberties developed as responses to specific situations, but at some point they were seen as interconnected, mutually reinforcing and clustered around a principle of liberty which made sense of those connections, and around a general view of a well ordered society as an order of freedom. This order could be understood as a systematic arrangement of individuals' negative liberties woven together.

The defense of the city and the two dimensions of citizenship: the classical heritage

This order of freedom has to be defended by human agents. It is not a self-regulatory, self-perpetuating and self-defending set of institutional mechanisms. Just by being, it does not persist in being. We do not live in Parmenides' world, in which the Being subsists in and by itself. The rules lay down the general conditions that any legitimate, legal, political action must subscribe to, but they are not a substitute for action, nor do they prescribe the action's content. This content is a matter of practical judgement to be made by individual agents in view of the premises and the situation at hand. There is a need for continuous activity to *mantenere lo stato* (Pocock 1975: 175) in the face of external enemies, internal corruption, or both, and in the face of *fortuna*, of ever changing new contingencies.

In order to conserve an order of freedom, within the limits of a *civitas*, a city-state or the nation-state of early modernity, there is a need for individual citizens to attend to public business in two forms, that of jurisprudence and that of government proper (*gubernaculum*). On the one hand, the rules have to be defined, revised if necessary, and implemented. On the other, a number of decisions are to be made, *hic et nunc*, in order to confront the wheel of fortune, face danger

and maybe cope with tragic circumstances. This is never more necessary than in time of war, when there is a pressing need to defend that order of freedom. At that time, Pericles' words do apply. In what has become a sacred text in the Western tradition of the open society of the Athenian-like cities, and not of the closed society of the Spartan-like ones, Pericles reminds us that freedom cannot persist unless people are willing to defend it and die for it (Thucydides 1972 [5th century BC]:143ff.).

Thus, in Pericles' view, the classical city of the open, liberal kind, the one which corresponds to an order of freedom, is free in two senses: it guarantees the individual freedoms of its citizens, and it does so by, among other things, not submitting to external powers inimical to that order. Membership in the city, citizenship, therefore, comprises two dimensions: a rights dimension, whereby people are entitled to enjoy, and to be protected in, the exercise of their liberties, and a duty dimension. The latter can be defined as the obligations of each citizen to the others, and the obligations of all of them to the city, which is their civic duty proper.

Varieties of active citizens: 'classical' citizens and 'monitorial' citizens

This liberal interpretation of citizenship is the legacy of intellectual debates and historical experiences accumulated over a very long period of time, but most notably from the 18th century onwards, on both sides of the Atlantic. Our understanding of the basic issues regarding the foundations and the challenges of citizenship in a free society remain the same. Its foundations are institutional mechanisms and understandings which make for an equilibrium of the rights and duties that individuals have as a result of being intelligent, willing, active parts in an order of freedom. Internal or external challenges threaten such an order with destruction and demand that citizens meet them in order to survive.

Thus, a city requires active citizens. I would not go so far as to say it requires full time 'professional' citizens, forever engaged in public business and prone to raptures of political enthusiasm, but I would argue that a city needs alert citizens who are committed enough to make their leaders accountable for their deeds, keep an eye on the course of events and be ready to pay a personal price for the defense of the city.

Under 'fair weather' conditions, these citizens will attend to their private concerns while they will be ready to intervene from time to time *à propos* of the specific issues they judge most relevant, as Michael Schudson suggests that contemporary American citizens do, when he describes them by the standards of what he calls the 'monitorial citizen' (1998: 311). This monitorial citizen becomes an active citizen the moment he crosses the line between paying only intermittent attention and paying more continuous attention to civic issues, while trying to justify his position on those issues in terms of a common good. The point is, however, that 'crossing that line' is a permanent, impending possibility. Because, for the selective behavior of

the monitorial citizen to be possible, the order of freedom as a whole must be in place; in other words, for citizens to scan the entire gamut of policy issues in order to pick up the 'interesting ones', some general conditions have to apply. Even though such conditions may be taken for granted in good times, in critical times they are challenged and must then be defended. As those times may come at any moment and without warning, a complex balance has to be struck between attending public and private concerns, since both should be attended at the same time and on a continuous basis.

The defense of the city as an order of freedom is therefore a crucial part of the citizen predicament. It is, of course, a fairly complex and multi-dimensional task. Legal work, political deliberation, diplomacy, trade, the educational process, religious rituals: all these activities make a contribution to that defense, and can be understood as being part of the defense instruments the city has at its disposal. There is no way, however, to elude the fact that readiness to use force in the defense of the city, if and when it is needed, is the hard core of such task, and provides a test of the citizens' sense of their civic duty.

3. A European story: (a) The drama of the Great War, and a drifting experience after the war

The contemporary record of the European societies in regard to our ability to make good the above conception of citizenship and meet its challenges, including the recourse to force in the defense of the city, is a mixed one. And our current political character results from, and reflects, that mixed record.

Let us assume that there was a hint of a European civil society in the emergent system of states in the 18th century, linked together by trade and a community of manners, a world view with an intensely positive evaluation of the 'earthly city' and a government to ensure peace, undisturbed by the religious conflicts typical of the preceding centuries. However, any hopes of such a civil society that might have been entertained in the 18th century would not materialize in the next two centuries. What we had was not so much a European *civil society* as an ongoing European *civil war*, interspersed with periods of truce between armed adversaries who turned into enemies when the occasion arose.

The European absolutist states and later the nation-states engaged in frequent wars. They fought in Europe, America and Asia, went through the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, and undertook a string of local wars throughout the 19th century. For most of this time, citizen performance consisted in acting out a mix of contrary dispositions. Thus, although it included a readiness to go to war against other nation-states, state-related nationalism often combined with constitutionalism, individual rights and liberalism. Citizens submitted to an education of

distrust and hatred towards other nations, but the possibility remained for agreements, common interests and common views among their members. While nationalism inclined people to engage in excesses of incivility, the language of civility was also part of the experience of being a citizen.

Nevertheless, the most crucial formative experiences in shaping our current understanding and practice of citizenship in Europe came in the 20th century. Once again the record is mixed, so that the 'happy experience' of Western Europe in the second half of the century must be put in perspective, and balanced against a dark side which looms far too large to be ignored or minimized. Here, the basic experiences of Europe have been the drama of the Great War, the turmoil of the inter-war period, World War II and the Cold War.

'Suffering' totalitarianism?

The Great War was the culmination of a series of steps undertaken in the previous century. The population was tamed and led into a path of mutual destruction, largely a suicidal one, by its elites. People went to school and received patriotic, if not chauvinistic, indoctrination by state schoolteachers. They went for military service to military barracks to be trained by state officers in much the same spirit. They read patriotic journals which depicted the world as a theater for the display of rivalries between nations. They attended church to listen to sermons by priests or pastors which blended patriotic and religious symbols. They supported political parties imbued with patriotic enthusiasm, or joined them at the critical moment. It can come as no surprise that people went to World War I singing patriotic songs, and then tried to adjust themselves the best they could to a life of misery in the trenches and devastating losses for more than four years.

Adjusted... up to a point. Having done their duty, these citizen soldiers returned home in a state of deep demoralization, which helps explain the rise of authoritarian, totalitarian, uncivil political parties and regimes all over continental Europe in the years to come. The spirit of war remained latent in European life under new guises such as intensified class struggles and racial hatred, and the old guise of aggressive nationalism.

The members of the constitutional polities of the 19th century had taken some tentative steps towards an attenuated version of civic virtue. Now, the hesitancy of the new generations indicated a loss of direction. Many became drifters and finally joined one of the many authoritarian or, worse, totalitarian movements. Young people flocked to them. The moderate center, with its following of liberal and civic minded people, became a minor player in the Big Game.

Thus, continental Europe did not 'suffer' 20th century totalitarianism, even though 'suffering' is how some philosophical observers (for instance, Todorov 2003: 90) have described the European experience with 20th century totalitarianism. But 'suffering' is here an euphemism that conjures up images of passive victims of a regime imposed upon them, while, in fact, many Europeans embraced and practiced totalitarianism, forcing it upon themselves and their neighbors. Once in place, they defended it quite knowingly, and in some cases, as in the German one, fought for it to the bitter end.

Hitler gained power and stayed in power with the support or acquiescence of a large part of the German and Austrian populations. The French acquiesced with a government which collaborated with the Germans, changing sides only after an American-led army landed in France and liberated the country near the end of the war. Mussolini stayed in power for much longer than Hitler, with the support of a large part of the people, and his fall was the result of the vagaries of the war. Fascist governments, in one version or another, were paramount in continental Europe for between ten and twenty years; and their end came as a byproduct of the Second World War. The Christian churches temporized and tended to accommodate themselves to the situation. In the Iberian peninsula, two authoritarian regimes managed to hold their ground for about thirty years after the end of the war. In the east, Communism was imposed on conquered countries, but was also supported by significant minorities in many of them and could only work through the willing collaboration of a large segment of the population.

Thus, in those times, the expression 'civic or political obligation' quite often suffered a complete reversal of meaning. It did not denote civic virtue with its implicit reference to Roman Republican virtue combined with a liberal soul. It became the catchword for allegiance to the Caesar, namely, the Duce, the Führer or the Caudillo, and their retainers and totalitarian parties on the right; or, at the other extreme, to the Secretary General of the communist party, his army of revolutionary professionals and the totalitarian parties on the left.

4. A European story: (b) After World War II: Freedom not conquered but given, and the free-rider ambiguities of the Cold War and beyond

The Cold War confronted totalitarians of the left and those attached to an open, or a free society. This division cut across the divisions between Western and Eastern Europe. On the one hand totalitarianism ruled over half of Europe, in most of Central Europe and in Eastern Europe, for two or three generations. But to this must be added the totalitarian influence over a significant segment of the population in Western Europe, which is borne out by the number of communist party voters, one third of the electorate in Italy for many years and one quarter in France, and which is still evident in academia, the intelligentsia and the media to this day. In that segment, we find a pervasive feeling of distance, even hostility in regard to a *civitas* understood

as an order of freedom to be defended against external and internal enemies. On the other, the large majority of people in Western Europe rejected both brands of totalitarianism, right and left, while the political dissenters of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe looked to Western Europe as their source of inspiration and hope.

Certainly, the stirring historical experience of the revival on European soil of an order of liberty is well known. It has embraced a liberal democracy, the rule of law, a market economy and a public space for free discussion and toleration. It has provided the basis for the European Union, which is a revealing chapter of that saga and a byproduct of those developments. The revival of citizenship in the nation-states, and now, in an tentative way, in the EU, is part of that broad optimistic picture, which does, however, have a more shadowy aspect to it.

The imbalance between the two dimensions of citizenship in the post-war experience

In the lapse of a few generations, Europe passed from an *excess* of training in war-making of an uncivil kind in the Great War, to a *deficiency* of training in the accomplishment of the civic duty of defending the *civitas* understood as an order of freedom afterwards. Thus, there were concessions, acquiescence or outright defeat at the hands of totalitarians on the right during the inter-war period, followed by most Europeans playing a secondary role, even though a worthy one, in World War II and in the Cold War.

As already indicated, active citizens strike a balance between exercising their rights and performing their duties on the public arena, including the duty to defend the city as an order of freedom against all enemies. Failing to do so means that citizens reduce themselves to the rank of subjects and cannot claim the city as an order of freedom to be the result of their own actions, nor can they feel responsible for it. Now, the fact is, continental Europe did not, by itself, oust the totalitarian regimes between the 1920s and the 1940s, neither did it manage to contain, by itself, the communist danger thereafter. Thus, most Europeans could not consider the order of freedom they came to enjoy after World War II to be the result of their own making, as it was bestowed upon them by others.

This, no doubt, has been a crucial, defining experience for the Europeans. Because, as they were unable to claim this order as one of their own making, Western Europeans could not feel fully responsible for it, and, therefore, before them lay a process of slow, laborious, practical and intellectual appropriation of their own world. In that undertaking, and in due course, they have been partially, but not wholly, successful.

After World War II, the defense of the Western world against totalitarians on the left, the Soviet Union and its allies, was never fully assumed by Western Europeans. In this endeavor, they were heavily dependent on US protection for some 40 years; and even France was no

exception to it. The French pretended not to need US protection, but it is obvious that NATO, and the US, provided the French with a shield against a Soviet aggression, and that US nuclear power was the ultimate reason for Soviet restraint. Withdrawing from the NATO military chain of command was one way for the French political class to *se dégager* in full public view while being protected and taken care of in reality. The general tendency in Europe was to keep defense spending at a rather low level, and, in time, to replace a citizen army by a professional army. The public and even the political class at large did not develop a readiness to make decisions in this field, nor did they cultivate the skills needed to engage in realistic considerations of the risks and costs involved in any course of action, to think in terms of both principle and interest, and to know when to act and when to delay action without undue procrastination that betrays simple inability to act. All this inhibited developing a degree of awareness regarding external threats, and the need to contemplate the use of force as a response to them.

By contrast, while the duty dimension of citizenship has not been fully developed, including the duty to defend the city, the rights dimension of Western Europeans has been overdeveloped. Many authors take for granted a definition of citizenship reduced to its rights dimension, and some may speak, for instance, of "an ideal of citizenship symbolized in the granting of rights", in accordance with Marshall's scriptures about "the centrality of the state as guarantor of civil, political and social rights" (Crouch, Eden and Tambini 2001: 261). In fact, Europe has probably been able to devote a large array of economic resources to non-defense, social policy areas partly because it has been reluctant to spend in the area of defense. State bureaucracies have put forward welfare schemes of all sorts, with public projects for health, education, pensions and family benefits. This has suited the natural inclinations of social-democratic and Christian democratic or conservative parties, and has helped them to stay in power, alternately or in coalition, for most of the time all over Western Europe. This has been so because the offer of a welfare state by civil servants and politicians has coincided, on the demand side, with the natural inclinations of people weary after so many years of war and hard times, and perhaps also ashamed by so many war related crimes committed or acquiesced with for so long or, alternatively, by so many instances of defeat and powerlessness, and, therefore, looking for ways to find themselves in the midst of a benevolent environment and to feel part of a community. People have been eager to define citizenship in terms of belonging and rights: human, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights all attach to that definition.

Used to colonial and intra-European ventures, but untrained in the hardships of a world-wide foreign policy

While European citizens' attention, *qua* citizens, has been firmly focused on their rights, to be guaranteed and exercised in the domestic arena, much less of their attention has been directed to foreign policy, regarding the Cold War as well as other international concerns. At times, there has been a silent acquiescence with foreign policies of the 'few' that could be

construed as exercises in the old-fashioned 19th century style of colonial and nationalist policy, neither fully sustained nor openly and systematically opposed by the majority of the 'many'. This tacit consent could not easily develop into a full fledged exercise in active citizenship given the moral ambiguity of many of these foreign ventures, which could be fully justified only in terms of a discourse based on the principle of national interest. In some cases, such as that of Germany, there was all along a deep uneasiness to engage in world affairs in view of its own record during the first half of the 20th century. In cases such as those of France and the United Kingdom, and others, there were experiences, closer in time, of failed colonial wars (Indochina, Algeria), of semi-colonial expeditions (Suez) and of withdrawals from old colonies leaving behind a scenario of civil strife (India, Congo), a series of murderous plots leading to bloody dictatorships (the Middle East) or unviable states and endemic violence (a large part of Africa). What was common to these experiences is that engaging in them tended to leave, in many Europeans, a residue of guilt, shame or moral confusion.

Taking a point even closer in time, the formative experience of the generation of 1956/1968, which has affected most of the governing classes in Europe, has left a dubious moral legacy, and intimates a pattern of confusion regarding foreign policy. For that generation, questioning the war in Vietnam was easier than facing up to the totalitarian world nearer home: the Soviet tanks in Berlin (1953), Budapest (1956) or Prague (1968), or the threat of them in Warsaw (at several times). Protests against deployment of the Pershing missiles in the 1980s suggested a new manifestation of the youth's abstract idealism, or their ethos of good intentions. But a closer look at their practical adjustments to the realities of everyday life suggests a more ambiguous moral attitude. Good intentions in the field of foreign relations went hand in hand with realistic appraisals about how to play, more down to earth, their own life chances.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the most conspicuous members of the younger generation started a silent march through the institutions that placed them in positions of power and responsibility, which they used to maintain the political and economic system with only minor changes. The rhetoric of 'change' combined symbolic flourishes with pragmatism and gradualism, and was their trademark. The new generation maneuvered to find its place in the sun. Most interest and identity groups, manned or led by that generation, entered the public arena in much the same spirit. Their members articulated their demands in terms of self-expression and self-interest, pressing for a polity in which their interests and their identities should be given proper recognition. Most appropriately, they focused their energies on the domestic arena. Once again, this was a scenario for maintaining the imbalance between the dimensions of the rights and duties of citizenship.

Beyond the Cold War, we still find remnants of that uneasiness to engage in active foreign and defense policy and that tendency to focus on domestic issues in the Europeans' recent responses to the war on terror. Many Europeans have tended to reduce the importance of

9/11, 2001, and its aftermath, and to de-dramatize their long term effects both for Europe and the world at large, to see the ensuing challenges as requiring something more than business as usual but not as much as a 'war on terror', and to resort to a mixture of diplomacy, limited engagement and police operations for dealing with this limited challenge. This is consistent with the general inclination shaped up by past experiences, as already indicated. Lastly, as free riders during the Cold War, they have been used not to take full responsibility for their own defense. Then a self-reinforcing mechanism follows, and as the Europeans do not spend much in defense, their diminished capacity to act matches their low perception of the danger.

At the same time, the governments of countries such as France and Germany, which had been at the heart of the European process, have felt justified to take the war on Iraq as an opportunity to reassert their claims to European leadership, either because they did not think there was such a grave external threat or because they thought the threat was real but took for granted the US would deal with it anyway. Thus, in the end, there may be an elective affinity between populations eager to avoid external risks and governments eager to give priority to intra-European politics. They both see no pressing need to spend more on defense (in 2003, France's spending in defense per capita was 41% that of the US, and Germany's was 23%: SIPRI 2004) and tend to de-dramatize the external threat and focus on domestic concerns.

Eastern Europe's process of learning in the field of foreign policy

Back to the period of the Cold War, we observe an asymmetry between the views of Western and Eastern Europeans on some key issues. Many Western Europeans tended to consider the lack of freedom in the other half of Europe in a rather philosophical, not to say passive, way. They assumed the *status quo* would exist for the foreseeable future, and a significant segment of them, particularly on the left, tried to work out a *modus vivendi* with a totalitarian system which they thought even worthy of some esteem. By contrast, the Eastern European dissidents, who longed for the freedom enjoyed by their Western counterparts, knew better. Their difficult everyday experiences provided them with a better grasp both of the principles involved and of the hard facts of reality. They understood quite clearly that the communist system had no legitimacy and was based on naked force. They also knew that the Western order of freedom had been the result of a war, and was defended against the communist threat, in the last resort, by a US-led military coalition.

In the end, however, while the resistence of these Central and Eastern Europeans to totalitarian rule was quite remarkable, transition to an order of freedom was, once again, the result less of their own making than of the implosion of the Soviet empire under US pressure. Now, as this transition took place, the prevailing mood in the people in those countries, untrained as active citizens by decades of totalitarian rule, has been that of citizens-consumers of the political system, which pass judgement on the new political regime according to its ability to

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deliver economic growth, welfare provisions and other public goods. At the same time, when this attitude is projected into the field of foreign relations, and particularly in the European arena, it translates into a view of each particular country more as a 'consumer' reclaiming its rights and fighting for its interests vis-à-vis the European club it tries to join, than as an 'active citizen' which shoulders the burden of a joint venture and shares in a deliberative process aiming at a common good.

5. Conclusion: Would Europe become a people of aliens to each other governed by strangers?

Europe's (and America's for that matter) idiom of citizenship came to a significant extent from classical times and, through time, blended with other discourses to provide the foundations of a modern *civitas*. However, our contemporary historical experiences do provide only in part a context of plausibility to this idiom. In Pericles' view, the city is free in two senses: it does not submit to external powers and it guarantees the individual freedoms of its citizens. Therefore, a proper understanding of citizenship comprises two dimensions: those of rights and duties. Prominent among citizens' duties is the defense of the free city against external enemies. Nevertheless, the historical record of late European modernity has been, in this respect, rather disappointing, and the traumas of the 20th century, in particular the Great War and World War II, as well as other developments, have left a disquieting legacy. There has been no balance between citizen duties and citizen rights. The rights dimension of citizenship has been overdeveloped, while the duty dimension has been underdeveloped. The experience of the Cold War has only partly attenuated this imbalance between the two dimensions, and there is still a deficit of active citizens.

It may be that, in the European Union, we are halfway between the actual politics of nation-states and that of another political community; and it is a fact that both the way in which these two political architectures will be combined, and what the timing and modalities of this peculiar, hybrid construction will be are matters of intense speculation, grand projects, tentative steps and endless ad hoc provisional arrangements. But this development of the institutional design is not matched by the corresponding development of a political culture in which the discourse and practice of an active citizenship would play a prominent role.

As we move along this process, it seems very significant that, at different points, rights of European citizenship have been added to those of the different nation-states. Europeans now have the right to vote in local and European elections wherever they live, to have diplomatic protection provided by a European representative wherever they travel, and to petition European institutions. There are other rights in the process of being defined, pointing to an all round rapprochement of economic and social policies, or not, as the case may be: it all depends on how

the current tensions are resolved between the proponents of a liberal, in the classical European sense of the term, Europe and those of a more social democratic or conservative view. But, however this particular debate is resolved, the mere accumulation of rights does not lead to fully fledged membership in a political community any more than the accumulation of legal claims by Roman citizens during the Roman Empire led to a robust citizenship on their part.

The litmus test of citizenry occurs at critical times, when the city has to be defended and an appeal to civic virtue and civic duty has to be honored. A crucial sign of the weakness of the European polity is that, as far as defense and foreign policy are concerned, the European process has been noticeably lukewarm. The fundamental issue of sovereignty is war; which defines the relationship between the group and its external environment, its enemies, it allies, and what to do about them. This applies both to despotic polities and to free cities. This is the basic locus where the matter of civic duty applies; but so far this has not been the case in the European Union. This should put us on alert. Because this suggests we may be moving, true, but moving along a process that could lead us to a community of passive citizens on the European stage, of peoples alien to each other and governed by strangers. And this, as Larry Siedentop (2001) has rightly suggested, is a recipe not for a free city but for despotic government.

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