Anthony Pagden. *The Pursuit of Europe: A History*, Oxford University Press 2022., 432 str.

The Pursuit of Europe: A History, written by Anthony Pagden, who is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and History at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) is a persuasive, comprehensive, and detailed account that follows the history and evolution of both the ideas and practices of European unity from the 18th century till the present day. Pagden, who in his previous academic and popular works is no stranger to the history of Europe or the European Union (EU), has targeted this book also to a broader audience. Pagden's book is "the story of a project, of a long, tortuous bid to unite groups of varied, diverse, and heterogeneous peoples, to give them a collective identity without robbing them of their individual identities" (1). The peoples in question are those that today speak meaningfully of themselves as "We Europeans" (1). Pagden presents an almost overwhelming cast of writers, politicians, philosophers, poets, and jurists who were part of this project of European unity. To name only a few, they are the Duc de Sully, Saint Simone, Napoleon Bonaparte, Giuseppe Mazzini, Victor Hugo, Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, Winston Churchill, Robert Schuman, and Jean Monnet. Pagden shows how the idea of a united Europe crystallised from the 18th century onward through their thoughts, writings, and actions, and how they and their ideas were influenced by events like the Napoleonic Wars, the scramble for Africa, and the two World Wars. Pagden also follows how crises that took place in the 21st century like that of the Eurozone, Migration, Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on this idea of a European unity, and its main contemporary incarnation – the EU.

Though focused on the idea of European unification in modern history, Pagden also looks back all the way to Antiquity to two inherited elements unique to Europe. The first is the idea of civil society that emerged in modernity uniting the Ancient Greek idea of representative government and the Ancient Roman ideal of rule under a common law. The second element is the idea of leagues and alliances starting with the ancient Greek leagues. These various and needed political unions, systems of alli-

ances, and interdependence that dotted European history were points of reference to generations of later champions of European unity.

Still in the realm of ideas, Pagden starts his story in the 18th century with peace and unification projects such as Sully's *Le Grand Design* and Saint Pierre's *A project for establishing a perpetual everlasting peace in Europe* (11) which envisioned a federation bounded by a "Treaty of European Union and ruled by a council" (11). Still, following Pagden it was not a thinker but a soldier, Napoleon Bonaparte, who would have a lasting influence on the idea of European unity, and the reactions to his actions would reverberate into the 19th and 20th centuries. Contrary to his intent, Napoleon contributed to "generating an ideology which had not previously existed" (35) through his ultimately failed imperial project. This new political form, "the principle of nationality", as one of its foremost champions Giuseppe Manzini referred to it, was one of the principal political forces in the 19th and 20th centuries and in Pagden's view "the most potent political force today" (47). Pagden juxtaposes liberal nationalism both to patriotism and to cosmopolitanism, as Manzini and his followers championed the idea of internationalism. Through what Manzini defined as blending, where "the creation of a nation was always a step toward… a federation of all the European people united in a shared culture not beneath a single regime" he can be seen as a founding father of European unity (65).

After the Napoleonic Wars and the establishment of the Concert of Europe the Continent enjoyed one of the most peaceful times in centuries. Still, war and conquest were relocated abroad where the major European powers found themselves scrambling for Africa. This move explained in Europe as a civilising mission of Europeans entailed an application of racist hierarchies. This emerging worldview justifying the conquest and violence is a tainted legacy that is still haunting Europe, especially former colonial powers. Pagden traces echoes of this "civilising mission" to the 20th and the 21st centuries. Some of the founding six members of what today is the EU still had colonies when this integration started. For these colonies the Treaty of Rome declared in an updated version of this "civilising mission" an intent of "furthering the interests and prosperity of these countries and territories in such a manner as to lead them to economic, social and cultural development which they expect" (85). Only in the 1960s through the troubled process of decolonization did a political break occur as former colonies became independent. Still, the relationship with the former colonial powers remained there. Pagden highlights the French intervention in Mali in 2014, but also states that today the EU can be seen "as a sophisticated institutional expression of anti-imperialism" (136), for example because the EU is the largest donor of developmental aid.

The two World Wars were haunted by these long shadows of racism and imperialism that were now projected on Europe itself. Word War I, apart from the unseen

destruction and suffering that it brough to Europe, also substantially affected the ideas of European unity. There was both a sense of decline and of an end of Europe as well as hopefulness about peace and unity. Centred on the Treaty of Versailles that was to prevent a future war and secure peace in Europe these hopes were bound for failure. This was in no small part to the War Guilt clause the Treaty imposed on Germany whose "long-term impact would eventually prove to be catastrophic not only for Germany but for much of the globe" (147). A hopeful element established by the Treaty that would fail in the future was the League of Nations. Apart from the Treaty Pagden also presents ideas and efforts on European unity that emerged between the Wars or that have impacted the future project of the EU. One of these was France's Prime Minister Aristide Briand's contribution called "Memorandum for the Organisation of a European Federal Order" (183) presented to the League of Nations in 1929. Even though it was one of the more comprehensive proposals on European unity, Pagden cites the more ambitious Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi who saw it as "an effective European League of nations" and not a real Federation. Coudenhove-Kalergi, envisioned what he called Pan-Europa, a federation where Europe would incorporate Africa and its resources, that could see the emergence of European-African empire.

Pagden argues that during World War 2 the Axis powers also created projects that could be seen as ones of European unity, still both in the case of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy these projects were there to further their own interests and would be under their domination and will. For the territories and peoples they tried to occupy and conquer this proved to be not only inacceptable and exploitative but, in many cases, fatal. Pagden also discusses the ideas of Grossraum and hegemony by Nazi fellow traveller Carl Schmitt although his ideas differed from what was implemented during Hitler's short-lived domination in Europe. Even in these dark days, the champions of European unity did not lose hope, even while some of them were in exile and captivity, such as the future founding father of the EU Altiero Spinelli. Together with Ernesto Rossi, he penned the Ventotene Manifesto pleading from prison for a future "Free and United Europe" (222) based on federalist principles. With other champions of European unity, in 1946 Spinelli "set up Union of European Federalists" (227) and was dedicated to this vision in his later years as member of the European Parliament and "had "considerable influence on the negotiations which led finally to the Treaty of Europe in 1992" (227) which he did not live to see.

During World War 2 first both the USSR and the USA were not looking favourably at a possible project of European unification. For the then USSR, as for Putin's Russia today, "a liberal democratic and united Europe is understood as a continuing threat to Russia's very existence, politically, culturally, and economically" (229). Still, as the Cold War started brewing Americans realized that "a democratic Western European Alliance… would be the necessary condition of Soviet containment" (230). Already

through the Marshall plan of 1948 they envisioned an economic and potential political unification of Europe. Another effort came from Winston Churchill who was dedicated to a project of a "United States of Europe" modelled on the British Commonwealth (232). In May 1948 Churchill, as honorary president, led the Congress of Europe a gathering of statesmen, parliamentarians, and champions of European unity. This initiative led to the establishment of the Council of Europe and later to the European Court of Human Rights. The Council gave the European Union both its flag and anthem but was "never incorporated into the governing structure of the EU" (236).

Here, Pagden introduces the more familiar founding fathers of the EU like Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, and the already mentioned Altiero Spinelli. Their project "announced by Schuman on 9 May 1950" (238) led to the creation of the initially modest European Coal and Steel Community with the Treaty of Paris of April 1951. Although the project incrementally crystalized into the EU, the founders were from the start committed to the "ultimate creation of a truly federal Europe "(239). Still, they were aware that a "new European political order" (240) can only be reached through a more pragmatic economic integration, the first of which was the integration of coal and steel production, then through the collaboration and integration through the Euroatom treaty and through the European Economic Community. The Treaty of Paris's preamble already reflected this more ambitious European project "to lay the foundations of institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared" (242).

Until today, such a "series of interlocking treaties" in effect created "a system of European public law" (243). This European public law that is the cornerstone of the EU but can indeed be "seen as formal expression of the European capacity for creating alliances between peoples and as such has been a crucial aspect of the European civilising process (243). Although championed by federalists and the supporters of greater unification, this public law still has limits, such as the principle of subsidiarity introduced by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which Pagden stresses can also be seen as introducing the "claim that the community did in fact and in law enjoy some measure of "exclusive competences" (253). Maastricht therefore transformed the project into the EU and "significantly altered the political identity of Europe…bringing it far closer to the federal ideals of the 'Founders' (249). The European Court of Justice in Pagden's view also contributed substantially to the federalisation of EU as it interpreted that the "treaties established a new legal order for the benefit of which the States have limited their sovereign rights" (253).

Although Pagden acknowledges other interpretations of this trajectory of European unification, such as the realists, for Pagden these fail to "grasp the full ideological force of convictions" (244) of the founding fathers of the EU. As Pagden stresses, the EU as a peace project has indeed made war on the territory of its member states im-

possible, but even for a book written before the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022 Pagden seems to brush off conflicts that did take place in Europe after WW2 and how these impacted and were impacted by the project of European unification. Pagden mentions the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in passing but presents it as a "war between former client states of the Soviet Union exacerbated by ethnic and religious animosities which years of Soviet subjugation had managed to contain but never resolved" (241). This view seems misconstrued. The EU was indeed unable to mount a cooperative military operation in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia before that and reserved its position to non-combat monitoring missions. Still, in these conflicts both the EU and specific member states were highly involved through diplomacy. The EU has subsequently launched missions such as EUFOR Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina and EULEX in Kosovo. Two former Yugoslav federal states, Slovenia and Croatia, are member states of the EU, and the impact of the breakup of Yugoslavia on future EU foreign and security policy should not be assigned to a footnote. Still, Pagden does not overstate the success of the project by stating that "the European Union is still undoubtedly the most sustained, most far-reaching, most successful attempt to unite the peoples of Europe there has ever been – with the possible exception of the Roman Empire" (263).

In the final chapter, Pagden reflects on how the EU as it is today corresponds and differs to the ideas and themes of European unification he traced through the previous chapters. One of these central ideas is a common European identity. Although not openly acknowledged in the treaties, the Christian cultural aspect reflected the reality that both the project of European integration and the European cultural space were still majority Christian in the second half of the 20th century. The break with Christianity that also reflected the process of secularization would become apparent in the struggles over the content of the preamble of the failed Constitution of Europe, rejected in 2005 by referendums in France and the Netherlands. The Treaty of Lisbon of 2007 that arose as an alternative to the rejected Constitution does not specify Christianity as such by stating, "drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law" (264). The mentioned religious inheritance could be interpreted more broadly considering both the secularisation and the rise of non-religiousness and secular humanism, as well as the bigger presence of orthodox Christianity and Islam in the crystallising European identity of today than when the integration process started.

Pagden echoes Monet by saying that the EU has by now become a civilian great power and that "the enlargement of the Union… as its most successful foreign policy instrument, has brought stability, prosperity, the rule of law and liberal democracy to

large areas of Europe which had little or no prior experience with it" (299). Another related aspect of it is the creation, through regulation, of what might not be global market standards, but ones that indeed go beyond the members states and for that matter the EU itself through what has been called the "Brussels effect" (300). We can follow from Pagden's closing remarks that there indeed is arising a more consolidated and independent Europe, especially in the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine, where these ideas of European unity and values can be seen at the heart of this conflict and Member States have embraced solidarity with Ukraine, with only a few dissenting voices. On the global plane there is also the relation with a rising China, an economic competitor, and its more than cordial relationship with Russia, and the sometimes-uneasy relationship with Europe's biggest ally, the United States, where the outcome of the 2024 presidential elections might also impact its relationship with the EU and Europe.

The EU has successfully navigated and mastered almost two decades of crises, though with some very high costs, one of the greatest of which could be seen as Brexit and the dis-integration of the UK from the rest of the Union. As Pagden shows, Brexit has been the culmination of a decades long struggle between national sovereignty and European unity, in which both far-right and far-left populist parties have questioned the very existence of the EU, if not also the existence of liberal democracy, though beyond the reality of Brexit, these do not provide feasible or desirable alternatives. Taking all of this into account, today the EU still stands more decisive, united, and committed to action, especially on the "Green deal…which aims to make Europe climate neutral by 2050" (301). To this one could add the diversification of energy and cooperation both during the COVID-19 pandemic and on defence after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Therefore, echoing Manzini, Pagden rightly claims that the European project can indeed already be seen "as a transnational family of nations living peacefully together in the ecumenical pursuit of a common body of political objectives governed by a single if diverse order of justice" (314). The aspiration of states such as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, North Macedonian and Bosnia-Hercegovina to join this project and the signals of the EU and Member States to welcome them is indeed the greatest affirmation of the idea of European unity that Pagden traced back to the 18th century. This idea, encapsulated by Burke's words that "no European can be a complete exile in any part of Europe" (3), rings as true today as it ever did. *The Pursuit of Europe* is a testament to that vison – and is a book that should not only be read by academics and policy makers, but also a wider audience.

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[*] Views and opinions expressed are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Directorate-General for Competition (DG COMP). Neither the European Union nor DG COMP can be held responsible for them.

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