

THE FEDERALIST

a political review

To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent unconnected sovereignties situated in the same neighbourhood, would be to disregard the uniform course of human events and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages.

Hamilton, The Federalist



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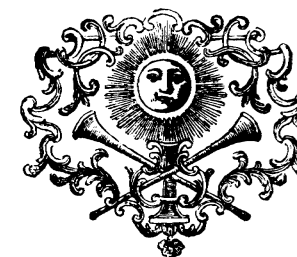


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Editor: Francesco Rossolillo

The Federalist was founded in 1959 by Mario Albertini together with a group of members of the Movimento Federalista Europeo and is now published in English and Italian. The review is based on the principles of federalism, on the rejection of any exclusive concept of the nation and on the hypothesis that the supranational era of the history of mankind has begun. The primary value *The Federalist* aims to serve is peace.



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The Decisive Battle

The birth of the euro is an important landmark in the process of European unification. As well as representing an unprecedented advance in the movement towards the completion of a single European market, it has turned Europe (albeit to a certain extent only virtually) into a great world financial power. But EMU also highlights a number of serious contradictions inherent in the process and raises anew (in increasingly concrete terms) the question of the political unification of the continent. It is a question which has been dealt with on a number of occasions in this journal, and one to which it is not necessary to return here — above all because the need for political union (or a European constitution, or a democratic European government) has become so pressing, and so obvious, that the arguments traditionally advanced by federalists are now being propounded across the board by politicians and opinion leaders of the most diverse leanings.

It is no longer simply a question of demonstrating the need to give Europe its own constitution but, rather, one of turning words into deeds: a task, no small one to begin with, rendered all the more difficult by the fact that we are required not to seize an existing power so much as to create a power which as yet does not exist. In an effort to understand better the nature of this problem, we must return to one of the main elements of the political and theoretical work of Mario Albertini: his considerations on the *power to build Europe* and, hence, on the nature of the stakes, on the players involved, on the circumstances in which the process might enter its crucial phase and on the ways in which such a phase will manifest itself.

Sovereignty. First, it must be made clear that the stakes in this phase are represented by the *transfer of sovereignty* from national to European level. As we have pointed out before, this process of transfer has already

begun, and the coming into force of the euro is certainly an important landmark in it. There can be no doubt that, in the sphere of economic policy at least, national governments will find that the euro restricts considerably their freedom to act and that, once the currency is visibly in circulation in the form of banknotes and coins, it will become, in the eyes of the citizens of Europe, a very real symbol of their common membership of a new European entity. Yet, at the same time, the power to decide in the last instance (whose main emblem and instrument is the monopoly of physical strength, in other words, exclusive control of the armed forces) is still in the hands of the national governments, each of which has the formal right (which it could effectively exercise in the event of a real emergency) to pull out of the single currency. It is also true that, in Europe, politics (and thus the process by which the general interests of the citizens are determined) is carried on almost exclusively at national level and that the decisive arguments put forward to gain consensus, and thus to win, and to hold on to, power are still based on the promotion of national interests. There can thus be no doubt that the most difficult hurdles still have to be overcome.

The Intergovernmental Method. On the other hand, it is unrealistic to expect that a politically unified Europe can be created on the basis of intergovernmental conferences, in other words, by applying the method that has, until now, been used for the reform of the Treaties. The intergovernmental approach is deeply rooted in the idea that a government's natural political objective is to promote national interests, an idea which effectively reduces European politics to a search for compromises among divergent national interests. It is true that the process of European unification has got as far as it has thanks to the fact that the national governments have always recognised the vital importance of reaching such compromises within the European framework. But having said that, each of these national governments has always held the right of veto which, when it feels that a vital national interest is at stake, it can exercise in order to block a decision reached by the majority, a faculty which renders Europe's political mechanism, based on the national governments, ineffective and undemocratic. From this perspective, the retention of national sovereignty is the most vital national interest of all, and it is thus inconceivable that, unless exceptional circumstances arise, the governments will unanimously decide to relinquish it, in other words, that the *intergovernmental method can be suppressed through the adoption of an intergovernmental approach.*

Public Opinion. The semi-conscious awareness of the truth of this statement renders acceptable the slogan, "a citizens' Europe." And yet it is an ambiguous slogan which generally expresses the unfounded and misleading idea that public opinion is something that can evolve progressively until it becomes so strong that governments will have no choice but to bow to it and renounce their sovereignty. What this idea fails to take into account is the fact that public opinion is, itself, part of the national power game. Underlying power, there must be the consensus of public opinion, but the leanings of public opinion, conditioned by contrasting short-term interests and filtered by the mass communication channels that represent an integral part of the national political framework, become, in turn, nothing more than a reflection of the existing balance of power. In short, the national character of the balance of power serves to reinforce the national character of public opinion, and vice versa. And while this cannot take away the fact that the process of European unification is a reality, and that, as a consequence, public opinion in most of the Union's member states is pro-European, there continues to be a lack of institutional channels and democratic mechanisms through which this consensus and support might really be made to count and to influence the political direction of parties and governments. Instead, it remains purely passive and citizens continue to see their faculty to choose between different national options as the only channel through which they can influence, to a greater or lesser degree, the decisions on which their future wellbeing depends.

The European People. This is a vicious cycle that can only be broken through the materialisation of exceptional historical circumstances, capable of forcing public opinion (as we have seen, a superficial, disorganised and non autonomous phenomenon) to make way for what can, in the final analysis, be considered the protagonist of all the great political transformations that have taken place in the course of history: a people which, in situations of emergency, proves able to rise above its state of passivity, to adopt a new identity, to shrug off the self-interested impulses and contrasting positions which generally characterise life in a civilised society, and to impose, through the unstoppable force of its will, a new institutional order and a new conception of what constitutes the general good of the citizens. What is needed in Europe, therefore, is a transmutation of many national public opinions into a single European people, in whose name the process of transferring sovereignty from the nation-states to a European federal state can be begun and completed. None of

this means, of course, that the national governments will be excluded from the process. On the contrary, they will have to remain in power, if only to carry through the transfer of sovereignty and to delegate to an elected assembly the task of drawing up the constitution of the United States of Europe. After all, until a European government has been created, the disappearance of the national governments would produce nothing but anarchy. And yet, when the decisive moment comes, the latter will have no choice but to bow to the will of the European people.

The Crisis. It would be naive to imagine that all this might come about through a calm and progressive heightening of awareness among European citizens. Instead, nothing short of a crisis — in other words, the emergence of contradictions so grave that the very real risk of their eruption throws into question the existing order, and makes a European federation seem the only possible alternative to chaos — will suffice to shake them out of their passive acceptance of the existing state of affairs. Only in these conditions can *the multitude become a people*, and the citizens break free from submission to the political power in order to express their own, independent, free will. And it is only in these conditions that national power will, in the states of the European Union, lose its capacity to condition public opinion: only then, with the future of national power thrown into question, will governments and politicians be free to carry through the traumatic step that is the complete renunciation of sovereignty. Yet until this crisis occurs, in other words, as long as the intergovernmental method goes on managing to overcome (albeit with increasing difficulty) the obstacles which will, as time goes by, present themselves, then national governments will continue to hold on to their power to decide in the last instance, and the political outlook of the people will remain trapped in the national sphere.

The Vanguard. On its own, however, such a crisis is not enough. No political or institutional order will ever be thrown into a crisis that it is not, itself, equipped to resolve (even though this may be at the cost of a progressive outcasting from the historical process of the political community which it regulates and the gradual decline of civil co-habitation). Governments, politicians and public opinion all need, in some way, to be prepared for the advent of this crisis so that, when it does occur, an alternative is already in place. This is the kind of role played by revolutionary vanguards and, in the case of Europe, it is the role played by federalists. This provision of an alternative is the real purpose of their

work (obscure, and seen by many as sterile) in the period leading up to the onset of the crisis. Let us not forget (although many already have) that it was federalists, after all, who formulated and promoted the political designs for what have proved to be the two most crucial developments in the process of unification to date: the direct election of the European parliament and the single currency. It is essential, therefore, that they continue to remain on the scene, carrying forward with tenacity their two most important tasks: to promote, tirelessly, the federal message in the face of governments and politicians who, while sometimes ready to applaud their efforts, are nevertheless determined not to relinquish their hold on power, and to keep alive in public opinion (often distracted and passive, as we have seen) the idea of the federal unity of Europe, so that what today can only be considered weak and passive consensus might, when the time is ripe, be transformed into a strong political will and conscious participation in the struggle to win constituent power. Yet the vanguard must not be seen as the only player on this particular stage. There are others who have a part to play in carrying forward this process, and it is crucial that the vanguard realises who they are, and understands the nature of their role.

The Occasional Leadership. It is important to underline that, in the phase of the mobilisation of consensus, these other active protagonists cannot be institutions (even though the vanguard will be required to keep up the pressure on the existing ones, reminding them of their responsibilities and highlighting any failure to fulfil the same); this role cannot fall to the national governments or to parliaments as their function, rather, is to hold back the process; it cannot be fulfilled by the Commission, or even by the European Parliament whose role it is (leaving aside the problem of their current weakness and inconsistency) to manage the *acquis communautaire*, and not the realisation of revolutionary designs. To find the other leading players in this process, we must look, rather, to great leaders, to individuals who have risen to the highest echelons of political life and who are part of the institutions without, however, identifying with them. In short, we must look to those who, thanks to the sheer height of the position they hold, sometimes manage (in exceptional circumstances) to divorce themselves from the strictly national view of the struggle for power, and pick up on a much deeper reality, developing a very real appreciation of the nature of the historical process, and of the crucial problems inherent in it, that renders them receptive to the message which the vanguard is striving to convey. Such individuals, taking up what

Albertini called “occasional leadership” of the process, are the only ones who have the capacity to mobilise popular consensus and *to make the citizens of Europe feel like a single people*. In the absence of an individual (or more than one) who fits this description, it would not be possible to mobilise and channel into the effort to achieve major institutional transformation the potential energies unleashed by the crisis. In the mediocrity of everyday life, these would, instead, be allowed to burn themselves out.

The Interface. Finally there exist, in the countries of the European Union and in the European parliament, a small number of political figures (not high ranking ones) who, while unable to devote themselves full-time to the cause of European political unification (being involved in national politics and the management of power) do appreciate the historically decisive nature of the problem and may be willing to carry out crucial groundwork, similar to the campaigning carried out (upon the instigation of Altiero Spinelli) fifteen years ago, in the ambit of the European parliament, by the members of the Crocodile Club. These individuals, whom federalists must patiently seek out, could act as intermediaries between the vanguard and the “occasional leaders;” they could play an important role in the mobilisation of consensus whenever “occasional leaders” do come to the fore, and be the first to pick up on and amplify the ideas and proposals advanced by the vanguard.

The Constituent Phase (in the strictest sense of the expression). If the consensus of the citizens of Europe can be mobilised successfully (if, in other words, a European people is formed), the process will move into its constituent phase (an expression used here in its strictest sense). This phase will see the institutions once again taking the field. Presumably the European Council — or in any case a certain number of heads of state and of government — will entrust the European Parliament, or a body made up of MEPs and members of the national parliaments, or (and perhaps most likely) a specially elected constituent assembly, with the task of drawing up a federal constitution. There is no point, at this stage, trying to define the exact procedure that will lead to the accomplishment, and determine the succession, of these various steps as the cards are always thrown up into the air in times of revolutionary change: situations tend to alter with impressive speed and predictions are systematically proved wrong. And let us not forget that, at the present time, we do not even know which countries will form the first federal core — a group that looks

unlikely to include all the countries which will then be members of the European Union, and thus responsible for deciding the composition of its bodies. In the meantime, it is up to federalists to go on spreading the fundamental message of European federal unity, until such time as the evolution of events renders possible the convergence of the vanguard, the citizens and those in power which represents the indispensable condition for any revolutionary change.

The Federalist

Luigi Sturzo: From Autonomism to Federalism

RODOLFO GARGANO

Introduction.

Both in the political and in the human sphere, the life of Luigi Sturzo¹ was, in many ways, unusual; few are the outstanding individuals who, like him, are led by the evolution of events and by a sense of civic passion to become instrumental in the development of a new way of understanding, and of acting within, communities of peoples. Sicilian by birth but, following his ordination, soon mixing in the ecclesiastic circles of Rome, Luigi Sturzo was a witness to the constitution of the Italian nation-state, living through his country's transition from kingdom to republic. He experienced the difficulties of government at local level and also observed the terrible events of the two world wars, events which rendered the question of a world government a pressing issue both in Italy and in Europe (where the dreadful experiences of Nazi-fascism and Bolshevism had made democracy and freedom the only legitimate way forward).

Sturzo's life itself, which spans around three generations, appears to reflect this dual experience — indeed, his political activity can be divided neatly into two main periods, each lasting around thirty years; the first saw him concentrating with single-minded determination on the problems of local government and the second tackling, with the same tenacity and energy, the most controversial international questions. By the end of his life he had set his own seal on two major political achievements of the post-war period: the establishment, by the Italian constituent assembly of 1948, of a regionally organised state, and the start of the process of European integration. It is precisely this duality of Sturzo's experience (in the smaller sphere of the local community and in the much vaster sphere of the global community, where the tumultuous political upheavals in Europe assumed a particular significance) that formed the conceptual basis of his interest in institutions able, overcoming the bureaucratic

and centralised vision of the nation-state, to create a community tailor-made for the people. And so, both of these important choices made by the political class of the new Republic can be said to be based, albeit in part, on the main lines of Sturzo's thought which, for a political analysis of Italian society, is still of great relevance today.

In the more general context of his commitment to world democracy, his support for the post World War II movement towards European unification can, in this regard, also be considered significant, giving substance to some of the assertions he made during the period of his exile from Italy. If we consider that the process of European integration actually originated (if we leave aside the general aspirations of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa committee and the work and goodwill of Briand and Stresemann in the interwar years) from the meeting and shared feelings of three men, Adenauer, Schuman and De Gasperi, all members of Christian Democratic parties, then the intellectual oeuvre of the Sicilian priest who, for many years had represented the driving force and energy behind a new approach to politics which combined an elevated, ethical sense of duty with an admirable determination to establish new political orders, emerges as particularly significant.

Through Luigi Sturzo, in part due to his extraordinary life — he founded a Catholic political party, became involved in the struggle against fascism and was subsequently obliged to seek asylum in Anglo-Saxon countries — the search for and conceptual exploration of new social foundations, with the emphasis on freer and more democratic institutions, took on a very broad significance, a significance which, for Italy in its laborious transition from the First to the Second Republic, still remains. Certainly, Sturzo's progression from autonomism to federalism, like his support for European unity, is not free from ambiguities and contradictions: this however does not justify the attitude of many scholars and commentators on Sturzo's copious works who, with notable exceptions, prefer to ignore these aspects of his thought² which, nowadays more than ever, is highly topical and relevant, and serves both as a warning to those who are all too ready to back unconvincing institutional makeshift solutions, and as a stimulus for those genuinely striving to improve human societies.

Southern Italian "Anti-stateism".

The young Sturzo's support for an autonomist view of relations between national government and local communities soon became evident

and, it might be said, accompanied him throughout his life, fusing on the one hand with his “Southern Italianism” and on the other with an “anti-stateism” which continued to manifest itself even beyond the birth of the republic. Thus, in the years which marked the close of the 19th century, Sturzo launched a strong campaign against the centralist state, bringing up once again, this time from a Sicilian standpoint, the question of administrative decentralisation raised by the Catholic groups inspired by Giuseppe Toniolo and Roberto Murri. But Sturzo set the question of local government in the wider context of the special attention which, in his view, the new nation-state should be paying to Sicily and to the weakest classes of Southern Italy — the peasants and poor people of the area — and it was from this angle that he mounted his vigorous opposition to the “regionalist war” calling, as a matter of urgency, for true autonomy at municipal and regional level.³

In this context, the municipality (which, unlike the province, the region or the state, Sturzo considered a “concrete body”) plays a special role, and so this autonomism was, for a number of reasons, defined primarily as “municipalism”. Hence, in its local programme of 1902, the Municipal Christian Democrat Party of Caltanissetta makes a strong call for autonomy, even though this is to be understood essentially as autonomy in the financial and administrative spheres. On the other hand, Sturzo remained aware of the importance of the region which he rightly saw as the body best able to oppose the demands of the central power. On July 12th, 1903, in *Pro e Contro il Mezzogiorno*, he wrote, “This is the real issue: we are regionalists... a new Monroe doctrine, *Sicily for the Sicilians*, is the only basis on which to build a true Sicilian political movement ... which, bearing the banner of *administrative and financial autonomy*, and characterised by its opposition to *central government*, would win the support of all the other parties.” And he added, “The proud Sicilians of yesteryear know that this is a land that was not born to serve — and yet through the cowardice of its sons, serve is what it has nearly always had to do.”⁴ However, just two years earlier, declaring “I am in favour of the unity of the Italian state, but unashamedly federalist,”⁵ he had written that the remedy for Italy’s ills (meaning, above all, the uneven fiscal burdens in different parts of the kingdom) “would be a *carefully weighted* regional and administrative decentralisation and a *federalisation* of the various regions, leaving intact the unity of the existing order.”⁶

One cannot fail to appreciate, in these passages, the ambiguities and inaccuracies inherent in Don Sturzo’s thought, and not only in the part in which he confuses administrative decentralisation with the federalisation

of Italy: even more marked are the nationalistic overtones in his references to Sicily, which are incompatible with his support for an “administrative and financial autonomy” that goes hand in hand with a rejection of the idea of secession (when secession could surely be seen as the most logical objective of one with such clearly nationalistic leanings). While there can be no doubt that the Sicilian priest⁷ never really considered promoting the cause of independence for the island, it is however quite probable that his indiscriminate use of two conflicting terms: decentralisation and federalism, can be attributed to his need to seem not to oppose the regime of the unitary state that emerged from Porta Pia⁸ and not to place too much emphasis on questions of form (institutional issues) rather than of content (the urgent problems of the peasant classes). Indeed, in Sturzo’s view, it was the failure to resolve these very urgent problems which, more than anything, was responsible for the civil and psychological repression of Southern Italy.⁹

It must, of course, be acknowledged that Sturzo’s support for federalism, openly declared from as early as 1901, is also characterised by a certain vagueness that reveals his primordial affinity with Gioberti and the Neo-guelphs who, made in the same Catholic mould, were far less federalist than, for example, Cattaneo with his rigidly structured system of federalism. However, just as the apparent conflict between the terms “unitary” and “federalist” can be explained by the very nature of federalism, whose aim is, quite openly, to marry diversity with unity, so the call for both “decentralisation” and “federalisation” can almost be seen to reflect a logical or temporal succession of phases by which the local community might obtain the greatest possible degree of self-government while remaining, necessarily, harmoniously integrated with the higher level of government (central government). As far as the people of Southern Italy were concerned, Sturzo, at the time, could do little other than, in his indomitable fashion, show them the road they should follow, convinced, more than ever, that in local autonomy, coordinated at nation-state level, they would find the salvation — civil, economic and moral — which they quite rightly sought.¹⁰

These reflections are, in a sense, borne out by the forcefulness with which Sturzo, at the third national congress of the recently established Italian Popular Party, propounded a new state order based on the establishment of the regional authority as an “elective-representative, autonomous-autarchical, administrative-legislative body.”¹¹ Sturzo, in fact, viewed the region as a natural entity in which decentralisation and fiscal autonomy (the latter coordinated at national level in order to avoid

manifestations of anarchy) might best be achieved. Indeed, the very concept of coordination was introduced as an essential element in relations between the different levels of government, from the single municipalities to groups of municipalities, and to provinces, all upheld by, and organised in accordance with a principle which in fact differs very little from that of federal government.¹²

In this context, the spirit which pervades the work of Luigi Sturzo, not only in the first thirty years of his activity as a politician and local administrator, but also up until his forced exile from Italy in 1924, is his vis polemica against the centralising bureaucratic state which is at times expressed resoundingly and with remarkable bitterness. As early as January 1919, in his *Appello a tutti gli uomini liberi e forti*, Sturzo was saying: "At constitutional level, we want to see the replacement of a centralising state, which tends to limit and regulate all organic powers and every activity both civic and individual, with a state ... which recognises that there are limits to its activity and which respects natural groupings and bodies — the family, classes, municipalities ..."¹³ And it is easy to see that Sturzo is referring, here, to something which is in fact of great topical interest today: the principle of subsidiarity which, always considered an essential aspect of federal systems, was recently introduced into Community law — a subsidiarity clause was introduced by the Maastricht Treaty on European Union¹⁴ — and was seen by Sturzo as inevitable in a non state-controlled society.

Even during the years of his exile, spent in the United Kingdom and the United States, and until his return to Italy in 1946, Sturzo remained steadfast in these views, which were in fact strengthened by the Nazi fascist oppression of Europe. Indeed, Sturzo developed a deeply critical view of the nation-state. He wrote: "Everywhere the nation-state has been characterised by ever-increasing centralisation, on militarism based on conscription and permanent armies, on the use of the state school system as a means of creating national conformism ..." whereas ... "free economy and internationalism would have generated a much more rapid growth of cosmopolitan as opposed to nationalist feelings."¹⁵ Here, Sturzo not only stresses the importance of these aspects of the nation-state, (from the growth of bureaucratic centralisation to the deliberate blending of militarism with the state school system), he also underlines — with a touch of bitterness over the weakness of liberal and socialist organisations in the face of this State, as well as towards the Church which, fighting it, "was defeated" — the absolute contradiction that exists between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, between the sense of belonging exclusively to a

given nation and the awareness of one's membership of a common humanity which reaches beyond artificial national boundaries.

In Support of Internationalism and an End to Wars.

Sturzo's years in exile provided him with further food for thought with regard to the questions of internationalism and a world government. In fact, the autonomism debate inevitably prompted, also at international level, a deeper examination of issues connected with the totalitarian state established by the Nazis. Particular attention was paid to the possibility that the international community might, in the pursuit of the objectives of universal disarmament and the elimination of the "right to make war" (also embraced by the programme of the Popular Party), be able to limit the power of states. Indeed, on the basis of its being an organisation at supranational level, Sturzo fully supported, in principle, the establishment (on the initiative of President Wilson at the end of the First World War) of the League of Nations, even though he could not help drawing attention to the "organic deficiencies" in its statute which was caught precariously between the renewed independence of the single states and the authority of the League. In Sturzo's view, "... the League of Nations has less authority than a Medieval emperor who could, at least, count on the strength of his own particular kingdom and enlisted armies; it has less prestige than a medieval pope whose political responses did at least have the weight of religious authority, rendering them a force strong enough to bring down kings and release subjects from their vows of loyalty."¹⁶

According to the Sicilian priest, the surest way to strengthen the position and confirm the status of the League of Nations was, in a constant and assiduous effort to achieve peace and harmony among peoples, to listen to public opinion in democratic states: in line with this, if it was to establish a new order in international politics, the League needed to be founded on regional federations of states, each formed on the basis of a certain socio-economic homogeneity among its members.¹⁷ Sturzo was, nevertheless, aware that the main problem lay in the "right to make war", and that elimination of the same depended closely on the coercive force of an organisation like the League of Nations. Bitterly, he wrote: "In states, all the citizens are unarmed and only the public power is armed; in the international community all states are armed and only the international authority is not. In this situation, there can be no such thing as coercive force."¹⁸ However, Sturzo had to recognise the practical difficulties underlying this statement of principle: he found himself faced

with the same dilemma that Kant, before him, had tackled and failed to resolve when he reached the conclusion that perpetual peace could only be guaranteed by subduing the “lawless freedom” of states, submitting them, in a universal federal union, to the dominion of law in interstate relations and eliminating, at root level, war and international anarchy. Not being fully acquainted with the federal mechanism, (even though it had been set out in *The Federalist Papers*, written in defence of the federal constitution of the United States of America and published in 1787), Kant, unable to resolve the problem of the relationship between federal powers and the powers of the states, was induced to speak of the danger of federations evolving into empires.¹⁹ In the same way Sturzo warns against the birth of a superstate that could come to stand for “intolerable hegemonic domination,”²⁰ thus revealing his failure to appreciate fully how the “antagonistic dualism of reason and force can fully be overcome through their synthesis into the rationalisation of force itself... and how the law of victory which is the law of pure force can be replaced by a judiciary and social law, which is the law of reason.”²¹ The need to establish a binding institutional link between states, and subsequently a legal system proper (that of a federal state) represented, in fact, the indispensable condition for the elimination of the “right to make war” to which Sturzo stood opposed and for the realisation of the internationalism and end to wars to which he was committed.²²

According to Sturzo war is a voluntary decision, it is neither an ineluctable fact nor an inevitable occurrence: in fact, “... there exists no conflict between states that cannot lead to war, and there is no conflict that cannot, more or less satisfactorily, be resolved through pacific means.”²³ In line with this view, Sturzo, in several articles published in Paris in 1937-38, in clear and uncompromising terms points the finger of blame at the ruling classes of the European nation-states shaped by Fascism. Sturzo preferred, ultimately, to call for a re-emergence of the Christian spirit of brotherhood in support of governments, failing to recognise international politics itself and the persistence of sovereign entities like the states as the structural cause which in fact favoured international anarchy and created the premises for war. And yet, in December 1926, he had risen up against the dogma of the absolute sovereignty of the state, declaring expressly: “We refuse to accept the concept of the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of the state.”²⁴ While Sturzo had, with reference to the national sphere, specifically denounced stateism and put forward concrete proposals for the limitation of the powers of the national government through the institution of regional authorities, on an interna-

tional level he still hoped for a moral revolution which would lead states, albeit gradually, to renounce the right to make war: “And so states will no longer have recourse to violent means, being able instead to practise the arts of persuasion and coercion; no longer will they harm innocent people... they will strive to win over to their side the majority of the Council or Assembly and obtain the favourable judgement of the courts of arbitration.”²⁵ However, he soon became aware of the inadequacy of moral obligation²⁶ and, particularly in view of the necessary inclusion of Germany in a new European organisation, felt compelled to suggest in explicit terms recourse to the federal principle and the creation of a European federation.²⁷

Regional Italy and a Federal Europe.

When Luigi Sturzo returned to Italy in 1946, he was greeted by a country that was, in some ways, fundamentally different from the one he had left twenty-two years earlier. Following the collapse of fascism, the very structure of the state had been thrown into question once more, the relative strengths of, and relationships between, the political parties in existence at the time of his exile had altered and new balances had emerged. Sturzo soon found himself cast in the difficult role of polemicist and critic — one whose voice for the most part went unheard, particularly by the leaders of the Christian Democrat Party which had replaced the Popular Party at the end of the Second World War.

In fact, with the advent of the republican Constitution, which pursued a rather decentralised model of a unitary state, it appeared that the advanced form of local autonomy which had represented one of Sturzo’s main concerns since as far back as the days when he edited the weekly journal *La Croce di Costantino* (“Constantine’s Cross”) might at last become a reality. And indeed, as maintained by Gaspare Ambrosini as early as 1933, the regional state that emerged from the work of the Constituent Assembly seemed to go a long way towards realising the autonomistic demands advanced by the Venice programme. In the face of the many trivial objections and criticisms that were raised by self-interested critics of the regional institution, Sturzo, in a number of articles published by influential newspapers in the period from March to May 1947, and in his 1948 writings *The Region in the Nation*, defended with vigour the choice of the Constituent Assembly. “Cattaneo and others — Sturzo writes — were not looking for a federation of fine and wonderful states (the idea of the Neo-guelphs was soon abandoned); they were

opposed to a uniform and centralised state; instead, they wanted a state which was, from a structural point of view, unitary and from an organic point of view, regionalist... This does not mean replacing the unitary structure of the state with a federalist structure: it means, through a regional electorate and through regional representation, giving the people a voice that is real, effective and free.”²⁸ And to those who claimed he wanted to dismember Italy through federalism, Sturzo replied: “Our ‘region’ cannot be regarded simply as a territorial district, like the *département* in France. Our ‘regions’ must represent a middle way between France’s *départements* and Switzerland’s cantons. Our ‘regions’ will never be sovereign states like the Swiss cantons, limited only by the confederal authority which unites them; neither can they be considered simply as *départements* in which only, and all, the authority of the state holds sway.”²⁹

In truth, one cannot fail to acknowledge that it is, to a considerable extent, due to Sturzo’s work that the Italian Constituent Assembly decided to opt for a regional state, thereby overcoming reservations and opposition rooted in a decades-long tradition based on the supposed superiority of a centralised bureaucratic state in the Napoleonic mould. There had already been a break with this tradition in 1946 with the introduction of the Statute of the Sicilian Region, a statute which is recognised by many to embrace, in parts, clearly federalist ideas.³⁰ And even though the inevitable absorption of the functions of the High Court by the Italian Constitutional Court (therein provided for) provoked indignation and bitterness in Luigi Sturzo among others, it is nevertheless a fact that the Statute of the Sicilian Region can still today be seen as the expression of a region which enjoys an advanced level of autonomy, comparable to the Spanish region of Catalonia.

While the Sicilian priest’s efforts to obtain recognition of the need for real autonomy for local communities is universally acknowledged, there is less awareness either of his unreserved support for the movement towards European unity (stemming from his reflections upon the international community during his years in exile) or of his strong desire to witness the birth of a European federation. Writing in *Il Popolo* in April 1948, Sturzo is entirely in favour of European unity in a federal form and indeed asks: “Is the Europe of today going to prove more fortunate than the Europes of the recent, or more distant past? That is the question that we federalists of 1948 should now be asking ourselves.”³¹ Moreover, two years earlier, Sturzo had already written: “With effort and determination, Europe must become one, strengthening the moral and material ties

between peoples which underlie our current civilisation.” The same sentiment is expressed with even greater clarity in letters dated 1939: “In 1914, we were supposedly fighting the war to end all wars: today, it might be said that we are fighting for the federation of Europe, and the stake is Europe’s international position: we are faced with a choice between federation or the dominion of nationalism in alliance with Bolshevism.”³² As Sturzo saw it, what is more, the post-war economy could never be “strictly national.” Instead, it had to be “federative”; all forms of autocracy between different economic units would, being “by definition anti-federative”, have to be done away with as federation “requires an open, not a closed economy.” And expressing this view, he focused on Europe: “A United States of Europe — he wrote in 1929 — is not a utopia, only a long-term ideal involving many stages and considerable difficulty. Financial restructuring, through the definitive settlement of all war debts, is the first thing that is needed, followed by the restructuring of the various currencies. This will lead to a review of customs restrictions in preparation for a customs union, leading gradually to the elimination of all internal barriers. The rest will follow.” And, after the war, he added: “We want an independent and federate Europe. If the East is to remain totalitarian, then European federation will start from the West....”³³

Despite his advanced years, Sturzo (through letters, messages and articles) joined in the debate of the issues and problems laid bare by the process of European integration: he joined Spinelli’s European Federalist Movement,³⁴ put his name to the *Petition for a Federal Pact* manifesto drawn up by federalists in 1950, and sent a message of support to the founding congress, at Geneva, of the Council of European Municipalities whose legitimate wish it was in the process of European integration to represent the voice of all the communities of Europe. Having been made a senator for life, Sturzo sent a message to Paul-Henri Spaak on the occasion of the congress of the European Movement held in The Hague and was harsh in his criticism of Mendés France when the treaty for a European Defence Community was thrown out by the French National Assembly.³⁵ By 1957, the European Economic Community had been founded, and Sturzo entrusted the “new society” with the task of looking southwards — of striving for “Arab pacification” and, in more general terms, for the establishment of “a European economic and cultural policy ... in the Mediterranean” area.³⁶

Conclusions.

By the time of his death, in Rome on August 8th, 1959, Luigi Sturzo was seen by most people as a “survivor”, a bearer of ideas and a representative of interests which no longer coincided with the new aspirations of a political class which had come through the fascist period and was now getting ready to govern the new Italian republic. And yet, if it may be said that the Luigi Sturzo of the post World War II period still showed the same political and moral fibre that had sustained him in his time as a local politician and as leader of the Popular Party, as well as during his years in political exile, then this was certainly not at the expense of an ever vigilant attention to, and deep involvement in the realities of daily life (a legacy of his time as a shrewd politician who never lost sight of the concrete aspects of a problem). Instead, as far as scholars, at least, are concerned, two things emerge as significant: one is the way in which, while remaining true to certain convictions, he constantly adapted his political ideas to the changing political scenario, and the other is his remarkable ability to find new routes and new ideas designed to bring about the concrete realisation of the aspirations he held most dear.

The most important of Sturzo’s unwavering convictions undoubtedly centred on the peoples of Southern Italy, and in particular, the people of his beloved Sicily; peoples whose acute need for deliverance he recognised and supported passionately. He did not believe that a higher degree of social, economic and moral progress was something that could be donated from up high, but saw it, rather, as something which could be achieved only through the assumption, at the lowest levels, of responsibility for (and of the risks involved in) running, in full autonomy, the affairs of the local community. In this sense, Sturzo’s autonomism, (sometimes called municipalism, sometimes regionalism) conveys, if we except several isolated examples of verbal excess, something more than that which is conveyed by sterile and often abused slogans of a “national” or of a “nationalistic” character, which are nothing more than a prelude to the extreme forms of micronationalism and the secessionist views which the Sicilian priest always abhorred. Sturzo’s autonomism is to be seen as a community-based form of democracy, rationally chosen and founded upon the harmonious coordination of local governments with central government in the context of an overall vision which is substantially federalist and which, what is more, contains strongly moral and pedagogical overtones.

But, for reasons of a different nature, Sturzo stands for more than just

autonomism and the struggle to institute, in a climate of freedom and democracy, lower levels of government. The advent of Nazi-fascism in Europe and the problems faced by the international community, viewed from the perspective of another ideal, that of a more just international order founded on the abolition of the right to make war, led Sturzo to reflect deeply, especially during his years spent in exile, on another aspect of human relations, in other words, on the way relations between states are regulated. And Sturzo’s views on this are quite definite: resolutely opposed to conflict, he is convinced of the negativity of war and of the absolute need to overcome war as a solution (even though this line of thought, leading inevitably to an acknowledgement of the hypothetical need to invest a superior international authority with adequate powers of coercion, raises doubt and confusion over Sturzo’s view first of the League of Nations, and subsequently of the UN, and renders contradictory and inadequate his idea that states could be pressed by a moral revolution into a renunciation of their right to make war).

On a first examination, therefore, Sturzo’s federalism, caught between narrow autonomism and moralising internationalism, may appear to lack precision,³⁷ while his interest in the process of European integration (upon which, due partly to his age, the Sicilian priest was not in a position to reflect in greater depth) could seem rather marginal. And yet, such appraisals are probably both flawed and lacking in generosity towards a man who was doubtless an exceptional individual, even among his contemporaries. One only has to think of the tenacity with which Sturzo tirelessly denounced the intrusive omnipresence and the supposed omnipotence of the state to realise that his work should be re-appraised and interpreted from a different, more complex angle: his whole life seen as dedicated fundamentally to a very precise struggle against stateism. In truth, his ceaseless campaigning for autonomy at local government level, like his efforts to win support, on a conceptual level at least, for abolition of the right to make war, cannot be seen as anything other than two inseparable expressions of a single and determined opposition to the Moloch-state, centralised and illiberal within and, on an international level, imperialistic and warmongering.

In this regard, Luigi Sturzo’s deep criticism of the nation-state, and of the nationalist ideal on which it is founded, his refusal to accept the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of the state, and his affirmed belief in the unshakeable contradiction between nationalism and cosmopolitanism placed him quite firmly in what can be regarded as an extraordinarily contemporary position: face to face with the problem, rooted in the

experience of the French Revolution, of the centralised bureaucratic state, or better still, with the realisation that such a model of state stands totally opposed to the free and democratic society that he so dearly wished to build. Sturzo's support for European federalism, which he saw as a step on the road towards the creation of a United States of Europe, is the logical culmination, and in a certain sense, the supreme climax of his long political career. But he must also be given credit for the way in which, in times of great change (characterised first by the deep crisis of the nation-state and then by the rebuilding of new state institutions in the wake of two world wars), he proved able to fuse the difficulties of the poor with the problems of the ruling class, merging content (concrete problems) with form (institutional questions and those relating to the structure of the state) and marrying the merits and defects of the smaller (municipal and regional) sphere with those relating to the international community and to the relations between sovereign states.³⁸

In this context, Sturzo's war against stateism, waged it must be said in a positive manner — he advocated reform of the nation-state and the construction of a superior international order — is the keystone of the political approach of a man who sought always to marry the pressing need to unshackle the people of Sicily and of the Southern Italian region in general with a tenacious commitment to the greater good (freedom and democracy for peoples), all in the context of an overall vision of federal unity for Europe and universal peace at world level.

Sturzo failed, of course, to see that the very essence of the sovereign state *superiorem non recognoscens* is connected with imperialism and international anarchy and, at domestic level, with authoritarian politics leaning towards a rejection of local government: as a result, his frequent and clearly federalist notions remain devoid of substance and difficult to link together (scattered as they are throughout the pages of his copious writings). While Sturzo may have failed to recognise that the centralisation of powers at national level and anarchy in inter-state relations are rooted in the endurance of the absolute sovereignty of the state, a state of affairs to which federalism (more precisely, European federalism) is the most effective antidote, to his credit, he appreciated fully the gravely disruptive nature of the nation-state model of state, the precursor of the totalitarian state and certainly the antithesis of a free and democratic society. And thus, it is for his commitment to anti-stateism in the greater perspective of a European federation that this unusual Sicilian achieves his greatness and remains an example (and a source of inspiration) to those of us now who approach his work, still so highly topical and relevant today.

NOTES

¹ Luigi Sturzo was born in Caltagirone on November 26th, 1871 to a family of country gentry who steered him young into religious studies. He was ordained in Rome in 1894. Returning to Caltagirone, he founded a weekly journal, *La Croce di Costantino*, and began working intensively with parish committees, mutual aid associations, and cooperative societies, eventually setting up a Catholic political movement which he led in local elections, himself becoming a provincial councillor and, in 1905, deputy mayor of Caltagirone. On January 18th, 1919, in Rome, Sturzo founded the Italian Popular Party, making his famous appeal "A tutti gli uomini liberi e forti" (*to all strong and free men*). As leader of the new party, his political activity, characterised by a clear anti-fascist and anti-socialist stance, intensified. By the time of the party's Venice congress in October 1921, he had already given definition to his main ideas on anti-stateism and on the need to protect the rights of local communities, and expressed his condemnation of Nazi-fascism and Bolshevism. Forced into exile in 1924 (acting on the advice of the Vatican) Sturzo remained out of his country for around 22 years, residing first in London and later in New York, further elaborating his ideas on the problems of war and international relations. He returned to Rome in September 1946, immediately becoming caught up both in the debate surrounding the new republican Constitution (particularly the part relating to the regional question) and, by joining Altiero Spinelli's European Federalist Movement, in the earliest steps in the process of European integration. He died in Rome on August 8th, 1959. Of his many works, (now collected in *Opera Omnia* published by Zanichelli for the Luigi Sturzo Institute, a number in particular should be remembered: *Popolarismo e fascismo* (1924), *La Comunità internazionale e il diritto di guerra* (1928), *Miscellanea londinese* (1926-1940), *Politica e morale* (1936), *L'Italia e l'ordine internazionale* (1944), *Nazionalismo e internazionalismo* (1946), *La Regione nella Nazione* (1949), *Politica di questi anni. Consensi e critiche* (1946-1959).

² The scarce interest aroused by such problems among scholars taking part in the international congress on the work of Luigi Sturzo (held in March 1989, in Rome, under the esteemed patronage of the President of the Republic) was clearly evident. The proceedings of this congress are now collected in Gabriele De Rosa (ed.) *Luigi Sturzo e la democrazia europea*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1990.

³ The expression "regionalist war" was used by Sturzo, writing in *La Croce di Costantino* on 12th July, 1903, in reference to the controversy over the promulgation of the Zanardelli decree on the reduction of domestic rail tariffs. For more on the autonomistic aspects of Sturzo's "Southern Italianism", see Francesco Renda, "Per una riconsiderazione del meridionalismo sturziano", in *Luigi Sturzo e la democrazia europea*, cit., pp. 271-74.

⁴ Luigi Sturzo, "Pro e contro il Mezzogiorno", in *La Croce di Costantino*, 12-13 July, 1903, published in C. Petraccone (ed.), *Federalismo e autonomia in Italia dall'unità ad oggi*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1995, pp. 159-61.

⁵ Luigi Sturzo, in *La Croce di Costantino*, Caltagirone, 22nd December, 1901, published in Id., *Contro lo statalismo*, (edited by Luciana Dalu), Messina, Rubbettino, 1995, p. 125.

⁶ Luigi Sturzo, "Nord e Sud. Decentramento e federalismo" in *Il Sole del Mezzogiorno*, 31st March-1st April, 1901, published in Id., *Contro lo statalismo*, cit., pp. 120-21.

⁷ Sturzo's stance is widely confirmed not only by his view of Italian unification as a fundamentally positive process, but also by his repeatedly expressed aversion to, and apprehension over, the separatist designs that arose in Italy during the Allied occupation of 1945 and, finally, by his famous speech on New York Radio ("autonomia sì, separatismo no"). See Eugenio Guccione, *Municipalismo e federalismo in Luigi Sturzo*, Turin, S.E.I.,

1994, pp. 22 and 32-3.

⁸ C. Petraccone, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁹ This theme is also dealt with in Zeffiro Ciuffoletti, *Federalismo e regionalismo. Da Cattaneo alla Lega*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1954, pp. 94-5. For more on the problems of the autonomy of local powers, with reference to European experiences, especially in the area of welfare state and fiscal federalism, see Pierangelo Schiera (ed.), *Le autonomie e l'Europa. Profili storici e comparati*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993, and *I volti del federalismo*, (edited by) SPAI (Institute for the Study of International Politics), Milan, 1996.

¹⁰ The relationship between the ideology of popularism, which has been considered to be, above all, the expression of the interests of a substantially pre-industrial peasant society, and the modern "rationally" centralised, industrial, bureaucratic state foretold by Weber, is a different thing altogether (see Norberto Bobbio, *Profilo Ideologico del Novecento italiano*, Turin, Einaudi, 1986, pp. 122-23). In any case, starting, in fact, from Sturzo's autonomism, the grounds for supporting this view of the federal system as typically "pre-modern" or conservative in character (unlike a unitary state with its more innovative and progressive inclination) appear, especially given the considerably greater liberty and democracy allowed by a pluralistic society (like a typically federal society) in which the power is more widely spread, somewhat weak.

¹¹ Luigi Sturzo, Nicola Antonetti (ed.s) *Opere scelte. Riforme e indirizzi politici*, vol. V, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1992, p.35 onwards.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 47 and 61-5. For the definition of federal government as a system of independent and coordinated governments, see Kenneth C. Wheare, *Federal Government*, London, 1963. For more on federalism see also, Lucio Levi, *Il Federalismo*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1987 and, more recently, Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, Rome, Carocci, 1998.

¹³ Luigi Sturzo, *Opere scelte. Il popolarismo*, vol. I, (edited by Gabriele De Rosa), Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1992, p.40.

¹⁴ Art. 3 b: "In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community." The question of subsidiarity in the European Union has given rise to numerous contributions and in-depth analyses which include those of Peter-Christian Muller-Graaf "Subsidiarity as a legal principle", in *The European Union Review*, Pavia, no. 1, September 1996, p. 75 onwards and Gianluca D'Agnolo, *La sussidiarietà nell'Unione europea*, Padua, CEDAM, 1998. For a brief analysis of the principle of subsidiarity within the framework of the European Community in relation to possible developments of the Union and to the German federal experience, see also Rodolfo Gargano, "Il principio di sussidiarietà nel Trattato di Maastricht e il federalismo cooperativo", in *La Fardelliana*, Trapani, 1994, p. 157 onwards.

¹⁵ Luigi Sturzo, "Lo stato totalitario", in Id., *Contro lo statalismo*, (edited by L. Dalu), *cit.*, pp. 84-5 and p. 86. Already, in 1924, he had written "The nationalist theory and system overturn moral values, denying brotherhood among, and freedom of peoples, to exalt the idea of nation as essentially good, and thus as an idol... in order to achieve the predominance of one people and the subjection or servitude of the others." (Luigi Sturzo, *Popolarismo e fascismo*, Turin, Piero Gobetti editore, 1924, p. 304). For more criticism of the nation-state and more on the significance of cosmopolitanism as the opposite of nationalism, see also Mario Albertini, *Lo Stato nazionale*, (1959), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997, and by the same author *Il federalismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993.

¹⁶ Luigi Sturzo, *Opere scelte. La comunità internazionale e il diritto di guerra*, vol. VI,

(edited by Gabriele De Rosa), Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1992, p.11.

¹⁷ On this theme see Gabriele De Rosa, "I problemi dell'organizzazione internazionale nel pensiero di Luigi Sturzo", in Luigi Sturzo e la democrazia europea, *cit.*, pp. 5-25.

¹⁸ Luigi Sturzo, *La comunità internazionale...*, *cit.*, p. 11. And, in 1946, he added: "It is human experience which leads us to believe that men, in order to be organised, need as much of that rational element which induces us to accept the limitations of society as of that coercive element which prevents us from escaping them" (L. Sturzo, *Nazionalismo e internazionalismo*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1971, p. 219).

¹⁹ Cfr. Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace", in Id., *Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991 (edited by H. Reiss); Id., *La pace, la ragione e la storia*, introduction by Mario Albertini, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1985; Mario Albertini *Il federalismo*, *cit.* Differently, in the sense that Kant stops at the confederation of states, bound by a social pact and without a coercive central power, see Id. *Per la pace perpetua*, (edited by N. Bobbio), Rome, Editori riuniti, 1985, p. XVI. On the same theme, see also W.B. Gallie, *Filosofie di pace e guerra. Kant, Clausewitz, Marx, Engels, Tolstoj*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993, p. 29 onwards.

²⁰ Luigi Sturzo, *La comunità internazionale...*, *cit.*, p. 7.

²¹ Luigi Sturzo, *Ibidem*, p. 8.

²² This is Sturzo's expression (*ibidem*, p. 61).

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

²⁴ Luigi Sturzo, *Lo statalismo*, (edited by L. Dalu), *cit.*, p. 55. And he went on: we need to agree that the concept of the sovereignty of a state, understood in the true sense of the word (that is, its boundlessness both internal and external, and its self-dominion), no longer has any meaning, other than as a means of distinguishing between independent states and dependent states (like protectorates, mandated territories and colonies)" (L. Sturzo, *Nazionalismo e internazionalismo*, *cit.*, p.274).

²⁵ Luigi Sturzo, *La comunità internazionale...*, *cit.*, p. 15. At this point, we cannot fail recall the words written by Alexander Hamilton in *The Federalist Papers*: "To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of unconnected sovereignties situated in the same neighbourhood, would be to disregard the uniform course of human events and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages", Id., *Il Federalista* (edited by Lucio Levi), Bologna, Il Mulino 1998, p. 164.

²⁶ Indeed, just after the end of the Second World War he wrote: "...ever since the time of the First World War ... we should have been creating, not a league of states, but a league of peoples. Still today, during and after the constitution of the United Nations, there has been a return to the idea of an international parliament, elected by the peoples of the associated states, which will have legislative powers, while the political, administrative and military powers will be held by the executive centre it is up to civil individuals to make sure that reason holds sway over instinct, and accepting the value of moral law, that the blind faith engendered by force is surpassed. All this would be impossible in the absence of some form of international authority with the capacity to make laws, to defend justice and to make itself heard, even through force. Without force, any international organisation would be inefficient and clumsy" (L. Sturzo, *Nazionalismo e internazionalismo*, *cit.*, pp. 225 and 329-30).

²⁷ Giuseppe Ignesti, "I problemi della pace e dell'assetto politico internazionale nell'analisi di Sturzo", in Gabriele De Rosa (ed.) *Luigi Sturzo e la democrazia europea*, *cit.*, p.339.

²⁸ Luigi Sturzo, "La regione nella struttura dello Stato", in *La Voce Repubblicana*, 28th May, 1947, (from the volume *Politica di questi anni. Consensi e critiche (dal settembre 1946 all'aprile 1948)* Bologna, Zanichelli, vol. I, pp. 247-50).

²⁹ Luigi Sturzo, "Senato e Regione" in *Il Popolo*, 18th September, 1947, in *Politica di*

questi anni (1946-1948), cit., pp. 294-99.

³⁰ On this theme, see (a volume which provides great detail) Eugenio Guccione, *Dal federalismo mancato al regionalismo tradito*, Turin, Giappichelli, 1998, pp. 71-4. For more on the rebirth of regional identity and the effects of regional identities on the institutional bases of the economy, see Ilaria Porciani, "Identità locale-identità nazionale: la costruzione di una doppia appartenenza", in O. Janz, P. Schiera and H. Siegrist (ed.s), *Centralismo e federalismo tra Otto e Novecento. Italia e Germania a confronto*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997, p. 141 onwards, and Paolo Perulli (ed.), *Neoregionalismo. L'economia-arcipelago*, Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1998. For its repercussions on the question of European integration, see also Rodolfo Gargano, "La rinascita delle piccole patrie e l'Europa delle Regioni", in *ITemi*, Cagliari, December 1996, p. 61 onwards.

³¹ Luigi Sturzo, "La federazione europea", in *Il Popolo*, 29th April 1948, and "I problemi dell'ora" (conversation with *Cité Nouvelle* Brussels correspondent), both now in Id., *Politica di questi anni (1946-1948)*, cit., pp. 421-24 and 22-24 respectively.

³² Luigi Sturzo, "L'Italia e la guerra", in *Il Mondo*, New York, December 1939, cited in Id., *Opere Scelte. La Comunità internazionale... cit.*, pp. XVIII-XIX; L. Sturzo, "Economia del dopoguerra", in *People and Freedom*, May 1940, and "Il problema delle minoranze in Europa", in *Il Pungolo*, Paris, October 15th, 1929.

³³ Luigi Sturzo, "La federazione europea", in Id., *Politica di questi anni (1946-1948)*, cit., p. 423.

³⁴ Of Altiero Spinelli's writings, see, in particular, *The Ventotene Manifesto*, Ventotene, The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies, 1988. On the process of European integration, see also Lucio Levi and Umberto Morelli, *L'unificazione europea. Cinquant'anni di storia*, Turin, Celid, 1994, and Luigi Vittorio Majocchi, *La difficile costruzione dell'unità europea*, with preface by Antonio Padoa-Schioppa, Milan, Jaca Books, 1996.

³⁵ Luigi Sturzo, "Europa oggi e domani", in *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 8th, 1954, now in Id., *Battaglie per la libertà*, Palermo-S. Paolo, Il Palma, 1992, Vol. I, pp. 127-30.

³⁶ Luigi Sturzo, "La piccola Europa", in *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 24th, 1958, now in Id., *Battaglie per la libertà*, Palermo-S. Paolo, Il Palma, 1992, Vol. II, pp. 799-803.

³⁷ Reference is made, in particular, to Sturzo's criticism of the League of Nations and of the international community generally which he sees as conceptually detached from the political project for European unity proposed by Spinelli's European federalists; on this subject, see also Sergio Pistone, *L'Italia e l'unità europea. Dalle premesse storiche all'elezione del Parlamento europeo*, Turin, Loescher (ed.), 1982, p. 41.

³⁸ For more on Sturzo as a genuine interpreter of the crisis of the liberal state, see Sabino Cassese, "Quando 'la politica divenne arte senza pensiero'. La crisi dello stato e Luigi Sturzo", in Gabriele De Rosa (ed.), *Luigi Sturzo, e la democrazia europea*, cit., p. 278 onwards. Finally, on a wished for revival of Sturzo (viewed as a development which has so far failed to occur), see various authors, *Chi ha paura di don Sturzo? Passato e futuro del cattolicesimo liberale*, Fondazione amici di "liberal", Rome 1996.

Notes

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION AND THE INTERNET

The scientific and technological revolution is producing extraordinary transformations in the means of production and in the life of every individual. Among the innumerable ways through which this phenomenon is manifesting itself in all fields of human activity, one aspect in particular, that of the success of the Internet, has become the symbol of the global society. The problems and potentialities connected to this development of information technology have entered the current debate through two symbolic images, that of the electronic (or information) highway, and that of the creation of a universal service. These images have the merit of highlighting the true nature of the challenge facing mankind in the new phase of the technological revolution opened by the Internet: the possibility of finally realizing the design, only sketched out by the Encyclopaedists in the age of the Enlightenment, of offering each individual the opportunity and possibility to find out at any time or place what mankind knows and what it can do. When the Internet originated in the late fifties, there was a theoretical plan to ultimately create a galactic network, by which it would be possible to share any kind of information on a planetary scale in real time.

This is not the place for more detailed consideration of the analogies between the aspirations of the age of the Enlightenment and those of the era of global communication. It is however worthwhile underlining that the birth, growth, propagation and realization of these aspirations took place in eras marked by the emergence of the role of the State — on a national scale the French state in particular between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and on a continental scale the American state especially from the second half of the twentieth century — in policies promoting science and technology. This role is well attested in reports on

the state of science and technology commissioned by Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and by speeches on the state of the Union by US Presidents from the end of the Second World War, which display not only national pride in playing a leading role in the development of progress, but also the consciousness of being able to increase human well-being.

Today there is general agreement that innovation can result both from individual spontaneous and fortuitous action, and from state policy. Yet in the case of the Internet one tends to undervalue this interaction between power and innovation and emphasize its spontaneous nature rather than the aspect of its government. The fact remains, as cause for reflection for the Europeans in particular (but not only — for the Russians too, for example), that the history of the success of the Internet is inseparable from the role played by the US government, and marks a grave failure for those states which, because of their purely national dimension (the European Union countries) or because of an accumulated technological lag (the former USSR and its satellites), despite having invested enormous resources in the development of the information society and/or in communication technology, have had to surrender to the Internet.

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Before examining this aspect more closely, it is however worth clarifying: 1) in what sense the Internet is part of the scientific revolution, and 2) who governs the Internet.

As to the first point, in the definition given by Radovan Richta in the late sixties, the network of revolutions facing mankind was “a universal and constant process of transformation of the productive forces of human life, of their structure and their dynamic, in which science becomes the foundation of all production, opens up the way to complex technicalization of the productive base and eliminates the use of human labour from direct production, thus freeing manpower for the phases preceding production; it creates the conditions in which it is above all the general development of man and of his capacities and strength, which becomes the decisive element in the process of civilization.”¹ What emerges from Richta’s analysis can be briefly summed up thus. The advance of the scientific and technological revolution should make it possible: a) to extend and deepen human interdependence; b) to liberate man’s creativity; c) to bring about a convergence between the processes of production and information transfer, and those of education; d) to create the material premises for a

not yet well-defined revolution in the political and social field. The revolution of information technology and of the Internet in particular represents the most advanced and dynamic front in the network of revolutions described by Richta; it has developed by following a logic qualitatively different from that of the industrial revolution.² The innovations of the industrial revolution had decisive importance in promoting the development of new means of communication on land (railways, telegraph lines) and in the airwaves (radio broadcasting), and of mechanization and automation of production, i.e. in promoting the birth and growth of distinct and specialized networks. The revolution in information technology has on the other hand made something absolutely new possible: the inter-operability of networks, i.e. the tendency to eliminate specialization by function from the different communications infrastructures. The Internet is the most mature expression of this tendency, having begun, at least in some parts of the world, to radically modify the way people research and buy, advertise and sell the goods they need for living and producing, and the way they store and transfer knowledge; and to make ever more widely available resources and information which until less than ten years ago were the exclusive domain of restricted circles of scientists, researchers and the state apparatus.

As to the second point, it has to be said that, despite this success, the Internet still only represents the embryo of a genuine global web of networks. In fact a global network, to be really at the service of all mankind, should depend on the policy of a world democratic government. Instead, now and for who knows how long, its development and government will depend on how the international balance of power evolves, in particular between the USA, Europe and Asia.

What is happening in Asia merits a fuller analysis than is possible on these pages. There, the Internet phenomenon has already launched policies of technological competition with the rest of the world, particularly in India, to gain leading and therefore controlling positions in the services which can be introduced on the Internet. China also merits a separate discussion, for it is beginning to constitute a problem on its own in the management of the regional register of Internet addresses. The fact is that the heart of the development of the Internet currently lies neither in Europe nor in Asia. In order to understand how the interaction between power and innovation in this field is evolving, it is therefore worth briefly recalling how the Internet was born.

After the Soviet space success with the launch of the Sputnik, the American government began to fund research projects in the attempt to

bridge the technological gap, which at that time seemed huge. Thus an autonomous foundation within the Department of Defense was established to study all aspects of the development of communications. In the sixties this work produced the first nodes in the North-American continental network, linking the principal military research centres and specialized university laboratories situated on the US west and east coasts. In the seventies, the American federal government, like other governments of industrialized countries, began to finance research into the development of advanced digital communication technology, to strengthen ARPANET, the network of the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. It was in this period that in the attempt to realize the “galactic network” dreamed of by the pioneers of the Internet, a primitive “network of networks” was born and began to develop, governed by the Internet protocols to enable connection between several networks. This innovation met two needs which were making themselves felt in American society. The success of the policies of promotion and control of communications on a continental scale, launched by Congress in the thirties (*Communications Act*, 1934), had raised the problem of automating telephone traffic control and management operations since the sixties — hence the need to create intelligent networks which could reduce manual intervention to a minimum, as it would be impossible to find enough operators to make the network function. On the other hand, they had stimulated the birth of autonomous user networks, like *Usenet* and *Bitnet*, which sought to unite the capacity of computers to process and store data, with the capillarity of the telephone network, so as to broaden and improve possibilities of sharing and exchanging information. Federal agencies also took advantage of this situation, not only in the field of defence, but in energy, health and the environment, which were able to extend and improve continental coordination. Innovation and the needs of society thus began to interact in the USA and to spread to other countries — but only from the eighties, as in Holland, one of the first Internet bridge tests in Europe — as a result of activity by multinationals.

It is therefore no wonder that the functioning of the Internet was and remains, *de facto*, in US hands. Indeed it is still only possible thanks to the system of centralized assignment of site addresses (the familiar — at least for those who use the Internet — *Domain Name System* or DNS), which constitutes the true “core technology” of the Internet.

According to the pioneers of the Internet, the secret of the network lies precisely in these numbers: whoever guards this secret controls the

Internet. The system of assignment really fulfils the function of a world telephone directory which combines Internet names (for example www.euraction.org) with the numerical codes assigned by Internet Protocols (for example 194.202.158.47) for the univocal recognition of addresses on the the Internet. This control has so far been exercised by agencies such as IANA (Internet Assigned Number Authority), and, since 1992, by companies such as Network Solutions, under the direct control of the US federal government. But how can the rapid spread of the Internet on a worldwide scale be explained?

With the end of the Cold War many of the reasons for the restrictive policy imposed by Congress and the US Administration on the transfer of information technology disappeared. Thus, with a law passed in 1992, the US Congress authorised the federal agencies to make their own network infrastructures available to international trade, opening the way to commercial and private exploitation of the Internet. This decision helped attract new network applications, invented outside the USA. The first consequence was a further advance in the use of new protocols for communication between computers, including one (now known as http) invented in Europe by CERN (European Center for Nuclear Research), which had no chance of realizing its potential on the national European networks.

This new development opened the doors to the transfer, at low cost and by simple operations, of images, sounds and information between tens of millions of personal computer owners, putting an end to the European dream of competing with the USA in the field of information technology.

Europeans were the first in the world to explain how to live with the computer,³ but without worrying about developing an industry worthy of the name in the personal computer sector. The Europeans financed ambitious national programmes for the computerization of their societies, but more with a view to reinforcing their respective monopolies and national bureaucracies than to extending the informational horizons of their citizens on a European scale. These choices proved to be the wrong ones. The symbol of Europe’s defeat is well summed up in the speech in which the French Prime Minister Jospin, after his investiture, declared the Minitel experiment substantially over. An experiment which in the space of twenty years had linked most French telephone users in one network!

The statistics showing the success of the Internet are now well known: in less than five years the volume of traffic on the Internet has equalled

that reached by the telephone network in one hundred years.

In the space of a few years the Internet has become an important factor in the increase in communications and in internal and international trade for states, becoming an important instrument in world government: it is still possible today, with only thirteen computers, directly or indirectly controlled by the US government, to manage the archive of the world addressing system of principal domains, i.e. of regional and national registers of geographical addresses (America, Europe, Asia, .us, .uk, .de, etc.) and of activity addresses (.gov, .org, .com, etc.) attributed to users who wish to be on the network.

The American government itself recognizes that this system of government of the Internet is now inadequate for at least two reasons: it is not sufficiently stable, since the time has come to extend — but by how much? — the capacity to meet demand for new addresses; and it is not sufficiently secure for the transfer of confidential information, whether commercial, administrative or military. On the other hand governments and users, primarily the Europeans and commercial companies, are pressing for greater liberalization of the system of attribution of addresses in order to increase their own influence. The American government says it is favourable to privatizing the management of the world register of addresses, but has stressed the need to maintain a centralized system of control with its headquarters in the USA.⁴

The growth of commercial and administrative use of the Internet also raises the problem of universally valid legislation to prevent any state gaining an advantage over other countries either in the commercial field or in military security. But at the moment neither Europe nor Asia is yet in a position to support the USA effectively in governing the Internet, and the conditions are not yet ripe to create a world federal controlling authority. The reform of the system of government of the Internet therefore depends on the respective strength of the various states in the international bodies coordinating communications.

* * *

In this context it becomes clear why the USA does not wish to renounce the position of strength which it still holds, and why the USA and Europe are responding differently to the challenges of the revolution in information technology.

The American government, determined to defend its world leadership, has decided on the one hand to accelerate the timing of the reform

of the bodies controlling the Internet, and on the other hand, to launch the challenge to realize the Next Generation Internet.

Since 1996 there have been proposals to restructure the control of the Internet, envisaging the creation of a new corporation, “with its head office in the USA so as to promote stability and foster the maintenance of confidence in the technical experience which has matured in the USA in this sector;” this was indeed realized in October 1998. This corporation, under the aegis of the federal government, now has the task of producing a general reform by September 2000.

In the meantime the Next Generation Internet project should further increase the role of the USA in this sector, by transferring the core technology of the “old” Internet onto a US network capable of transmitting information at a speed of 100 to 1000 times greater than the present speed by the year 2002. This American commitment to the Internet is part of the general commitment shown by the federal government over many decades to supporting innovation: for at least forty years, 45% of resources for research and development in the USA has been provided at federal level. This commitment has had essentially one aim: to coordinate efforts on a continental scale to foster osmosis between innovation for civil purposes and innovation for military purposes. During the Cold War the accent was on the primacy of military innovation, today it is on the primacy of civil innovation, but the basic orientation is unaltered: it is up to federal government to guarantee the dual use of any innovation to conserve and increase American world leadership.

None of all this has happened nor can yet happen in Europe. The Delors Plan (1992) and the Bangemann Report (1995-6) are a pale reflection of what happens on the other side of the Atlantic. The Delors Plan, which did consider the problem of European infrastructural investment in the field of information technology, has been overtaken both as to method — deepening of cooperation between member states — and content — we are in fact already facing a new turning point in the development of the Internet. The Bangemann Report, although more recent and more specific than the Delors Plan, lays more emphasis on subsidiarity as a working method than on the central role of European institutions, and does not offer any cue to relaunch European policy in supporting innovation.

Thus, in the USA the dialectic relationship between innovation and new needs continues to find in federal power a decisive factor in coordinating the productive forces and in bringing together the social consensus on federal policy; whereas in Europe innovation, which still

continues to flourish in various fields, cannot be translated into world power nor into applications capable of modifying social behaviour without American intermediation. In other words the Europeans seem to have embarked on a course similar to that taken centuries ago by Chinese civilization, which, though capable of producing innovations such as gunpowder before other peoples, was unable to exploit all their implications.

* * *

In conclusion, the beginning of reform of the system by which the Internet is governed once more confronts Europe with a choice between submitting to American decisions, or equipping itself with the instruments to contribute effectively and responsibly to the control of an instrument crucial to world order. And this choice increasingly coincides with that between maintaining the sovereign nation states and creating the European federal state.

Franco Spoltore

NOTES

¹ Radovan Richta, consulted in "La rivoluzione tecnologico-scientifica e le alternative della civiltà moderna", in *Progresso tecnico e società industriale*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1977, p. 72.

² See Arati Prabhakar in *Trade and Technology*, Seminar Series at the University of Maryland, March 7, 1995 and in *The National Information Infrastructure: A Revolution for the Millennium*, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, October 4, 1995.

³ "To put France into a position of strength with regard to competitors who escape their sovereignty, the public authorities must without scruple avail themselves of their 'regal' prerogative: to command" (*L'informatisation de la société*, consulted in *Convivere con il calcolatore*, di S. Nora e A. Minc, Milan, Bompiani, 1978, p. 26)

⁴ *Statement of policy concerning the management of the Internet Domain Name System*, United States Department of Commerce, Management of Internet Names and Addresses (White Paper, June 1998).

REFLECTIONS ON TOTALITARIANISM

What exactly is totalitarianism? What are its origins, and why is it that the 20th century, in particular, has been so scarred by its brutality? Have we seen the last of it, or could it surface once more? All these are dramatic questions which are still prominent in political thought today.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and the end of the Cold War, the communist regimes, with their particular brand of totalitarianism, are generally considered to have been definitively overcome. Even though there are political forces still in existence and, particularly, countries which remain rooted in communist ideology, these are, in the first case, forces which have accepted the democratic order in which they, as parties, have taken their place, and in the second, countries which, while generally autocratic, have nevertheless set in motion a process by which they may be integrated into the world market, and which are gradually seeking to adapt to western economic models. And both, moreover, repudiate the eras of totalitarian rule, dismissing them as instances of degeneration. Yet, while totalitarianism in the communist mould is something that has proved relatively easy to confront, much controversy still surrounds the brand of totalitarianism that accompanied the phenomenon of National Socialism. The continuing debate over this issue, particularly in Europe, reveals an oscillation between the desire, on the one hand, to forget the experience of Nazism, to write it off as a period of madness which, as such, will never be repeated, and, on the other, the fear that we could once again be brought face to face with the same tragic phenomenon. This fear is, in part, fuelled by the fact that there exist throughout the world, albeit on a smaller scale, active political groups which embrace elements of fascist and Nazi thought, even in its ugliest and most brutal guise (e.g. racism), and which hark back to the fascist and Nazi period. Even though these are only minority groups, they have nevertheless proved capable of winning a certain amount of support among those sections of society hardest hit by situations of crisis, and emerged as a serious potential threat to democracy.

It is therefore crucial that we go on striving to answer the questions posed above, not only in order to gain a deeper understanding of our past, but also in order to evaluate the potential risks the future holds.

* * *

Two scholars who, among others, have asked themselves these

questions, setting out to analyse them in particular depth, and whose views it is extremely useful to consider, are Hannah Arendt, particularly in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and Norbert Elias, in essays collected in *The Germans*.¹ Both German Jews forced into exile to escape the tide of Nazism, they have, at length, examined this tragedy, which for them, of course, also had a personal dimension, in order to understand its origins. As Elias points out in the introduction to his book, “many of the following discussions originated in the attempt to make understandable, to myself and anyone who is prepared to listen, how the rise of National Socialism came about, and thus also the war, concentration camps and the breaking apart of the earlier Germany into two states.”² And Arendt, in the preface to the first edition of her book, writes: “This book... was written out of the conviction that it should be possible to discover the hidden mechanics by which all traditional elements of our political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value, and has become unrecognizable for human comprehension, unusable for human purpose... Comprehension does not mean denying the outrageous, deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by such analogies and generalities that the impact of reality and the shock of experience are no longer felt. It means rather examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us — neither denying its existence, nor submitting meekly to its weight. Comprehension, in short, means the unpremeditated, attentive facing up to, and resisting of, reality — whatever it may be.”³

While both these scholars begin with an attempt to understand the tragedy of Nazism, the perspective from which they subsequently develop their arguments differs: Arendt, even taking Stalinism into consideration, seeks to analyse the phenomenon of totalitarianism as a whole and finally develops a sort of *Idealtypus* of “this entirely new form of government which as a potentiality and an ever-present danger is only too likely to stay with us from now on, just as other forms of government which came about at different historical moments and rested on different fundamental experiences have stayed with mankind regardless of the temporary defeats — monarchies and republics, tyrannies, dictatorships and despotism.”⁴ And so, her work highlights, very effectively, the problem presented by the radical novelty of totalitarianism, and by the impossibility of its assimilation into other, tried and tested, historical forms of dominion. Elias, meanwhile, focuses on Germany and tries to explain why it was that Nazism managed to win consensus in that

country. Examining both internal aspects (the lateness of Germany’s development into a modern state, social relations, etc.) and external factors (the country’s geographical position and its relations with other states), he goes right back to the process leading to the formation of the German state.

The work of these two authors is, to a certain extent, complementary, and it is important to begin by outlining the main lines of their arguments, starting with *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, in order to identify both their most useful aspects, and their eventual weaknesses.

* * *

In her effort to understand totalitarianism, Arendt begins by drawing a distinction between simple dictatorship and totalitarian dominion, a distinction which also has the effect of separating clearly the Nazi ideology and experience from the fascist ideology and experience (Arendt interprets the fascist experience in Italy, for example, as a nationalistic dictatorship born of the difficulties generated by a multi-party democracy). The fundamental difference between dictatorship and totalitarian dominion lies in the fact that, even though single-party dictatorial systems strive both to take over the public administration and to obtain a complete fusion of State and party, (filling the administrative posts with their own members), and even though such systems leave space for no other parties, forms of opposition or freedom of opinion, they nevertheless leave intact the original balance of power between the State and the party. The government and the armed forces still have the same authority as before and, not having an independent centre of power of its own, separate from the institutions, the party bases its power on a guaranteed monopoly of the State.

The revolution brought about by a totalitarian movement (once it has seized power) is, on the other hand, far more radical. All the power remains in the hands of the movement’s own institutions, excluding completely the apparatus of State and the armed forces. While this is again achieved by taking control of the public administration, in this case, there is no merging with it: the highest positions in the State hierarchy are assigned only to less important members of the movement, while all the offices of State are duplicated, creating shadow institutions which emanate directly from the movement and strip the existing offices of State of their effective power. The country is thus run by the movement, within whose confines all decisions are taken. The State remains, but only as a

façade for the benefit of the outside world; it is now the secret police, and not the armed forces, which is the country's real centre of power, existing above the State and operating behind the pretence of the State as the real power.

The driving force behind all this is the leader, on whose will and orders the entire life of the movement depends. He remains removed from the members of the movement, even those who have reached its highest echelons, and lives surrounded by a close circle of initiates among whom he is careful to cultivate a climate of reciprocal suspicion and mistrust. In fact, his rise to power is due, in part, to his ability to exploit situations of internal strife; once he has gained supremacy, however, his power is guaranteed, as a situation is created in which the whole organisation is totally dependent upon him, and in which each member identifies fully with his person. Everything in a totalitarian regime is, in fact, fictitious; facts do not count, only the infallibility of the leader, who moulds reality. He has the absolute monopoly of power, and total and blind loyalty to him is the unbreakable rule. There are no such things as hierarchies within the totalitarian system, no possible heirs destined to succeed the leader; while these things are workable where an absolute authority has been established, the same is not true in the context of a totalitarian dominion; the latter, not content with restricting freedom, aims rather to abolish it, to get rid of it altogether. All this explains the fanaticism of militants who are prepared to die for a supreme collective ideal which does not have utilitarian implications in the short term, but which serves to ensure the greatness of the last, final victory.

The great innovation of the totalitarian regime is thus organisation, or the art of accumulating power. The slogans and ideologies of these regimes are generally nothing new, but what is new is the capacity to use them as the basis underlying (to paraphrase an expression of Hitler's⁵ "a fighting organisation", and to transform them into a system which makes reality correspond with ideology. The essence of this system is terror, a terror which grows as the power of the movement grows (in a manner inversely proportional to the existence of an opposition). Wielded over a population that is completely subjugated, it is directed not at real enemies (these have already been eliminated) but at "objective enemies", those, in other words, who belong to races and groups that are "objectively" to be eliminated. The concept of guilt thus becomes totally meaningless (and the objectivity of law disappears⁶) as the aim is not to bring about some, albeit distorted, form of justice, but rather to control, totally and permanently, every individual in every area of his life.

Concentration camps are laboratories for testing the will to achieve the total domination of men. Men are reduced to objects: they are allowed no rights, sapped of their moral strength (this is achieved by rendering even death meaningless, thereby removing the basis for martyrdom), their conscience is wiped out (whatever choice an individual makes, it destined to make a murderer of him, and victims and executioners are thus reduced to the same level of abjection), their individuality is destroyed, and their spontaneity, their capacity to react, snuffed out (which explains why there are practically no instances of resistance mounted in these camps). Death camps are an essential part of totalitarian regimes, as "without the undefined fear they inspire and the very well-defined training they offer in totalitarian domination, which can nowhere else be fully tested with all of its most radical possibilities, a totalitarian State can neither inspire its nuclear troops with fanaticism nor maintain a whole people in complete apathy."⁷

The death camps, according to Arendt, are "the appearance of some radical evil, previously unknown to us, that puts to an end the notion of developments and transformations of qualities. Here, there are neither political nor historical nor simply moral standards but, at the most, the realization that something seems to be involved in modern politics as we understand it, namely all or nothing — all, and that is an undetermined infinity of forms of human living-together, or nothing, for a victory of the concentration-camp system would mean the same inexorable doom for human beings as the use of the hydrogen bomb would mean the doom of the human race."⁸

* * *

The most striking aspect of Arendt's analysis, which I have sought to convey here, is her ability to probe so deeply and effectively the abyss opened up by Nazism. This is, in fact, a new historical reality, distinct from other experiences of absolutism or dictatorship, that brings us face to face with the manifestation of "radical evil". Radical evil is man's capacity to destroy all that which distinguishes him as such, in other words, all traces of reason. However, it is, in my view, questionable whether Nazism should be defined in these extreme terms.

Eric Weil, too, in *Logique de la Philosophie* maintains that Hitler can be comprehended by reason, but that he places himself outside of it, that he is something other than reason, (and thus is, substantially, pure violence). From a logical point of view, and as far as an understanding of

Nazism is concerned, these affirmations are contradictory (reason in fact cannot comprehend that which is other than itself, because it lacks the categories to do so; thus as Arendt herself admits, it cannot explain radical evil⁹; on the contrary, within the framework of this logic, it would not even be possible to talk in terms of it). The fact remains however that these affirmations have empirical confirmation that cannot, from a moral point of view, easily be denied. The insinuating doubts which remain serve in fact to demonstrate that there are still obscure aspects clouding our understanding of Nazism.

Moreover, there remains the crucial question of just how such a dramatic experience came about at all. Here, Arendt is unable to provide any convincing answers. In her view, the fact that a phenomenon of this kind had never previously manifested itself is, in some ways, mere chance, due even to the simple fact that never before had there been a dictator mad enough to start such a regime. As far as the causes are concerned, she highlights imperialism and the role of ideologies as determining factors.

With regard to imperialism, Arendt's starting point is correct; she goes back to the crisis of Europe's nation-states which began in the last three decades of the 19th century, and was due to the fact that the nations in this period found themselves unable to cope with the pace of economic expansion. However, instead of proceeding along these lines to see the growing tensions and subsequent upsetting of the international equilibrium as a consequence of this profound inadequacy on the part of the states, Arendt shifts her attention to the mechanisms at work within them, blaming the wealthy bourgeoisie which, until then, had never sought political supremacy, for imposing the imperialist solution as a means of safeguarding its own interests. Since, again in Arendt's view, the degeneration of the nation-state is rooted in imperialism, which in turn brings with it an insatiable thirst for power (corresponding in this case to the thirst for capitalist expansion on the part of the bourgeoisie), and since it is based on the use of force, there could only be one outcome: mortal conflict among the nations and the replacement of the "spirit of unorganized solidarity and agreement"¹⁰ that had characterised the comity of European nations, with hostility and competition between "fully armed business concerns — 'empires'."¹¹

Arendt also stresses the point that the nation-state had, until the advent of the imperialist phase, been above the classes, founded on the principle of the rule of law. As the imperialist phase unfolded, however, the nation-state, which had passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie, tended to

degenerate. This was partly due to its inability (since it lacked the necessary instruments) to incorporate new populations. Unable to integrate the populations of the countries brought under its imperialist control, it sought instead to assimilate them, and whenever this proved impossible, to oppress them, thus violating the fundamental principles underpinning the rule of law. Nationalism itself subsequently degenerated into tribal nationalism, evolving from a sense of loyalty to one's country (a sentiment which, in Arendt's view serves merely to justify centralisation, a need which, due to the fragmentation of society, became immediately apparent upon the birth of the nation-state) into a pretext for prevarication and brutality. The way was thus prepared for political decline and for the emergence of anti-democratic movements. It was, in fact, in precisely this phase that the first of these began to appear (imperialist and, especially, Pan-Germanic movements in German-speaking countries and Pan-Slavic ones in Russia) presenting ideologies which were to serve as a source of inspiration for patriotic totalitarian movements.¹²

Here, the weakness of this part of Arendt's analysis — her failure to appreciate the link between the advent of Nazism and the crisis of the European system of states — becomes clear. More concerned with drawing a distinction between common forms of dictatorship and totalitarianism as such, and thus more predisposed to picking up on aspects common to Nazism and Stalinism than to recognising the different roots of the two phenomena, Arendt overlooks the fact that Nazism emerged in a Europe that was suffering a generalised crisis of democracy and witnessing the affirmation of dictatorial regimes in almost all its countries, a situation born of an objective contradiction which seemed to leave the European states no way forward, other than the fascist way, and which lies at the root of both Nazism and fascism.¹³ This contradiction, which Arendt points out, but fails to probe, is that which existed between the pace of the evolution of the forces of production and the structure of the nation-state. The national markets, in fact, were no longer able to satisfy the requirements of production (unlike the United States which, thanks to its continental market, was already stronger than Europe economically), but in Europe, the economy was prevented, by the very nature of the system of states, from expanding to take on the continental dimensions needed. In fact, the "comity of European nations", to use Arendt's expression again, has never been characterised by "spontaneous solidarity and tacit understanding" among its members; on the contrary, it has always been a tension-ridden system that has produced, alternately,

phases of equilibrium, and thus relative quiet, and phases of extreme tension, coinciding with the emergence of attempts to achieve hegemonic dominion of the continent. Colonialism and its political equivalent, imperialism, thus represented an attempt to get round the problem through a search for new economic outlets that would allow the State to survive while at the same time ignoring the deep contradiction caused by the radical evolution of the forces of production.

In this situation of impasse, the dramatic force of the new hegemonic challenge, originating from Germany, was unprecedented: the very existence of Europe's states was at risk and all the resources of all the different countries had to be mobilised in order to face up to the threat.

The continuous escalation of tension caused by this situation, which rendered increasingly evident the structural inadequacy of the states, could not fail to lead to conflict. The First World War was the first instance of this, and it led to a dramatic acceleration of the process. It was the inevitable consequence of Germany's desperate attempt to free itself from the shackles of the system of states in Europe in order to become the centre of a new world equilibrium.

Since it left untackled the basic problem of the inadequacy of the European system of states, the First World War, and the inevitable economic and social crisis that followed in its wake, paved the way for the rise of fascism. The structurally authoritarian institutions of Europe's centralised states failed to deal with and absorb the growing social unrest, thus leaving the democratic institutions with very little support; this opened up the way for regimes which did have the capacity to impose, even through violence, an element of social order. And, as the crisis of the European system of states persisted, fascism emerged as the only possible way of ensuring the survival of the nation-state, as it was the only regime with the capacity to mobilise fully all the state's resources and, thus, to prepare it for war. Autocracy, imperialism, xenophobia and, of course, despotism, were not degenerate expressions of nationalism, attributable to subjective policies, but simply exaggerated expressions of its characteristic traits, traits first appearing at the time of the French Revolution — obscured initially by progressive elements and by the new-found freedom from the shackles of the *Ancien Régime* — and now brought to light by the objective contradictions which the nation-state itself had generated.

* * *

Nazism thus shares the same roots as fascism which, originating in

Italy, became a model for the whole of Europe. Arendt insists, however, that Nazism (like Stalinism), since its goal is to achieve world dominion, has nothing to do with nationalism, and thus she fails to appreciate fully the tragic contradiction inherent in the principle of the nation which, always tied to the concept of exclusive sovereignty, can view enlargement only in terms of imperial dominion. Arendt, herself, draws attention to the incongruity of a nation-state which affirms universal values but applies them only within its own confines, and it is Arendt again who writes that the evolution of the nation-state towards totalitarianism is a danger that can be regarded as having always been inherent in the structure of the nation-state.¹⁴ However, she is inconsistent on this point, even going so far as to state that "full national sovereignty was possible only as long as the comity of European nations existed; for it was this spirit of unorganized solidarity and agreement that prevented any government's exercise of its full sovereign power,"¹⁵ which is tantamount to saying that sovereignty represents a choice made freely by states and that it works only if it is not exercised to the full.

In fact, to appreciate the contradiction inherent in the principle of absolute sovereignty, it is necessary to bear in mind that it is superable: if, on the contrary, absolute sovereignty is considered immutable, then this point becomes impossible to understand. Although Arendt, for a short period following the war, believed in the idea of European unification, and despite writing, in the preface to the first edition of her book, of the need for "a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle, in a new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity while its power must remain strictly limited, rooted in and controlled by newly defined territorial entities,"¹⁶ she soon abandoned these ideas as utopian and went back to viewing real politics as "different peoples getting along with each other in the full force of their power."¹⁷ Thus, she fails to appreciate that, in an increasingly interdependent world, it was precisely this need for "the full force of... power" which lay at the root of totalitarian madness. The degeneration into totalitarianism of the communist ideology, which aimed to favour the process of human emancipation, is rooted, as well as in traditions of despotism in the Asian mould which were very strong in Russia and in Asia generally, also in the pressure brought to bear by the need to achieve in the space of a generation the level of industrial development achieved in the rest of Europe over the course of an entire century; this pressure was due to the need to reach as quickly as possible, in a Europe which was heading inexorably for another war, "the full force of ... power" (an

explanation which can also be applied to China, which aimed to achieve first regional and then global hegemony, and to Cambodia where nationalism was a crucial element in the pursuit of Pol Pot's crazy political design). While none of these were inevitable developments, of course, they did represent an expression of the need, imposed by the balance of power among states, for a coherent power policy.

* * *

In addition to imperialism and the degeneration of nationalism, Arendt also sees ideologies as a root cause of totalitarianism. Totalitarian movements, and the regimes which they manage to establish, are based on a radical falsification of reality. To put it another way, they scorn and reject facts and refuse to consider reality, which they believe they can mould, *ex novo*, according to the laws of history or of nature of which they consider themselves the trustees, even believing that they have the capacity to transform human nature. Arendt even goes so far as to say, "the aggressiveness of totalitarianism springs not from lust for power, and if it feverishly seeks to expand, it does so neither for expansion's sake, nor for profit, but only for ideological reasons: to make the world consistent, to prove that its respective supersense has been right."¹⁸

Given that Arendt fails, as we have said, to see the connection between the drive towards imperialist expansion and the crisis of the European system of states, she is thus led to maintain that ideologies are largely to blame for this movement. "An ideology is quite literally what its name indicates: it is the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the idea is applied... Ideologies are never interested in the miracle of being. They are historical, concerned with becoming and perishing, with the rise and fall of cultures, even if they try to explain history by some 'law of nature'... To an ideology, history does not appear in the light of an idea (which would imply that history is seen *sub specie* of some ideal eternity which itself is beyond historical motion) but as something which can be calculated by it... The movement of history and the logical process of this motion are supposed to correspond to each other, so that whatever happens, happens according to the logic of one 'idea'."¹⁹ And again, "Ideologies are harmless, uncritical and arbitrary opinions as long as they are not believed in seriously. Once their claim to total validity is taken literally, they become the nuclei of logical systems in which, as in the systems of paranoiacs, everything follows comprehensibly and even compulsorily once the first premise is accepted. The insanity of such

systems lies not only in their first premise but in the very logicity with which they are constructed. The curious logicity of all isms, their simple-minded trust in the salvation value of stubborn devotion without regard for specific, varying factors, already harbors the first germs of totalitarian contempt for reality and factuality."²⁰

The ideologies that evolved in the 18th and 19th centuries can thus be considered to have paved the way for the acceptance of totalitarianism, and their "logical" apparatus to have provided instruments important in the definition of the totalitarian doctrine. Without denying in any way the fact that totalitarian movements and regimes are founded on a strong tendency to mystify themselves, on an extreme disdain for reality (which in turn contains the seeds of self-destruction as it makes it impossible to evaluate correctly the real conditions of success) and on a rigidly and axiomatically formulated doctrine (something which served really to motivate the masses and to mobilise them in the collective effort), it cannot, however, be denied that ideologies were something more than a simple attempt on the part of groups and movements to bend reality to their logic. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between these ideologies on the basis of their underlying values, which may be universal values or values intended to create differences and divisions among men (in this regard, Arendt makes no distinction between the racist and the communist ideologies, considering them both tragically harmful); furthermore, like any conceptual instrument, they can be used more or less appropriately. Ideologies, *per se*, are theories which do not set out to describe reality, but which serve simply to provide the categories that allow it to be described. Reality is actually described on a concrete level through historical and sociological analysis.²¹ To assess the degree to which an ideology is objective, or falsified, it is necessary to appreciate whether or not it sets out to make reality correspond to its own designs (this is the way totalitarian movements and regimes use ideology) or whether, as was the case in many liberal, democratic and even socialist and communist ideologies, it does nothing more than supply the criteria which provide the basis for an awareness of reality and for action. Historically, these three currents of thought have been important influences in the emancipation of the classes excluded from power within the State; they have provided the instruments allowing an understanding of the historical situation and the pinpointing of the political objectives that must be achieved. The elements of self-mystification that they contained can be attributed, above all, to the contradiction between the universal values which they invoked and the partiality of the pursuit of these values,

always to the advantage of a section rather than the whole of the population. But in an era in which, for the first time, the overwhelming majority of the population, who had always existed on the outer edges of the life of the State, was being drawn into the political process, they became important instruments in the mobilisation of the different classes and factors contributing to great progress.

* * *

In conclusion, therefore, Arendt must certainly be praised for her successful analysis of totalitarianism as a category whose peculiarities have been identified on the basis of Nazism and Stalinism, two such vastly differing experiences; this is an achievement which allows her to isolate common and characteristic traits and to identify totalitarianism as an *Idealtypus*, different from other forms of dictatorship and qualitatively distinct from the forms of dominion already known. This is borne out by the fact that it is possible, on the basis of the categories which she outlines, to recognise the totalitarian regimes which subsequently emerged (such as that of China in the Cultural Revolution and Cambodia under Pol Pot) and to draw a distinction between these and the numerous other dictatorships that have taken hold all over the world; dictatorships which, while often more cruel as a result of the awareness of totalitarian precedents, are not for this reason to be grouped with them.

However, continuing to adopt this common perspective, also in her investigation of the origins of totalitarianism (in which she goes beyond the boundaries of a simple analysis of it as an *Idealtypus*), not only does Arendt fail to understand correctly the origins of Nazism (the misconceptions outlined earlier in this essay), she is also led to overlook the profound differences which separate the Nazi and communist experiences, particularly as regards the values on which they were based, and the different conditions from which they sprang and which determined their evolution and outcome. In fact, it is not possible, from a historical standpoint, to equate and evaluate in the same way the attempt to bring Europe under the control of a new race of masters and the attempt to realise the value of economic justice. Even though the manner in which this latter objective was pursued was erroneous, even though it quickly became mixed up with nationalistic impulses, even though it was based on theoretical presuppositions which turned out to be false, even though it gave rise to a totalitarian system, the fact remains that the Russian Revolution can also be attributed historically with affirming, albeit only

partially, the value of economic justice, and it is also true that the socialist and communist ideologies have, wherever the State left room for democratic action, been instrumental in the emancipation of the working classes. While Nazism ended in self-destruction in the context of a world war, there has been an evolution and “de-totalitarianisation” of Stalinism, a fact which indicates not the different nature of the two regimes, so much as their different historical significance.

* * *

For those who wish to examine the link between the crisis of the European system of states and the causes that led Germany to establish a totalitarian regime rather than a simple dictatorship (and thus to turn the dream of restoring the great Reich into something so brutal and tragic), the analysis of Elias (who also explains why it is that totalitarianism emerged this century, and not earlier) is extremely useful.

Elias, in fact, points out that alongside certain traits peculiar to Nazism, there are others which are shared by the whole of our society: “just like scientifically conducted mass wars, the highly organized and scientifically planned extermination of whole population groups in specially constructed death-camps and sealed-off ghettos by starvation, gassing or shooting, does not appear to be entirely out of place in highly technicized mass societies.”²² While the process triggered by industrialisation prompted major changes, and offered mankind great scope for progress, it also brought great dangers: the dizzyingly rapid increase in man’s technological capacity goes hand in hand with an increase in his capacity for destruction; the involvement of all sections of the population in the life of the state, a condition essential for the realisation of democracy, brings with it the need for a “strong” common philosophy as the basis of support for the institutions, but the values towards which this philosophy is oriented are not necessarily universal ones, because while the new, mass society is democratised socially, it is not necessarily democratised politically. The State’s monopoly of violence, which can serve to guarantee respect for the law and justice, can be accompanied by the risk of a strengthening of the bureaucratic apparatus, and of despotic control of the people. Progress, therefore, together with opportunity, has thus created the conditions and potential instruments for the establishment of total dominion. This is a danger that can manifest itself in concrete terms only if the existing political institutions prove unable to manage the deep contradictions which emerge, and only if no rational

way forward can be seen; in these cases however, the flight from reality can take the form of a crazy design for total dominion, and the higher the level of civilisation is, the more absolute the negation of its values has to be.

* * *

According to Elias, the contradictions peculiar to Germany's case can be understood in the light of both the German situation in the inter-war years and the characteristics of the process of the formation of the German State. It was a process strongly conditioned by the fragility of the Holy Roman Empire which, due to the vastness of its territory, was subject to strong centrifugal forces. As a result, while other European countries were becoming increasingly centralised, in the Holy Roman Empire, regional principles were gaining strength and the balance of power was tending to shift away from the emperor. This lack of integration proved to be a major weakness, inviting attempts at invasion on the part of neighbouring countries. The empire went through a long period of wars and invasions which left the German states impoverished not only materially, but culturally too, and led to the development of a strong inclination towards, and even a tendency to idealise military culture and practice. It must also be recalled that Germany was still firmly attached to a rigidly autocratic and authoritarian model of government which did not allow for the resolution of conflicts through mediation, treating these instead as insubordination against the established power.

None of these characteristics was changed by the mechanism which brought about the unification of Germany. Indeed, following the failure of the attempt at German unification of 1848, which can be seen as the incarnation of upper class aspirations for a democratisation of political life, unification when it did come, was achieved on a military basis, a fact which had, from the point of view of the questions under examination here, a number of implications. First of all, the new state sprang from a despotic power tradition and the German nationalism which subsequently developed was far removed from the ideals and the heroes of the democratic revolution ("the self-image of the nation as a 'we-unit' absorbed the association with an autocratic central power instead of, as in many other cases, shaking it off."²³) Second, the bourgeoisie which, due to the backwardness of the small German states, had had no hope of gaining access to power prior to the unification, began to enter public life at a time in which the conditions were already maturing for the birth of

a strong workers' movement. The bourgeoisie, finding itself pressed between two social fronts, was, due to the autocratic nature of the new German state, obliged to integrate with the aristocracy against the emerging "fourth estate" (this actually applied only to those belonging to the highest levels of the bourgeoisie, with those belonging to its lower levels remaining excluded), adopting aristocratic inclinations and an aristocratic attitude to power. The upper middle class (the only class to be drawn into the governing of the country) thus adopted (with even greater inflexibility and fanaticism than that shown by the aristocracy) the militaristic mentality of German nobility (its belief in the cult of force and in rigid discipline and absolute obedience) and its identification of the State with the ruling class, tightly closed and incapable of incorporating the new emerging forces. The section of the bourgeoisie which remained attached to liberal and democratic ideals was thus left completely isolated and powerless within the context of a totally rigid political system.

A deep contradiction emerged between all this and the concurrent process of industrialisation that had been triggered by the unification of the State and was now bringing to the fore new economic forces which, representing the material basis of the country's power, could not, without giving rise to other major contradictions, be kept indefinitely on the fringe of political life. There was, furthermore, also a major contradiction between all this, and the need for the involvement, and the mobilisation, of all levels of the population (a need which was emerging in all the European nation-states that had, through conscription, created vast armies, and which could not, as a result, fail to lead to a political awakening on the part of broad sections of the population).

With regard to this point, Elias points out how the nationalist ideology, necessary in order to mobilise the masses, and which, in the whole of Europe, had become a key element in the identity of each individual citizen (the people were made to assimilate the idea that, as individuals, they were subordinate to the needs of their country whose survival was the supreme value because on it depended the very meaning of the life of every one of its members) became particularly exaggerated in Germany, where strong discipline and absolute adherence to national principles and ideals was demanded regardless of their correspondence with reality. And this development was due precisely to those peculiar aspects of the history of the formation of the German State which had formed the basis for the moulding of the collective mentality which we referred to earlier. The very name chosen for the new state is indicative of this: Second Reich indicates the dream of resurrecting, at the heart of Europe, a great German

empire, a "continuation" of the great German empire of the Middle Ages. In short, Germany took as a model the one glorious period in its history, but this model was applied to such a vastly changed European context that it never had any real hope of succeeding; a highly self-mystified project, it was pursued with a determination and vigour heightened by the fact that it was never truly realistic. Present in all European states, this deliberate mystification of the nationalist ideology had, in Germany, due to the lack of any element of democracy in the country's political practice, to the gap separating its ideals from its reality, and to the exclusively national, and even racial character of its objectives which embraced no element of universality, particularly negative implications.

In the light of this heritage, it is easy to understand the fragility of Weimar's republic, and how the way was paved for the rise of Hitler. In Germany there existed neither a culture, nor a political practice compatible with a parliamentary system, based on mediation and flexibility. Instead, there were strong tensions generated by the inability to accept both military defeat and internal political changes, seen as impositions on the part of the winners; there was a sense of terror that a Bolshevist-type revolution might occur in Germany, and finally, there was the havoc wreaked by the economic crisis. Against this background, Hitler emerged as a leader with a design for the salvation of the humiliated might of Germany, and as the incarnation of the self-image, totally self-mystified, of the nation: "When a nation such as Germany, with a traditional inclination to an autocratic pattern of conscience and we-ideal which subjected the future to a dream-image of a greater past, became caught up, during a national crisis, in a dynamic of escalation in which, first of all, the ruling power elites and later wider social circles drove each other through mutual reinforcement to a radicalization of behaviour and beliefs and a progressive blocking of reality-perceptions, then there was an acute danger that the traditional autocratic traits would intensify into tyrannical harshness and that the fantasy-dominance, although previously moderate, would grow stronger and stronger."²⁴

National socialism, therefore, can be seen as the "modern" version of Germany's great imperial dream, set in a "democratised" mass society in which a strong ideology, far removed from reality, was needed in order to offer every citizen a reason, and a cogent justification²⁵ for obeying blindly the leader of the nation, and in a European context in which any design to achieve hegemonic dominion of the continent was totally unrealistic and thus could be pursued only with the desperate and ferocious determination characteristic of those who no longer have

anything to lose.²⁶

* * *

Elias thus points out that totalitarianism was not an inevitable consequence either of the development of the German State, or of the conditions emerging following its defeat in the First World War, but just one possible consequence of these things. However, the fact that it was a possibility that was realised should prompt us to reflect deeply on the fragility of the process of civilisation and remind us that we should never, in the defence of it, lower our guard. When situations of acute crisis evolve, in whose face the institutions are clearly powerless, the alternatives open to us in our increasingly interdependent world, a world in which technology and development continue to augment the instruments of power, become ever more sharply defined. Either we find the solutions that will allow an enlargement of the sphere of democracy and man's greater rational control over technology (that is, either we proceed along a path that will one day lead to the emergence of forms of government common to the whole of mankind), or the abysses of disintegration, dominion and possible barbarity will open up, ever wider. As Hannah Arendt points out, once a form of government has been an established fact, it can, after temporary historical defeat, always return. This should serve as a warning to all, but to Europe in particular — to a Europe which was spurred on, by the tragedy of Nazism, to begin the process of its unification and which, on the way, seems to be forgetting its historical responsibility to affirm, in the world, the revolutionary principle that is the overcoming of absolute sovereignty.

Luisa Trumellini

NOTES

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1966. Norbert Elias, *The Germans*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996. This is the English translation of the collected essays, *Studien über die Deutschen*, published in Germany by Suhrkamp Verlag in 1989.

² N. Elias, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. VII-VIII.

⁴ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

⁵ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 364, see note.

⁶ According to Arendt, the disregard of the totalitarian regime for law (including that originating from within), is the fruit of its claim to represent a higher form of legitimacy that stands above petty legality. It claims that it obeys faithfully the law of history, or of nature, (which is the true law) and applies the same directly to mankind, without the need to translate it into principles of right and wrong. Ultimately, this law, if correctly applied, will produce a mankind that can be regarded as its very incarnation.

Absolute terror is the instrument through which the regime gives real expression to the law of the historical process, or of nature (a law in perpetual motion which, unless it is to lose all meaning, can have no end, not even when a state of absolute dominion is reached). It serves to prevent spontaneous human action from getting in the way of the process, and to create a new mankind in which, for the greater good of the species, individuals are wiped out. Initially, this instrument of total terror can be mistaken for a symptom of tyrannical government as the totalitarian regime must behave like a tyranny initially in order to remove all the limits posed by the laws of men. Its real objective, however, is to create a cast-iron bond among individuals, a bond which unites them so closely that they lose their plurality and metamorphose into a single man of gigantic proportions.

Arendt's reflections on the way the totalitarian regime breaks down the *consensus iuris*, which it considers superfluous, demonstrate how all forms of law are subordinate to political power. Law is a product of the State, which holds the monopoly of violence, and the law is the law only in so far as the institutions of the State are able to guarantee the extent to which it can be applied and will be respected. The content of a law is determined by the regime operating within a country and by the restrictions imposed on that country by the system of states of which it forms a part (think, for example, of the obligation, built into all national constitutions, to die and kill for one's country). Wherever a state's internal regime and the international equilibrium combine to give rise to a system of laws in which all human dignity is denied, then the struggle to overcome that regime cannot ever be carried forward using instruments of law, because unless they are enforced by the State, these instruments have no validity. The struggle becomes a political one — a quest to create the conditions by which a different international equilibrium can be established, and the regime overturned. This also means that the regime is not judged on the basis of legal, but political criteria. Politics is the art of winning, and then of managing power, with the aim of carrying forward the slow and difficult process that is the emancipation of mankind; and law is one of the most important political instruments. But condemnation of Hitler's regime is based not on legal considerations, but on the awareness that his design was absolutely, totally, opposed to the process of human emancipation which tends towards peace, and equality and freedom among all men; the negation of the rule of law is just one, albeit extremely significant, indication of the barbarity of Nazism which, in a world of sovereign states, can be defeated through war (i.e., using another means in which the rule of law is negated) and only through war.

Equally, universal law may become a global reality only when it has become no longer necessary to impose the same through force and when, in the world federation, politics (and thus power) and law can finally come together. Until such a time, politics will continue to be the supreme channel through which events are assessed and responsibility apportioned.

⁷ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

⁸ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

⁹ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 459.

¹⁰ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

¹¹ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹² It is in this context of affirmation and subsequent degeneration of the nation-state that the question of anti-Semitism also emerges, and Arendt reflects in great depth on this, asking why it was that "this seemingly small and unimportant Jewish problem... had the dubious honor of setting the whole infernal machine in motion." (p.3) In fact, the condition of the Jews changed radically as a result of the strengthening of the nation-states and of the nation-state system in Europe. There was no longer room for them to live as a separate community (in fact, from a legislative point of view, they were rendered equal to the rest of the population — a move which guaranteed them equal rights, but also entailed their assimilation into society); there was no longer scope for their role as the sovereign's financiers — the financial and fiscal system now guaranteed the state its income — or for the privileges attendant upon this role. On a political level, too, the Jews' role as international mediators became untenable as the scope for diplomacy became increasingly restricted. In short, the Jews were targeted in a period in which they had become a futile and powerless community without a specific role to fulfil, a people who were, however, still "different" from the rest of the population, still identifiable by their Jewishness, a category which, having lost its political and religious significance, could only be judged on the basis of criteria of vice and virtue. This population, the most displaced throughout the course of world history, found itself stateless once again, at a time (the period following the First World War) when the refugee problem was exposing the limits of the nation-state, which was proving unable to restore to these masses without a homeland their dignity as citizens. Hatred of the Jews thus became a catalyst able easily to fire the mood of apolitical masses, frustrated and bowed by the economic crisis and needy of a new identity. The Jews provided the perfect instrument for defining, in negative terms, the new race that was being shaped as a means of salvation: as Hitler said, the Aryan is the opposite of the Jew.

¹³ These reflections are developed further in the essay "Il Fascismo come ultima linea di difesa dello Stato nazionale", by Francesco Rossolillo, *Il Federalista*, XIX (1977).

¹⁴ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

¹⁵ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

¹⁶ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. IX.

¹⁷ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 142, see note.

¹⁸ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

¹⁹ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

²⁰ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 457-8.

²¹ On the concept of ideology, see M. Albertini, *Il federalismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino 1993, p. 91-94.

²² N. Elias, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

²³ N. Elias, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

²⁴ N. Elias, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

²⁵ In a number of passages, Elias reminds us that the sense of authority inherited from the despotic regime, and the nationalist sense of subordination to the supreme good of one's country, were strongly internalised in Germany, making it difficult for individuals to disobey what was presented as the only doctrine, and the only political hope of salvation. And idolisation of the leader was also a part of this mechanism.

²⁶ In Elias's view, the Jewish question, too, fits into this framework: there existed no objective or utilitarian reason why the Jews should be exterminated. All the "rational" hypotheses that have been advanced, including the need for a scapegoat, the need to create "an enemy" do not in any way hold water. While it was of course easy for the Germans, like all oppressed peoples, to take out their frustration on someone weaker than themselves, taken in isolation, this explanation is deeply inadequate. The truth is, there is no explanation; it was just a demonstration of coherence with an ideology which, right from the start, had

picked out the Jews as the main enemy of the Aryan race. The fact that the slaughter only began in 1939 is easy to explain: first, it was only with the outbreak of war that Germany, no longer having to conceal its designs as it had done while preparing for war, was free to carry through its objectives. Second, only now was the organisation, in place to set in motion the colossal machine of deportation and mass extermination. Elias does not dwell upon just why the Jews were chosen as the object of the ideological hatred of National Socialism. See note 3 for Arendt's analysis of this point.

Discussions

ON THE SUBJECT OF WORLD CITIZENSHIP

The article by Keith Suter "Rethinking World Citizenship", published in issue number 3/1998 of this journal, gives us a detailed and well constructed picture of some of the changes that are taking place in our post-industrial society of global communication, and looks at the effects they will have on the concept of citizenship.

According to the historical diagnosis of Mario Albertini, these changes are linked to the evolution of the mode of production which, following a phase of vertical integration that has brought to the fore and introduced into the political process new social classes, allows an outward process of integration, in other words, a process of integration which extends beyond national boundaries. This second process is what triggered, to use Albertini's expression again, the supranational course of history; it rendered conceivable the formation, through the establishment of federal ties, of unions of states as a means of adapting the political framework and political institutions to an increasingly interdependent society (and in Europe gave rise to a concrete federal design).

In federalist thought, the characteristic features of this developing society, outlined in Suter's article, represent the historical-social conditions which make it possible to transform into political aims the ideals of peace, universal brotherhood and equality among all men which have been, and still are, aspects of religious thought and of political ideologies (liberalism, democracy, socialism), but which are, in reality, obstructed by the division of the world into sovereign and independent states.

The question of world citizenship needs to be viewed in the context of this historical diagnosis not only in order to appreciate the potentialities it offers, but also to be both "realist", in the positive sense of the word (its negative sense being the incapacity to interpret reality as well as merely recording it), and able to apply concepts in the spheres to which

they pertain.

And the concept of citizenship can, substantially, be interpreted in two ways. In one, the word has the same general meaning as it has in cosmopolitan thought and as such has, above all, a psychological significance (that of "feeling like" a world citizen) that is certainly neither new, nor exclusive to the age in which we live. Having said that, however, the cosmopolitan thought of the past (with the exception of that of Immanuel Kant, who overcame its limits), being founded purely on culture and on ideals, was limited to a narrow circle of people — and it could not have been otherwise, given the degree of evolution of the society in which it manifested itself. On the contrary, the present information-oriented development of society allows cosmopolitan feelings nowadays to be based on concrete and daily experiences of life which are, as Suter so clearly illustrates, shared by a constantly growing number of people.

But if, as he says, "They will also be increasingly world citizens in an economic and cultural sense" — if, in other words, a new historical-social framework is being created, this does not automatically mean that a world citizenship (citizenship here having a different significance from the general psychological one mentioned earlier) is being created, too.

If we want to appreciate the full potentiality of this new world situation, it must be recognised that the concept of citizenship also has its own, very real, political significance (and this is the second way of interpreting the concept). A citizen is invested with rights and is subject to obligations in the framework of an organised society. And a society is organised when its functioning is regulated by political institutions. Therefore, in the context of a state, one can quite correctly talk of citizens and citizenship.

Now, the concept of national citizenship has been rendered obsolete by the fact that the framework of the nation-state, too small to cope with the size of the problems with which it faced, is undergoing a profound crisis. In this framework, the rights and obligations of the citizens are becoming, to the extent to which these individuals are no longer able to exercise effectively their fundamental right to take part in the democratic decision-making process, nothing more than empty words. And the same is true, and in fact is even more obvious, in areas where the inadequacy of nation-states prompts the creation of international organisations, organisations in which intergovernmental collaboration still reflects the relationships, based on strength, typical of a hierarchical system of states, and from which the citizens are entirely excluded.

If all this is true, then Suter's remarks can be completed by adding (to

the objective factors contributing to the current evolution that he expounds) the need for subjective factors to come into play as well: volition and action in the political realm of human behaviour. These are the only factors that can give rise to new institutions which, by extending the sphere of "statehood" through the creation of regional federations of states, in order to move towards a world federation, can also extend the scope of democratic citizenship.

The concept of exclusive citizenship, linked to the nation-state, is not something which can be overcome spontaneously; for this to come about fully, nation-states will have to be replaced by federal states in which each individual will be a citizen on a number of levels. And he will be a citizen of the district, town, region, state and of the federation (even, in the future, of the world federation) to which he belongs because he shares in the choices which each level of government is required to make.

The non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with their global sphere of action, certainly help considerably to raise awareness of the need to overcome the barriers that are the boundaries of states. However, if they are to be more than just a passive reflection of the evolution that is taking place, they need to realise that "shaping society" means making choices, and that it is only within democratic political institutions that such choices can truly be made.

European federalists are striving to complete the transition from the Europe of nations to the European federation, precisely in order to give real meaning to the right of European citizenship which, while it is formally recognised in the Maastricht Treaty, is yet to be brought to fruition in concrete terms. Only a world federation, if and when it is created, will have the capacity to establish real world citizenship.

Nicoletta Mosconi

Federalism in the History of Thought

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) was, as is well-known, one of the “founding fathers” of Italian unity: throughout his life he fought for Italy to be one, republican and democratic, which more than once cost him prison and exile.

To realise his objective he founded a revolutionary association in 1833, called “Giovine Italia” (Young Italy). Realising, however, that it was unlikely that the aim he pursued could be achieved in any lasting way within a hostile Europe still linked to the *anciens régimes*, he tried to set up a parallel organisation, “Giovine Europa” — although this was to remain largely on paper — which, in his plans, was to be sub-divided into Young Germany, Young Poland and so on.

But, paradoxical as it may seem, it is no exaggeration to say that the idea of Europe (in the sense of a conviction of the need for supranational unity of the continent, as indispensable guarantee of a democratic, peaceful and stable order in Europe) does not come into this Genoese thinker’s scheme of things. There are two fundamental reasons for this, each sufficient to exclude it.

1. The *first reason* is that Mazzini was not convinced — unlike other thinkers of the Risorgimento — that, even then, only a system ordered above the state level could offer the old continent permanent assurance of development and progress in order and justice. In contrast, Mazzini fully shared that illusion held by liberals and by the Manchester school of economists, and which would later be held too by socialists of the Marxist or “utopist” confession, which can be called the “illusion of homogeneity.”

It is only the existence of capitalist regimes — according to the last, the socialist, version of this triform but substantially single illusion —, the existence of capitalist regimes alone which is the profound and real cause of disputes between nations and the resulting wars: an international society of socialist states will, by definition and necessarily, be peaceful.

It is only the obstacles to free trade — according to the second version, from which the socialist version, for example that of Marx, derives directly — which causes these disputes: a free trading Europe will be a Europe in which the causes of war themselves will have been torn out at the root.

It is only the Europe of the kings, of the *anciens régimes*, of absolutism — according to the first version, that of democracy — only “the Europe of the princes” which is by its very nature bellicose. It was Mazzini’s deepest conviction that a republican Europe, “Europe of the peoples”, would be a Europe where conflicts between states, which always have dynastic origins, would by definition be made obsolete. And as regards the indispensable coordination at continental level of the various nation-state policies — already naturally conspiring by their very democratic essence, because inspired by the same religious ideal (God and People) — this would be fully guaranteed by a sort of supra-state “lay Council” (whose duties and composition Mazzini never clearly defined).

2. In other words — thus we come to the *second reason* — to affirm explicitly and unequivocally the need for a European Federation one must clearly realise in theory, and energetically affirm in practice, the limits and risks of national unity: and therefore understand the need for a dual limitation of this nation-state idea — in the name of that principle of federalism called “subsidiarity”, which since Maastricht has come into fashion — upwards and downwards. Downwards, through internal federalism; upwards, by means of the establishment of a genuine European government. This conclusion was reached and voiced by a contemporary of Mazzini, Carlo Cattaneo, the only thinker and politician of the Risorgimento who can really be considered a precursor of the idea of the United States of Europe, since he is also the only one to have understood it in modern and rigorously federalist terms, both infra- and supranational, subordinating and inferring the idea of regional organisation of the nation, like that of the federal organisation of Europe, from the one supreme principle of freedom.

Now, on the one hand Mazzini was against the “regionalisation” of Italy, at least if understood in the sense of internal federalism, and on the other he judged, in no less apodictic fashion, the independence of the various European nations — conceived precisely in the form of absolute state sovereignty — as an indispensable condition for them to be able to fulfil the “mission” to which they were called by divine providence: to make their particular and irreplaceable contribution to civilisation, the progress of humanity.

In this perspective Mazzini quite naturally conceived of “Young Europe”, not as destined to promote the unity of our continent, but to promote the realisation, in each country, of democratic and republican regimes similar to that which he wished for Italy, and capable of politically reinforcing and guaranteeing their stability and influence at international level.

It is true that in Mazzini’s religious thinking — as Mario Albertini pertinently observed¹ — the “national” mission did coincide with the objective of European unity (“remember that the Italian mission is the moral unity of Europe”, *Dei doveri dell’uomo*): which led Albertini to conclude that “it must be admitted that supranational values were for him both the premises and the goal of his doctrine of the nation and not merely something accidental, extrinsic.” The fact remains that Mazzini’s European order — which he often called “the new Holy Alliance” — is very like the old (as Dante Visconti observes)², in other words like the order he was fighting, and does not go beyond the concept of international law, or the principle of balance. On the contrary, Mazzini was particularly concerned with balance, trying to draw a map of the new Europe which could guarantee a coherent and stable system of checks and balances: which shows, concludes Visconti, that in practice he basically had very little faith in the necessary brotherhood of democratic and republican nations, which he affirmed in theory. As P. Renouvin wrote, his Europeanism was basically none other than an alibi for his nationalism.

* * *

Our conclusion therefore is that there is nothing in Mazzini’s thinking which allows us to consider this author, in a “technical” sense, one of the precursors of the project of a European Federation.

If this is the idea of a European “state of mind”, but of a continental “state”, Mazzini was not federalist.

But there can be precursors who leave rich seeds for the future in a higher and more profound sense than in the technical sense: and it is in this sense that Mazzini is without doubt one of the authors who must have a special place in the federalist Pantheon, and who deserve to be better known and studied from this point of view too.

The religious conception which he had of the solidarity between peoples in defence of democracy and justice against the illegitimacy of the *ancien régime*, against the blind conservation of the Holy Alliance, against the cult of *raison d’état* and the disregard of the rights of the

individual: all these constitute, beyond the superficial contradictions and mystical, romantic conjuring tricks, a political conception that is not only solid and coherent but, within those limits, still entirely relevant today.

Mazzini’s contribution to the current conception of unity and European independence is not only his severe moral commitment, in the context of an ideology in which human factors always prevail over the abstract and often absurd demands of the state and of the powerful; but on one point at least he also gives us a very precise suggestion of a “technical” nature, which indicates the direction we should follow. I refer to the constant polemic, in all his writings, against the principle of non-intervention, which he condemns as a genuine “atheism” in international politics: an atheism which ignores the fact that only through change and intervention has humanity made its greatest progress and its most notable achievements.

It is true that he does not develop this idea to its ultimate consequences: but it is not difficult to see — following the line and spirit of his thinking and teaching — that the idea of morality, of the obligatory nature of international intervention, requires that it be given a legal basis, and therefore implies the limitation of sovereignty; and that this limitation must be in turn be rationally disciplined and organised, by means of a constitution and a state order above that of the states — if reason of state is not to raise its ugly head once more as it re-asserts its rights. Indeed, if the state cannot be subordinated, the idea of non-intervention ends up also being unassailable because coherent with the system, despite all its atheism — or rather, precisely because of it: since then it is the system itself which in this sense, proves “atheist.”

It is this aspect of Mazzinian thinking which should, I believe, be the focus of federalist reflection, as the guiding principle through which Mazzini’s work and action can still provide a valid lesson for Europe today. And from this point of view — I note in passing — Mazzini’s conception of religion and of politics as a sort of lay religion — a conception so off-putting to the eminently concrete and “positivist” mind of Gaetano Salvemini³ — recovers its value and its profound significance as a sort of “mythological incarnation” (indispensable to give it practical efficacy) of the moral idea of a humane society which would root out the violence within it, among groups as among nations: the society which Kant called “perpetual peace”, and Dante “universal Monarchy”, and which will — as Albertini says, applying to this system of ideas an expression of Marx’s — mark the passage from prehistory to history. A society which Mazzini, who was very sensitive to the profound values of

ethics (though not to the institutional aspects which these values must assume, if they are to take on a political, and not purely individual, dimension and significance) — saw symbolised in the passage from the age of rights, that of the French revolution, to the age of duties, whose prophet he wished to be.

* * *

Alessandro Levi⁴ shows very pertinently that Mazzini's greatness lay neither in his ideas — often contradictory, confused and obscure — nor in his action, which finally ended in a failure so complete, that Mazzini died, as is often said in Italy, "an exile in his own land." His greatness lies in the rigorous moral coherence with which, without any compromise and to the very end, he remained faithful to his convictions — loyal to loyalty, as Royce says — and maintained a perfect harmony between his ideas and his action.

Something similar may be said for the question which concerns us here. The value, and also the greatness of Mazzini's European teaching lies not in his very vague and nebulous conception of Europe. Nor does it lie in the European action developed by the revolutionary organisations he founded, in the ambit of "Giovine Europa"— all, after all, quite insubstantial — which was never directed, even minimally, towards supranational objectives. It lies rather in the spirit, in the moral soul of all his activities, entirely aimed at showing — and at living such a conviction — that democracy, liberty and the defence of the dignity of man are in harmony at European level, or are destined to perish.⁵

It is up to us to continue on this path and to reveal what Mazzini could but faintly descry: in other words to find the practical means and legal instruments necessary to ensure that this harmony is incarnated in reality and "becomes a state."

NOTES

¹ Mario Albertini, *Il Risorgimento e l'unità europea*, Naples, Guida, 1979 (republished in Id., *Lo stato nazionale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997).

² Dante Visconti, *La concezione unitaria dell'Europa del Risorgimento italiano*, Milan, Francesco Vallardi, 1948.

³ Gaetano Salvemini, *Giuseppe Mazzini*, London, Cape, 1956.

⁴ Alessandro Levi, *La filosofia politica di Giuseppe Mazzini*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1917.

⁵ As regards Mazzinian Europeanism, cf. also Andrea Chiti-Batelli's essay in André Miroir (ed.), *Pensée et construction européennes. Hommage à Georges Goriely*, Bruxelles, Université Libre de Bruxelles, CERIS and Emile Van Balberghe, 1990, pp. 89-103.

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DEED OF BROTHERHOOD OF YOUNG EUROPE (1834)

FREEDOM EQUALITY HUMANITY

We the undersigned, men of progress and of freedom,
Believing:

In equality, and in the brotherhood of man,
In equality, and in the brotherhood of peoples;
Believing:

That humanity is called to proceed, by a *continuous progress*, and under the rule of universal moral law, towards the *free and harmonious* development of its faculties, and towards the fulfilment of its mission in the universe.

That it cannot do so without the *active participation of all* its members, *freely* associated,

That association cannot be truly and freely established except among equals, since every inequality involves the violation of independence, and every violation of independence mars the freedom of agreement;

That Freedom, Equality and Humanity are equally sacred — that they constitute three inviolable elements in every absolute solution of the *social problem* — and that whenever one of these elements is sacrificed to the other two, something fundamental is missing in the way human efforts were organised to reach this solution.

Convinced:

That if the end to which humanity is tending is essentially *one*, if the general principles which must direct the human families in their journey to that end, are *identical*, progress may nevertheless be made in a *thousand* ways;

Convinced:

That every man, and every people has a *particular* mission, which, while it constitutes the *individuality* of that man, or that people, necessarily contributes to the fulfilment of the *general* mission of humanity;

Convinced, finally:

That the association of men, and of peoples must both protect the free exercise of the *individual* mission, and ensure certainty of direction towards the development of that *general* mission;

Strong in our rights as men, and as *citizens*, strong in our conscience, and in the mandate given by *God and Humanity* to those who willingly consecrate our right arm, intellect and life to the holy cause of the progress of the peoples;

Being first constituted in free, and independent, national associations, primitive seeds of *Young Italy*, *Young Poland* and *Young Germany*;

Met together for general advantage, on the fifteenth day of the month of April of the year 1834, with our hands on our hearts and standing surety for the future, we have signed the following:

1

Young Germany, *Young Poland* and *Young Italy*, republican associations tending to one identical goal which embraces all of humanity under the rule of a single faith in Freedom, Equality and Progress, swear brotherhood, now and for always, for all that concerns the general goal.

2

A declaration of principles, which constitute the universal moral law applied to human society, will be drawn up and signed in agreement by the three National Confraternities. It will define the belief, the goal and the general direction of the three associations. None of them can depart from these in its work without culpable violation of the act of fraternity, and without suffering the consequences.

3

For all that is outside the sphere of general interests, and the declaration of principles, each of the three associations is free and independent.

4

An offensive and defensive league of solidarity among peoples who recognise each other is hereby established among the three associations.

All three work with one accord for their emancipation. Each will have the right to assistance from the others in every solemn and important manifestation to that end.

5

Any meeting of the National Confraternities, or of the delegates of each Confraternity, will constitute the Confraternity of *Young Europe*.

6

The individuals who make up the three associations are brothers. Each of them will fulfil the duties of a brother towards the others.

7

The Confraternity of *Young Europe* will decide on a symbol common to all members of the three associations; they will all be recognised by that symbol. A common motto at the head of all writings will mark the work of each association.

8

Any people wishing to participate in the rights and duties of the fraternity established between the three peoples linked by this deed, will formally agree to the same deed, signing it through its own National Confraternity.

Berne, Switzerland, 15th April 1834.

* * *

ORGANISATION OF DEMOCRACY (1850)

Has some important progress been achieved among us? The idea expressed in our work Alliance of the peoples has been translated into a deed, and a *Central European Committee*, composed of men belonging to all the nations of Europe and influential in the field of democracy, will actively work to promote its development in the sphere of reality. [...]

Freedom without association inevitably leads to anarchy. Association without freedom is despotism, tyranny. Humanity abhors tyranny and anarchy in equal measure. It tries to maintain a balance between these two inseparable conditions of life: so inseparable, that the one cannot be achieved and maintained without the other. Every association sooner or later meets with rebellion, if its members have not freely consented to it: every freedom is precarious, if the forces of association do not arrange to preserve it.

And this is true for each country and for everyone. No system can be established as lasting legislation in a state, if it does not respect these two elements, *freedom and association*. No lasting conquest of freedom can come about in a nation, if similar progress is not achieved in the nations which surround it. [...]

The life of nations is dual: internal and external: their own and by relation. The totality of men forming every nation have the task of regulating their own life; the Congress of nations have that of regulating the life of international relations. *God and the people* for each nation: *God and humanity* for all. We are trying to realise, not Europe, but a United States of Europe. [...]

* * *

The absolute non-intervention doctrine in politics, appears to me to be what indifference is in matters of Religion, viz.: a disguised atheism — the negative, without the vitality of a denial, of all belief, of all general principles, of every mission of nations on behalf of Humanity. We are all thank God bound to each other in the world, and all that has ever been transacted upon it, that has been good, great, or eminently progressive, has taken place owing to Intervention. (Italy, Austria and the Pope. A letter to Sir James Graham, Bart. By Joseph Mazzini. Albanesi, London, 1845, pp.5-6.)

On principle, and broadly considering how the times are moving, we believe that everything in Europe is tending towards unity: and that, in the general re-organisation which is on its way, this region in the world will represent, as the final result of the work of our epoch, a federation, a *holy alliance* of Peoples constituted into great unitary aggregations, according to the nature of the physical and moral elements which exercise their action more particularly in a given circle, thus as a whole determining the special mission of the nationality. (From “Nazionalità unitarie federalisti”, 1835)

We long for the great federation of free peoples: we believe in the pact of nations, in the European congress which will peacefully interpret that pact. But no-one can enter as a brother in that pact, no-one can obtain a seat in that council of peoples, unless endowed with their own ordered life, constituted into national entities, armed, as a sign of their faith, with the unitary flag which represents it. (From “Scritti dell’Italia e del Popolo”, 1848)

(Prefaced and edited by Andrea Chiti-Batelli)

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