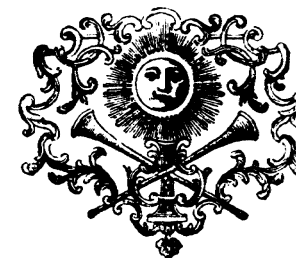


# THE FEDERALIST

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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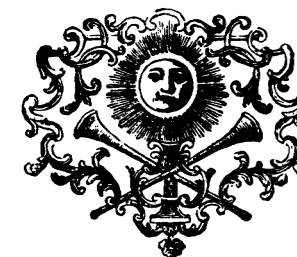
YEAR XLVIII, 2006, NUMBER 2

# THE FEDERALIST

a political review

*Editor:* Giovanni Vigo

*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 Legacy of Altiero Spinelli

Today, twenty years after his death, the thought and action of Altiero Spinelli remain as valid as ever. One might even go so far as to say that the crisis into which the European Union has been plunged in recent years makes Spinelli's struggle for a United States of Europe appear particularly relevant.

The legacy left us by Altiero Spinelli is highly complex: the outstanding features and topics of his writings are his penetrating analysis of the crisis of the nation-state (which lies at the root of his own conversion to federalism), his harsh criticism of traditional ideologies, the historical meaning of the process of European unification, and the principles that should inspire the life and action of a revolutionary movement like the *Movimento Federalista Europeo* (European Federalist Movement, MFE). In his action as leader of the MFE and in his activity within the European institutions, he will be remembered for the extraordinary tenacity with which he conducted every struggle, never once allowing himself to become disheartened by failure, convinced that the struggle for a good cause is always a success, because it leaves an indelible mark in history and thus ensures that all those who follow will not each time be forced to go back to the beginning and start again.

The first part of Spinelli's legacy to the federalists is the *Ventotene Manifesto*, which he wrote together with Ernesto Rossi (author of the first part of the third chapter) in 1941 during their internment on the small Tyrrhenian island of Ventotene. The *Manifesto* is universally regarded as the most important Europeanist treatise of the Resistance period — the only one that, after all this time, still conserves all its original vitality and constitutes (or should constitute) the criterion against which the European action of the governments, parliaments, political forces, Europeanist organisations and militant federalists should be measured.

If the content of the *Ventotene Manifesto* has stood the test of time, this is because Spinelli did not merely limit himself to highlighting the European alternative to the nation-state in crisis (this had already been done, with equal clarity, by Luigi Einaudi, who, moreover, had failed to advance precise proposals for realising this alternative). Instead, Spinelli

got right to the heart of the problem, working out a political plan to be pursued by a specific organisation, separate from the parties. Like a true revolutionary, Spinelli was able to see, in the midst of the destruction wreaked by the war, the seed from which a new era could grow, one in which men would overcome national boundaries to unite at supranational level. According to Mario Albertini, the originality of the *Ventotene Manifesto* lay in the fact that its main author had grasped, with particular clarity of vision, “the relationship that exists between the development of new principles of action and recognition of the embryonic nature of new historical processes. This relationship must be regarded as a practical, but also as a theoretical fact. And to set it in its correct theoretical framework, it is important to remember that those who concern themselves with the future try to pick out, in historical-social reality, those situations that, if adequately nurtured, could bring about a new historical situation. Second, one must remember that these situations, whose peculiar nature is that of possibilities to be exploited, can be recognised only when these possibilities are highlighted through the working out of new principles of action. Otherwise, this peculiar nature will not fall within our field of vision. It follows that political militancy is the only the method through which we can strive to recognise a precise moment in history: that of the start of new historical processes.”

The revolutionary is forward-looking, but he is not a prophet and — as Spinelli did — he can get his predictions wrong. Spinelli imagined that the situation emerging in Europe following the defeat of Germany and the weakening of the nation-states would allow the birth of a European federation, and thus prevent a rebuilding of the old powers. Things did not turn out this way because, deep down, the Europeans regarded the nation-states, together with their ideology (the nation), as the only realities that existed, as the only ones with the capacity to stir up the energies needed for the task of rebuilding. But precisely because Spinelli was able to appreciate the profound nature of the changes that were taking place, and to translate them into new principles of action, his disappointment at the rebirth of the nation-states — this rebirth was all a façade, not corresponding to any real power on the global stage — failed to influence, except transiently, his commitment to the European cause, which he renewed with even more intensity when the Marshall Plan created a new situation favourable to the re-launch of the struggle for European unity.

If one needs to make forecasts in order to act, it follows that when these forecasts fail to come true one must ask oneself wherein lies the error, and whether it throws into question the basic principles underlying

one’s judgement and action. The most famous passage from the *Ventotene Manifesto* provides, in this regard, the ultimate criterion that must guide the federalist struggle in all circumstances, especially in the event of defeats that seem to remove from the political horizon even the very possibility of fighting. “The dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer coincides with the formal lines of more or less democracy, or the pursuit of more or less socialism, but the division falls along a very new and substantial line: those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as being the ancient one, the conquest of national political power, and who, albeit involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again, and those who see the main purpose as the creation of a solid international state, who will direct popular forces towards this goal, and who, even if they were to win national power, would use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity.”

In the process of European unification, the most searing defeat was the failure to ratify the EDC; the project was buried on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1954 by the French National Assembly in the wake of a period during which, for a time, success had appeared to be within reach. The collapse of the EDC dampened the commitment of the governments, even the most strongly Europeanist ones, and created a widespread sense of bewilderment and disorientation, to which even the MFE proved vulnerable. The Movement, having seen its ranks swell and its influence grow during the years of the EDC, found itself reduced to just a few hundred militants, gathered around Spinelli, who, in October 1954, launched “the new course.” The era of the Europeanist governments was over, and the forces of nationalism had worked their way back to the fore, throwing the project for a United States of Europe into a state of limbo. What was to be done?

For the MFE, the most urgent thing was to identify a new strategy, so as not to lose what few forces it had left in the field, but, at the same time, it had to reject, with a resounding “no”, the false Europe, the Europe that the governments had outlined at the London and Paris conferences.

“The first consequence of all this, for the federalists, — Spinelli wrote — is that the methods of action employed thus far have become meaningless. To seek to be a source of inspiration and suggestion made sense as long as there were governments ready to be inspired, and ready to listen to suggestions; as long as there were ministers who were themselves convinced of the need to move in the direction of supranational institutions. Then, to accept, or even to propose, a compromise, to strive for a

partial success in order to obtain a complete one, had a precise and concrete political meaning.” The partial success to which Spinelli referred was the European army; the complete one, the European federation.

To avoid making fatal mistakes, it was also necessary to understand clearly the intentions behind the actions of the federalists during their battle for the EDC. Directing his comments at federalist organisations, Spinelli wrote: “We never asked for the creation of the EDC; since the governments had come up with the idea of creating the EDC, what we asked for, on the basis of the internal, supranational, logic of the EDC, was the creation of a European government and a European parliament. If, today, on the basis of the Union of Western Europe, whose internal logic is the preservation of national sovereignties, we were, absurdly, to request an arms pool, Franco-German arms cartel, which would disintegrate at the first conflict between the two states, we would foolishly be applying an old tactic that had been valid in entirely different circumstances, and instead of making progress in a supranational direction, we would instead be moving towards the swamping of federalist ideals by a nationalist way of thinking. We would be disuniting the federalist movement without obtaining anything positive at all.” He concluded his analysis: “The federalists must demand the direct election, by the free European peoples, of a European constituent assembly, and that the constitution voted on by this assembly be put to popular referenda for ratification. They know very well that, at the present time, no government is ready to accept this procedure. They outline it as a way of underlining their total rejection of the nation-states, to make it clear that the European constitution must, at its outset, possess European democratic legitimacy, in other words, that the organ that draws up its constitution cannot be made up of diplomats or national parliamentary delegations, but must comprise representatives of the European people, chosen to carry out a European action; equally, its sanctioning upon completion must have European democratic legitimacy: the Yes or No must come from the peoples, not from their national parliaments, which can legislate only on national matters. What we must obtain from the national governments and parliaments is that they relinquish their illegitimate sovereignty in those fields in which they are no longer able to exercise it, agreeing to the convening of a European constituent assembly.” Getting right to the heart of the problem, Spinelli illustrated the new logic that should inspire the action of the federalists: they had to force the governments and the national parliaments to relinquish — through an act that must be clearly

visible — their sovereignty and launch the European constituent process.

According to the founder of the MFE, the success of “the new course” depended on the emergence of a “rebellious federalist consciousness, a hundred times stronger, more widespread and more self-assured than it is today.” And to help to sow, over the difficult European terrain, the seeds of a federalist renaissance, he ended this period of “re-foundation” with the publication of his *Manifesto dei federalisti*, written in the summer of 1956, in which he summarised with characteristic efficacy, the historical conditions that had made the struggle for a European federation possible, the deaf resistance of its opponents, the fundamental role of the federalists, and the new strategy that revolved around the Congress of the European People. It was Ventotene revisited, but it also constituted a decisive step towards the new strategy that would characterise the action of the federalists over the subsequent years.

The first direct election of the European Parliament, in 1979, was also a result of this strategy, and the struggle led by Altiero Spinelli at the heart of it represented the continued pursuit of the constituent objective that dated back to Ventotene. Following the unique opportunity offered by the EDC, Europe again came close to success (a partial success, as Spinelli would point out, a prelude to the complete one) at the start of the 1980s, when, purely on the strength of his own will and the clarity of his reasoning, he managed to secure the European Parliament’s approval of his “Draft Treaty establishing the European Union” (more widely known as the “Spinelli Treaty”). Had the heads of state and of government who pledged to support this Treaty really supported it to the end, then the balance of power would have shifted in Europe’s favour, giving rise to a federation in the economic and monetary sphere, which, in time, would have been extended to the more controversial sectors of security and foreign policy, thereby completing the work begun on the island of Ventotene. But history — or more accurately the lack of courage of a political class devoid of real vision — decreed otherwise. The fact nevertheless remains that Spinelli’s struggle paved the way for the Single European Act, for the Maastricht Treaty, and ultimately for the single currency.

Spinelli was perfectly aware of the difficulty that his project would encounter, and he knew very well that the accusation of “extremism” that was often levelled at him, even by Europeanists, could at any time be dusted off and used against him. Anticipating the criticisms that the so-called realists would pour on the European Parliament’s project, he took the opportunity presented by the “Jean Monnet Lecture” held on May 13<sup>th</sup>

1983 at the European University in Florence, to address his audience in the following terms: "Let it not be said that all this is too adventurous, that we should keep our feet on the ground and advance by small steps. You can all see the disastrous point to which we have been led by feet-on-the-ground politics, by the politics of small steps, by politics defined pragmatic, when in truth it is politics founded on a lack of ideas or, to be more honest, on intellectual enslavement to old ideas that are now entirely inadequate."

This was a categorical condemnation not of realism, but rather of the bid to pass off a dearth of ideas as an appeal for caution. Altiero Spinelli, in his action, always applied not only strict principles, without which one runs the risk of losing one's line of march, but also the lucid pragmatism on which the realisation of any political project depends. A letter to Mario Albertini dated May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1983 clearly illustrates this need to ensure the coexistence, in a continual dialectic, of ideal principles and concreteness (above all in a revolutionary undertaking like the creation of a new state), without indulging in any weakness even in those moments in which one has to reckon with reality. Aware that his battle could not be a solitary one, and that it required the intervention of the MFE, the only political force in the field able to grasp fully the scope and the potentialities of his plan, he wrote: "In my view, the role of the MFE is to defend those proposals that are solutions to problems, in other words to represent the European political logic. Any compromises made should be the sole responsibility of those federalists called upon to conduct this action within the European Parliament. If those conducting it should find that any compromise accepted by the European Parliament totally undermined the project, then they should feel duty bound to dissociate themselves from it," without moreover renouncing the struggle.

This determination and, in more general terms, the lifestyle of the man, show how Spinelli embodied the figure of the political hero outlined by Max Weber. "Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective. Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth—that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible. But to do that a man must be a leader, and not only a leader but a hero as well, in a very sober sense of the word. And even those who are neither leaders nor heroes must arm themselves with that steadfastness of heart which can brave even the crumbling of all hopes. This is necessary right now, or else men will not be able to attain even that which is possible today. Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when the world from his

point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer. Only he who in the face of all this can say 'In spite of all!' has the calling for politics."

\* \* \*

As clearly emerges in the collection of complete works currently being prepared, Altiero Spinelli's legacy is extraordinarily rich. By reprinting, twenty years after his death, some of the writings that have left an indelible mark on the process of European unification and on the life of the MFE, *The Federalist* intends to turn the spotlight on three crucial moments in Spinelli's battle for Europe: the moment of foundation, which can be identified in the *Ventotene Manifesto*, the moment of "re-foundation", embodied in *The New Course*, and the final moment in his struggle, without which the faltering European Union would lack the one solid point of reference that it has: the single currency.

*The Federalist*

## The Principles of Action of the Ventotene Manifesto\*

MARIO ALBERTINI

It is now widely held that the *Ventotene Manifesto* — written by Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi in 1941 during their internment on the island of Ventotene — is the most important Europeanist treatise of the Resistance. But this view does not adequately convey the real content of this text — and of the writings that complete it — because “Europeanist” is a very vague umbrella term that can cover a range of widely differing and even opposing things. It is better to say that the *Ventotene Manifesto* is a key example of the militant political literature of the Resistance period, and to tackle, on a basic level at least, the problem of this kind of literature, which, despite its clearly identifiable purpose (political militancy) and texts (which range from Machiavelli to Lenin), continues to lack an effective theoretical framework and adequate interpretation.

The main problem is that there is still no clear distinction between what is contained in this type of literature (particularly that of our own era: Lenin’s *Imperialism, Supreme Phase of Capitalism* is a classic example) and what is contained in descriptive accounts of contemporary history, which are written by individuals who are merely recording history, not setting out to shape its course. And in the absence of this distinction, the true nature of this political literature, whose key element may be defined as the will, or determination, to become a part of history, remains hidden. The question, then, is this: what kind of events fall within the field of vision of those who examine the times in which they live with the eyes of a mere spectator, either giving no thought at all to the future, or merely predicting it from the outside (furnishing those so-called scenarios that, currently so popular, reduce history to a mechanical process that according to the “experts” will unfold in this direction or the other), and what events fall within the field of vision of those who examine the times in

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\* This is the introduction to the reprint of *The Ventotene Manifesto (Il Manifesto di Ventotene)*, Naples, Guida, 1982.

which they live as active subjects, concerning themselves with the future and, indeed, viewing the present purely in terms of its bearing on the future?

Just to make quite clear the breadth and complexity of this question, we must remember that in the second case (with regard to political activism of course) what we are concerned with is the attempt to submit the future to plans based on reason. And this implies, among other things, acceptance that reason has a place in history (in other words, that history has a meaning); it also implies that one must in fact choose progress — rather than wondering in abstract terms whether it is possible or impossible —, thereby avoiding making the catastrophic mistake of applying reason to everything but the very thing that determines all things, i.e., the course of history. But what really matters, in the narrower framework of this discussion (on the distinction between the two types of events), is that from this perspective, the present and the future each assume a specific configuration.

The present — the historical situation in progress — is not regarded as a separate entity, and something to be accepted, but rather as something that must be built into the will of men, and that must therefore be considered not in isolation but together with all its possible repercussions, i.e., with all that will follow should this or that plan of action (general political line) succeed. Thus the present may be viewed, in one way, as the means to a struggle’s specific ends, and in another, as a meaningful reality, whose meaning lies precisely in the fact that it harbours the seeds of its own evolution towards a new situation that has the capacity to change, for the better, the destiny of mankind. For its part, the future does not take the form of a simple picture (of false predictions painted by so-called contemporary historians, sociologists or experts), but instead that of new principles of action, together with their relative consequences. It follows, again with regard to the future, that thought takes on the form of reality (since action is the future in embryonic state); and, more precisely, of the reality that can be constructed through reason, because the new principles of action, providing they are just that, and not self-mystifications, link the present with the future according to a plan established on the basis of reason.

These remarks bring us to the very heart of the problem, that is, to the relationship that exists between the development of new principles of action and recognition of the embryonic nature of new historical processes. This relationship must be regarded as a practical, but also as a theoretical fact. And to set it in its correct theoretical framework, it is

important to remember that those who concern themselves with the future try to pick out, in historical-social reality, those situations that, if adequately nurtured, could bring about a new historical situation. Second, one must remember that these situations, whose peculiar nature is that of possibilities to be exploited, can be recognised only when these possibilities are highlighted through the working out of new principles of action. Otherwise, this peculiar nature will not fall within our field of vision. It follows that political militancy is the only the method through which we can strive to recognise a precise moment in history: that of the start of new historical processes.

Only by making this distinction between historical knowledge of the past (including all that is carried through to the present) and knowledge of new historical processes just beginning (or even knowledge, as yet unattained, of the overall historical process) can one avoid the risk of misunderstanding the meaning of militant political literature. To appreciate this, one need only think of Lenin's *Imperialism, Supreme Phase of Capitalism*. According to what was (until fairly recently at least) the most common interpretation, this text sets out to describe contemporary history's essential features. But were this truly its purpose, one might justifiably declare the book wholly unsound, given that capitalism, far from collapsing, has gone through a new cycle of development. And there is more. The worst consequence of this interpretation is that it hides the true significance of *Imperialism*, because it makes no provision for the observation that Lenin, while wrong over the meaning of contemporary history, nevertheless brilliantly grasped one aspect of it, recognising the beginning of a new historical process in Russia and in the colonial setting of the countries belonging to the poor, underdeveloped and dependent world.

But this emerges clearly only if one seeks, in *Imperialism*, and in the writings that complete it, not just a simple description of the present but also, and above all, the future in its true form, that of the new principles of action (remembering, of course, that all that is genuinely new will always struggle to come to the surface from under the huge mass of the old that still seems to represent the whole of reality). It is therefore necessary to realise that following the outbreak of the First World War and Western socialism's almost complete slide into social-chauvinism and into the internecine war that so tragically revealed the impotence of the workers' movement, Lenin's aim was not to paint a picture of the world as it was, but rather to make possible once again a struggle that seemed to have become impossible due to the very disappearance of its

leading actor, the working class, which had succumbed with disturbing passivity to the course of events. Lenin's texts speak quite clearly in this regard when they say that the working class cannot fulfil its global revolutionary function without fighting a ruthless battle against this betrayal, against this lack of character, against this servility in the face of opportunism, and *against this unprecedented theoretical degradation of Marxism* (the pamphlet was *Socialism and War*, written in July-August 1915 and distributed at the Zimmerwald Conference; Lenin's remarks were aimed at Kautsky and, more generally, at the Second International). And once this is clear, as it is for example, at least in part, in the analysis by Lelio Basso to which I refer the reader<sup>1</sup>, one can see how, in Lenin's thought, the development of new principles of action in fact coincided with the beginnings of his awareness of the presence of a new historical process in embryonic form, a process that has today assumed proportions so vast as to include China, and its revival. The same considerations apply to the *Ventotene Manifesto* and Spinelli himself, in his discourses, makes them quite openly, admitting that he was wrong about the global nature of the situation that was to come about upon the defeat of Germany and Italy in the Second World War. Not considering the possibility (indeed the inevitability) of a reversal of American and Soviet foreign policy, from isolationism to interventionism, Spinelli and Rossi had completely failed to imagine that the USA and the USSR would assume direct political control of Europe, thereby guaranteeing in the immediate aftermath of the war a level of political stability that, in view of the political and moral collapse of the nation-states, would otherwise have been impossible. It was this evolution of events that put paid to the plan to exploit the political instability of the immediate post-war period and the extreme weakness of the nation-states in order to found the United States of Europe.

Conversely, Spinelli quite rightly claimed that he was not wrong in his formulation of two new principles of action; and in this case, the passing of time has allowed us to remark, again, that the development of these new principles of action coincided, indeed, with an early awareness of a new historical process in the making: that of European unification. The new principles worked out at Ventotene were: a) the precedence of an international objective, European unity (i.e., European federation since there is no other stable and effective form of association of states), over all other political and social objectives; and b) the need to shift the dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties from the national to the international sphere. Spinelli and Rossi remarked in the



Manifesto: "If [through failure to overcome Europe's division into sovereign nation-states] tomorrow the struggle were to remain restricted within the traditional national boundaries, it would be very difficult to avoid the old contradictions." And on the basis of this assessment, which turned out to be correct (the nation-states did in fact find themselves caught up once more in the spider's web of corporativism, moderated only by that degree of European unity that exists), they affirmed, quite correctly, that *"the dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer coincides with the formal lines of more or less democracy, or the pursuit of more or less socialism, but the division falls along a very new and substantial line: those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as being the ancient one, the conquest of national political power, and who, although involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again, and those who see the main purpose as the creation of a solid international State, who will direct popular forces towards this goal, and who, even if they were to win national power, would use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity."*

It is true to say that only the European Federalist Movement has applied these principles constantly and consistently. That said, it is also true that the unification of Europe — from the founding of the Community mechanism to the first stages of its democratic development — has depended, thus far, entirely on decisions reached in accordance with these principles. The explanation for this lies in that fact (ignored by public debate, but nevertheless undeniable) that at several crucial points in the life of Europe, at which the taking of decisions at purely national level would have been extremely harmful or even impossible, statesmen such as Adenauer, De Gasperi, Schuman and Spaak proved ready to listen to innovators like Monnet, Spinelli and the federalists, and to act accordingly, refusing to be taken in — as too often happens — by the false advice issued by the pseudo-experts on European matters who clog up the corridors of power. This was true in the case of all the decisions underlying the various stages in the building of Europe, not one of which, let us recall, stemmed from or was promoted by any political party or other national force. This point can also be demonstrated in reverse in that it is the parties that have slowed down, and indeed that continue (albeit unconsciously) to slow down European unification, precisely because they remain attached to the *old priority* of national objectives, even though this means a re-emergence of the *old contradictions* and makes it

impossible to overcome the order imposed on Europe by the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War.

Although repeatedly experiencing major problems of supranational proportions, the parties have not been induced to reconsider the traditional principles at the basis of their action; and this is why their conception of the future, still viewed in national terms, is so uncertain. But the situation is becoming urgent. And it does not concern Europe alone. The development of effective forms of state in large world regions (North America, the Soviet Union and China), the building of Europe, and the revival of all the Earth's peoples are all beginning to look like evolutionary stages in a process of political unification of mankind that can culminate only in world government and universal peace. We are no longer talking about a utopian dream but about the supreme objective of political struggle, the only reasonable response to the fact that the advance of man's technological capabilities is leading him gradually but inexorably towards the ultimate crossroads where the choice is that of nuclear and environmental catastrophe, or complete liberation of the rational element in human nature through the transformation of international relations between states into legal relations and an end to the need for human labour used as brute force or simply as a monotonous machine. It is in this light that we should consider principles of action and establish intermediate goals.

The time has now come to turn our backs on the old world. Following the liberation of classes and nations, the problem becomes that of liberating mankind as a whole and its every single member. No national objective, if pursued in isolation, can bring us closer to this goal. And no ideology or strategy of the past can allow us to choose, at each stage, the right direction in which to proceed. We must — as the wisest political leaders are now beginning to say — "democratise international relations." This means developing the United Nations in a way that will give rise to institutions allowing the expression of the general will of the whole of mankind. It means building progressively, in Europe and everywhere, a democratic power capable of abolishing national armies within its own sphere, and of eliminating power relations between its member states without depriving them of their constitutional autonomy and effective independence. And there is only one power that fits this description: the federation understood as a set of governments [the international one and the national ones] that are "co-ordinate and independent."<sup>2</sup>

The principles enshrined in the *Ventotene Manifesto* hold true. Precedence must be given to the international objective, and political

struggle clearly cannot be directed towards it as long as the forces are divided at national level on the basis of national objectives rather than at international level on the basis of international objectives. It is thus becoming increasingly necessary to set the dividing line between the progressive and the reactionary at international level, and to view national political struggle as just one aspect of a greater struggle. As regards European federation and world federation, practically nothing is as yet known. Just one thing is certain: the meaning of contemporary history becomes clear only to those who truly set out to change it. This means considering, first of all, its underlying principles of action, and it is a fact that those developed forty years ago on Ventotene provide a glimmer of light in this world that is no longer sure that mankind still has a future.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lelio Basso, "La teoria dell'imperialismo in Lenin" in *Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, a XV, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth C. Wheare, *Federal Government*, Oxford, 1946.

## The Manifesto of the European Federalists\*

*ALTIERO SPINELLI*

The division of Europe into sovereign nation-states is like a curse on our continent.

The modern development of the forces of production, the intensification of traffic between the states, the acceleration of forms of communication and means of transport, the spread of similar forms of civilisation, and a deepening sense of human solidarity have all demanded, for some time now, the establishment in Europe of a legal system and a government that stand above the laws and the governments of the single nation-states. But the nation-states are sovereign. They make their decisions and they act without recognising any law or any power superior to their own. They are compelled to concern themselves with the safeguarding of their own interests and of those of their citizens, without having either the obligation or the opportunity to concern themselves with the interests of other states and other peoples. All the restrictions and all the controls that democratic progress has gradually imposed on public powers relate exclusively to the internal life of the states; relations between states are, and continue to be, governed by the law of the jungle. Attitudes and acts of selfishness and arrogance that are considered offensive and criminal when committed by private individuals or by small communities become laudable when they are adopted or carried out by sovereign states. It is because they have not been able to put an end to this political regime that the Europeans have been, and continue to be, struck by enormous and endless misfortunes; their future, and the future of their children, of their countries, and even of their thousand-year-old civilisation, becomes more uncertain by the day.

In order to engage in a more effective battle against this anachronistic regime, against the blind interests that defend it, and against the lies that

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\* Parma, Guanda 1957. Here we publish several chapters;

mask it, the European federalists today feel duty bound to set out their ideas clearly in this manifesto, a document that admits no hypocritical concession to current ideas and that is intended to bear witness to their struggle.

[...]

## II

### The Profiteers of National Sovereignty

#### *Abusive Sovereignties.*

In the humiliating circumstances to which they have been reduced and in which they now have to live, Europe's nation-states are reluctant to parade their old, ill-fated nationalistic ambitions. On the contrary, they claim — and in many cases have had this explicitly written into their constitutions — that they are merely instruments at the service of their peoples. The demands they make on the citizens, in order to fulfil this mission, are still same as they always were. Obeying the laws of one's state, paying the taxes demanded by the state, giving up a portion of one's life for military service, being ready in times of war to sacrifice one's life — all these things continue to be the supreme political duties of the citizens of all the European states. Fulfilment of these duties is guaranteed by adequate instruments of coercion, which are necessary in any community; but respect for these duties is also impressed into the souls of everyone through countless forms of propaganda, with the result that it is now viewed, in each citizen, as the supreme manifestation of moral correctness. A few decades ago, there still existed political forces that proudly claimed to appeal to a form of solidarity superior to the solidarity engendered by the nation-state. Today, however, all the political forces operating in the countries of Europe boast that they are only national; this means that they go no further than asking the state to provide good laws, and the citizens to obey the state.

However, to demand absolute loyalty to one's state is politically and morally justifiable only insofar as the state, in turn, is capable of guaranteeing its capacity to fulfil the fundamental public functions on which the security, the well-being and the freedom of its community of citizens depend. But Europe's sovereign states have in fact become structurally incapable of guaranteeing, in the interests of their citizens, even the most fundamental public services, and indeed have become the main obstacles

to the development of freedom, justice, well-being and security in Europe.

In eastern Europe and in the Spanish peninsula, there is now a clear contradiction between the claim, by the states, that their purpose is to serve their people and the true nature of these states. In these geographical areas, the people are denied any form of control over their governments, and their unhappy silence is broken only occasionally by desperate revolts and harsh repressions. The dominant political groups in these countries came to power through violence, and thanks to the intervention of foreign powers. They have established miserable tyrannies that continue to exist only because they are exercising power on behalf of, and under the protection of, a world power.

But if the free man's real objection to these tyrannies is that they are built on terror, the accusation that must be levelled against the democratic states is, in a sense, even more serious. These states are still the repositories of all the hopes of a rebirth of a free European civilisation, and yet, because they are built on foundations of pretence and lies, they are condemned to inevitable decline.

#### *The Profiteers of Economic and Social Sovereignty.*

First of all, Europe's nation-states continue to have at their disposal all the powers they need in order to conduct an economic policy. They collect taxes, they make laws, they decide matters relating to currency, trade, credit, and production, as though they really were capable of acting for the profound and permanent good of their peoples.

Now that we have entered the era of great supranational communities of continental dimensions, and the European states no longer have the capacity to conduct a power policy, all these faculties, as a means of turning the production system into an instrument of national power, no longer serve any purpose. But since economic policy is still the province of a state whose only sphere of action is the national one, the tendency towards economic nationalism is one that cannot be overcome; indeed, it is a tendency that has become even more marked precisely as a result of the economic weakness of the single states and their fear of being overwhelmed by stronger, foreign economies.

The American aid that was generously provided in order to allow the continent to pick itself up after the war, and to facilitate the creation of a vast European market, has been used by the European states to set the old national economies back on their feet. Despite an abundance of declara-

tions, projects, committees, and intergovernmental institutions, promising or pursuing economic union, the European governments continue to keep the national economies firmly under their own control, which means divided into stagnant compartments by customs tariffs, quota restrictions, currency controls, the prohibition of migration, and the arbitrary introduction or rejection of liberalisations.

The national scope of the economic policies precludes the creation of a vast common market that would, necessarily, be subject to a common economic and monetary policy. But the absence of such a market, by preventing both free access to resources and the rational division of labour on a continental level, makes production more expensive and the standard of living lower than they might otherwise be; it prevents the new technologies that science is putting at man's disposal, such as atomic energy and automation, from being fully exploited, and it condemns the Europeans to a future as peoples with underdeveloped economies.

Economic policy, on a national scale, can profit from favourable economic trends; it can (unjustifiably) take the credit for these trends, and, for a while, tone down its own nationalistic tendencies. However, if society is hit by a widespread economic crisis, the national governments can intervene only with measures of national scope, once again underlining Europe's division into a series of miserable, autarchic economies.

Today, the power of the nation-state to conduct an economic policy works to the advantage only of specific interest groups, encamped in each of our nations. In the past, beginning in the period just before the start of the First World War, these groups availed themselves of the protection of the state in order to begin transforming the national economies into economies based on monopolies, cartels, and corporations. Subsequently, under the protection of the restored national sovereignties, all these economic feudalities were quick to re-emerge, and today they continue to demand, and to obtain, the state protection that guarantees them the possibility to exploit consumers. In some cases, we are talking about the particular interests of capitalist groups, in others about the particular interests of groups of workers, and much more often, about a combination of the two. In some cases, the state certainly makes itself the executor of their requests. Other times, it seems to oppose the desire of these groups for secure and considerable earnings, bringing them under public control, and even going so far as to nationalise them. But the most frequent scenario is that in which a public administration is brought in to replace a private one, only then to retain the monopolistic methods that serve to protect the established interests. Sometimes, certainly, the state opens the

national market only to groups of private or public producers. Or the large cartels, in the different nations, agree among themselves, directly or through their respective governments, on the best way to divide up the anaemic European markets. In the present historical period, in which the Europeans need, more than ever before, a powerful movement for industrial and agricultural change, and in which this has been rendered possible by the advances of science and technology, the nation-states serve only to keep the old structures rigidly in place and to protect the established interests.

With national economies such as these, weak, inward-looking, dominated by privileged groups, devoid of any form of solidarity that extends beyond national boundaries, and showing growth rates that differ from country to country, serious social justice and social security policies can be introduced only rarely, and ineffectively, by one single state or another. The economic foundations of measures meant to bring about a fairer redistribution of social income are excessively narrow and, for this reason, these measures are incapable of attenuating to any significant degree the violence of the social contrasts that manifest themselves, in particular, in the poorest countries. The working classes, instead of being encouraged to take part in and to assume some active responsibility for modernisation of production structures, simply accept the existing national economic structures as a fact. In this context, the most they can hope to achieve is to secure privileged positions for one category or another, forming alliances of different kinds with the respective monopolistic groups. Or, alternatively, they are drawn to sympathise with movements for an ever more widespread national collectivism, the ultimate outcome of which would inevitably be state tyranny. Ultimately, the more each state strives to establish a national system of social justice, the more it encourages, in its own working classes, an obtuse and selfish form of nationalism, characterised by an indifference to the difficulties of those outside their borders.

### *The Profiteers of Military Sovereignty.*

Second, Europe's nation-states continue to possess and to use their own armed forces, as though they really were capable of looking after the defence of their own soil. They draw off enormous portions of the national income to cover military spending; they ask their citizens to give up several years of their lives for national service and to be prepared to risk death on the orders of national ministers and generals.

Since the differences of civilisation and politics that exist in the world make the unification of the whole of mankind under a single legal system and a single democratic world government quite inconceivable, the conservation of armed forces clearly continues to be a necessity. The European nations have stopped being the main centres of military power in the world and they are no longer in a position to consider pursuing policies of imperialistic expansion. But despite the economic and social disorder to which they are prey, they nevertheless remain, as a whole, one of the most important sources of industrious and civilised people, and one of the most important production systems, anywhere in the world. And the desire to have hegemonic control over them, as well as the fear of seeing them come under the control of adversaries, constitutes the primary concern behind the foreign policy of the world powers and the most important reason for war today. Even when wars break out on other continents, the stakes are always Europe.

In the face of this threat, and given the huge discrepancy between their power and that of their possible aggressor, the European states and their national armies cannot seriously think that they are capable of defending themselves. The national armies made sense when the threat of war originated from European national rivalries; they stopped making sense when the source of the threat began to be the rivalries between world powers. The national armies are in fact an obstacle to the effective organisation of defence. All military alliances, even those rendered necessary by force of circumstance, are hazardous undertakings, since the European states have both an old and a recent history of reciprocal conflict, of mistrust and of ill-feeling, which cannot be overcome as long as they remain sovereign states; each still regards today's ally as yesterday's and possibly tomorrow's enemy. Any attempt to pool the armed forces, in order to make them more efficient and better equipped with modern weapons, fails as a result of the fact that the single nation-states remain sovereign and thus ultimately concerned with only their own defence. And yet it is precisely this determination to hold on to this absurd military sovereignty that obliges them to do without the most powerful modern weapons, because on their own they do not have the economic resources to produce them, or the military power needed to use them. This means that Europe's armed forces cannot, in truth, be anything other than auxiliary forces serving the world powers. It is only the strategy adopted by these powers, which use them to hold a position, to re-establish a partial balance, or perhaps even to conduct some small-scale local war, that gives them any meaning at all. When a European state deludes itself

that it can still use its own troops for its own ends, the harsh reality of its impotence is soon brought home to it.

The national armed forces no longer serve the Europeans, who are crying out for a serious re-organisation of their defences, any useful purpose at all. They serve only to safeguard the pointless positions of political and social privilege enjoyed by a thin stratum of military leaders and politicians. In other words, of people who know perfectly well that they are no longer in a position to assume the leadership, should it be necessary, of their countries' defence, but, not worried by this, are happy to exploit national military traditions, the patriotism of the citizens, and the interests of the armed forces' traditional suppliers in order to conceal this humiliating truth, and to conserve and develop the national armed forces, in other words, essentially to preserve their own reputations, their own authority, their own abusive power.

### *The Profiteers of Diplomatic Sovereignty.*

Finally, one of the main aspects of the sovereignty of the European states is their continuing responsibility for relations with other sovereign countries and with territories outside Europe still under their dominion. The catastrophic world wars brought to an end the era in which world politics revolved around the foreign and colonial affairs of the European states. Today, when it comes to the world equilibrium, their diplomatic relations count for very little; their trade policies no longer determine the course of the world economy, because the European states are still built to conduct the old foreign policy of national dimensions. Their diplomatic corps thus continue to waste time and energy feeding public opinion in their respective countries with false sentiments, demanding pointless sacrifices, and concealing the truth from themselves and from their peoples, as though their manoeuvres and their decisions really were still capable of determining their countries' destinies.

The relative freedom of movement that the European countries still have in certain situations no longer reflects any real responsibility for their own fate, or for that of Europe and the world.

In their dealings with the world powers, the European states still regard themselves as great powers, too. In reality, they are the more or less autonomous protectorates of one of the great powers, sometimes biddable, sometimes troublesome, sometimes even capable of duplicity and of switching sides, but always absolutely dependent on them. Their belief that they can make an active and positive contribution to the great drama

that is unfolding between the United States and the Soviet Union is an empty one, because they no longer have the strength either to establish a solid and constant political line, or to make themselves heard.

They are too weak to be able to help the large emerging Asian states to modernise their economies. They can do nothing to help pave the way for the emancipation of the peoples of Africa, because they still think of themselves as being at the centre of colonial empires and can think only in terms of how they might hold on to what remains of the dominions they acquired in the era of their greatness and arrogance.

In their dealings with each other, as they attempt to tackle common problems, the European diplomatic corps are driven by old jealousies; they sabotage the will to pursue unity which can occasionally manifest itself in some minister or another; they come to blows over national issues, now entirely of secondary importance; they strive to preserve a meaningless balance among themselves; and they help to keep their peoples weak and divided.

The faculty of the nation-states to conduct foreign and colonial policies undermines any attempt to find a way out of this situation; indeed, it adds to the disorder in the world as a whole. This faculty now runs contrary to the deepest interests of the Europeans; it serves only to accommodate the laziness, the privileges, the interests, and the vanity of the diplomatic corps, of the colonial administrations, and of those politicians who tie their ambitions to national diplomacy.

#### *The Nation-State versus Democracy.*

The impotence of the nation-states in matters of foreign, military, economic and social policy is not the result of errors committed by one government or another, which can be corrected by subsequent governments. It is due to the fact that the nation-states, with all their institutions, public and private — from the governments to the parliaments, the parties, the unions —, are capable of developing only political will that is bound up with the idea of the nation, that relies on national executive instruments, and that is geared towards national ends, even though the fundamental problems in the spheres of foreign, military, economic and social policy have ceased to be problems of national dimensions.

But no democracy can last for long when the mechanism for developing the political will of the community is functioning to no avail. In this situation, mental laziness spreads through the political currents that are in government and also through those that are in the opposition, which,

were they to come to power, would themselves continue wearily to administer the false national sovereignties held by their states. A readiness to accept, neutral and passive, the demolition of all the fundamental values of civilisation is rife. Loyalty towards one's own community, despite often being solemnly declared, evaporates, and the citizens tend to split into factions, according to which new foreign master they would soonest see the destiny of their country entrusted to, and which they are preparing themselves to greet. The immediate and selfish interests of nations, classes, and individuals seem to be more important than any more noble objective, which, to be realised, needs to be projected into a future that can no longer reasonably be counted upon. The only strong and constant sentiment that is still able to affirm itself in the life of the European states is the wish of the privileged groups to milk, to the very end, entirely unscrupulously and without a thought for the future, the advantages that the old regime heaps upon them. This is a regime that only looks democratic; in truth it is, and cannot be anything other than, the instrument of power wielded by monopolistic and corporative groups, by gangs of short-sighted and mean-spirited bureaucrats, diplomats, generals, and politicians.

### III

#### **The Federation, Expression of the European People**

#### *The Nation-States versus the European People.*

The fate, not of one nation or another, but of all the Europeans, now depends on how policy — foreign and military, economic and social — is conducted not in this country or that country, but in Europe as a whole. Decisions and laws applicable to all the Europeans need to be established by a government that acts on behalf of all the Europeans, that involves all the Europeans, and that is subject to the democratic control of all the Europeans. The Europeans have the capacity to equip themselves with such a government, common and democratic, and to make it act coherently, because, with the variety of their different nations, they all recognise the same supreme spiritual and political values, and are all driven by the desire to guarantee their common civilisation a future; in other words, they possess the common creative spirit on which the ability to live in unity depends. The fact that the Europeans feel they have inherited a common civilisation, share a common destiny, and need free political

institutions to manage common problems means that they have reached a point in their history at which they must become a single people: the European people.

The nation-states are still useful instruments, insofar as they conserve and develop that fruitful diversity of national experience that is one of European civilisation's greatest assets. But their insistence on looking after, each on its own account, the running of affairs that in truth they are no longer capable of managing in the best and permanent interests of all the Europeans, has become an abusive position and should be seen as an out-and-out usurpation of power that is harmful to the European people. Despite cloaking themselves in the finest forms of democracy, the nation-states are in fact denying the Europeans the right to express themselves as a European people, and to administer, in the interests of all and through European democratic institutions, public affairs that have now become European public affairs.

Mankind today is tending to organise itself into continental-size political communities, each founded on a common civilisation, which may be a thousand years old or may be very young. The United States of America and the Soviet Union are merely the first of these communities, and have achieved the status of world powers. In the Asian continent, China and India, following a past characterised by humiliations and subjugations, are rising again and attempting to become political communities of civilisations. The Europeans find themselves at a crucial crossroads in their history: they too must choose whether to become a people in order, in this form, to be the continuers of what has been the most productive of the human civilisations, or whether, instead, to conserve the antiquated system of national sovereignties, allowing themselves to be transformed into political, economic and cultural appendages of other civilisations, of other peoples. The second course would put paid to any hope of a rebirth for those European nations that today find themselves reduced to a state of servitude, and it would spell ruin for those that are still free.

### *The Federation.*

The federation, the United States of Europe, is, for the Europeans, the only possible response to the challenge that history has thrown down before them.

Federating Europe means responding both to the call of the past, which divided it into national populations, and to that of the future, which

is crying out for it to become a single European people. Federating Europe means uniting the free peoples of Europe under an irrevocable pact which decrees that public affairs pertaining to the single nations be administered by each of the respective nation-states in the manner they choose, and the affairs of common interest be administered by a common government.

The federation is not a league of federated states. It does not exercise its power over the states, and nor do the states exercise their power over the federation. Both the federation and the states have jurisdiction that is restricted to certain areas of public life. But within these limits both remain fully sovereign entities, being equipped with the institutions and the means needed to take and to implement decisions independently of one another.

The federal community and the federated states share a common basis: the citizen. The federation is the political-legal organisation of the citizens of the whole of Europe, just as the nation-state is the political-legal organisation of the citizens of the single nations. Each individual is, at once, a citizen both of his own nation-state and of the federation. As a citizen of his own state he has a set of rights and of obligations towards the state in the spheres of public life that are the province of the nation-state. In the same way, as a citizen of the federation, he has a set of rights and of obligations towards the federation in those areas that are its province. In both, he elects, directly and freely, his own representatives; of both he demands that his rights be respected and that he be guaranteed justice; to both he pays, directly, the taxes that are needed to guarantee the provision of the respective public services; he obeys, directly, the laws of both of them. He is the meeting point of two political communities — the federal one and the national one —, whose sovereignties are separate and parallel. This solution is the only one that makes it possible to guarantee the simultaneous independence of the nation-states and of the federation, and the free and orderly life of the nations and of the European people.

To allow this body to function as an expression of the European people, the Constitution of the United States of Europe, while leaving the nation-states free to retain and modify their own institutions, must establish explicitly which public functions are to be transferred from the nation-states to the federation, what the institutions of the federation are to be, and what legal guarantees need to be in place against the risk of usurpations of powers, either by the European authorities or by the national authorities.

The functions that must be transferred from the nation-states to the federation are determined by the desperate crisis afflicting the old

European system. They are the power to decide and to act in all matters relating to the creation of a common economy, to the establishment of a common system of justice and social security, to relations with the other peoples of the world, and to the creation of a common defence against possible attack. And since respect for the fundamental rights of men constitutes the supreme value of any political community that is built on the ideals of European civilisation, the legal safeguarding of the freedoms of all Europeans must also be the responsibility of the federal authority. Everything that lies outside these ambits must remain the province of the single states.

#### *The Federal Government.*

Since there are matters that must be managed by the Europeans together, there needs to be, first of all, a European federal government with its own administrative body. Many of its constitutional characteristics will depend on the ideas and interests that will come to the fore when the European Constitution has been established. The definition of these characteristics, in this direction or the other, will be the result of inevitable political compromises and will not influence particularly the subsequent life of the federation. But two characteristics are essential. First of all, the European government must be appointed by a European political entity, and answerable to a European political entity. It cannot be appointed and controlled by the nation-states because, if it were, it would not have the necessary independence from them; it would not be the government of the European people. Second, it is not reasonable to imagine that the federation can have a parliamentary-type government. The federal government has limited powers, it does not have absolutist traditions, and it would be too weak and fragile if it were composed in the same way as the governments of the present European nation-states. Its continuity and its capacity to operate can be guaranteed only through its appointment for a limited, but clearly determined, period of time. Its members must be made responsible for the application of the Constitution and the laws, and must be dismissed and condemned if they violate them, but their remaining in office cannot be dependent on fickle parliamentary votes of confidence or no-confidence.

#### *The Federal Parliament.*

A European popular assembly, helped by one or more councils of

representatives of the various national, territorial and social communities that make up the European people, will vote on the laws that the government and the citizens must obey, the taxes that the government is entitled to collect from the citizens, and the financial plans that the government must adhere to in the spending of public money. Since the European citizens are obliged, directly, to obey federal laws and to pay federal taxes, they must also have the right to elect, by direct, equal and secret suffrage, their own legislators, and to replace them from time to time. Free European elections are the supreme proof of the democratic legitimacy of the European federal state. Through them, and through the life of the European Parliament, thoughts, feelings, interests and political currents will determine the policy of the federal government, grouping themselves according to new expressions of solidarity and new distinctions that will ignore the old national boundaries; a European political consciousness will awaken and find its way into the souls of the citizens; a European political class will take shape and duly go through cycles of change; the European government will belong to the European people; the European people will be a living political reality.

#### *The Federal Judicial System.*

Respect for federal law must be guaranteed by a federal judicial power that is independent of the European government and the national governments. It will decide all the disputes arising in relation to the application of the Constitution and the federal laws. The citizens, the nation-states and the federal government will all be able to have recourse to it whenever they should feel that their rights, guaranteed them by the Constitution and the federal laws, are being undermined. Above all, it will be the task of the federal judge to decide whether laws or acts of the federal government or of the national governments stray outside the limits established by the Constitution, and to declare invalid any act deemed unconstitutional and thus a usurpation of power. All this will put a definitive end to violence and wars within the federation. The independence of all the nations, large and small, that for centuries was pursued in vain in Europe through the law of force, will finally be guaranteed through the force of the law – the law which will prevent the federal government from tyrannically oppressing the nations, and the nations from anarchically attempting to take the place of the federal government. The European people, albeit politically united, will continue to be a people of free European nations.

[...]



### The false European solutions

A series of false European solutions are proposed that are all expressions of the dream harboured secretly by the profiteers of the national sovereignties and by their political spokesmen. These people all know that their states now retain only the appearance of sovereign states; they know that the nation-states can no longer master the problems of foreign and military policy, or those of economic and social policy; they know that these have now become problems of European dimensions. And so they dream of an unlikely Europe in which, instead of the European people, it is they — the national politicians, the profiteers of national sovereignty, the national governments — that hold in their hands, intact and unchanged, what in reality they have lost, and are able to bring it once more under their own control.

Let us take a look at the most important of these false European solutions:

a) *the national reorganisation solution* is the most popular within the national parties, and whenever those that proclaim it are on the point of coming to power, it proves highly seductive to public opinion. While the beauty and merits of European unity are solemnly acknowledged, unification is presented as a distant ideal, which, to become truly desirable and possible, presupposes the completion or near completion, in all the European countries, of a process of reorganisation of national life. This way of thinking makes it possible to conceal, under a benevolent pro-European guise, whatever national policy its proponents might have in mind for their country.

In truth, with the exception of the odd minor measure that the presence of some favourable trend or another might make it possible to introduce, the national structures impede any profound and genuine action of national reform in the fields of economic and social policy and of foreign and military policy. The most ambitious national reformers, as soon as they come to power, inevitably put themselves at the service of the profiteers of the national sovereignties and of their desire for constancy and inertness. In this way, the day when it might prove possible to proceed with European unification remains as distant and unreachable as ever.

b) *The international treaties solution* is the one most widely put into practice by the governments. While holding on to their sovereignty, the states all undertake, using the normal diplomatic methods (intergovern-

mental agreements and treaties of alliance, friendship, cooperation and trade, etc.), to act in a similar manner, so as to be able to tackle in the same way and at the same time problems deemed to be of common interest. The British Commonwealth is the most perfect example of this form of integration among states and is often held up as a model for the European states. But the Commonwealth is nothing other than the slow and judicious dismantling of an empire; it is not a process that is leading to the unification of powers that were once independent. Another much praised model is that of the Atlantic Treaty. In this treaty, all the countries are equal on paper, but the truth is that one of them has overwhelming power. If, to date, this treaty has not turned into a total subjugation of the European states to the United States of America, this is due solely to the reluctance of the latter to assume the role of imperial power vis-à-vis other, dependent powers. Moreover, the smaller of the allied nations repay this reluctance with an attitude of diffidence towards the main allied state and are always ready to take advantage of any opportunity to lessen this trans-Atlantic solidarity.

In truth, no international treaty, being inherently fragile, can make it possible to tackle, methodically and together, common problems, unless this is for extremely short periods of time or in certain circumstances, such as when the countries face a severe common threat, when the nation-states' different interests coincide absolutely, or when one of the allied states becomes disproportionately and overwhelmingly powerful.

c) *The international institutions solution* is the speciality of governments inspired by internationalist ideals. It consists of the creation of permanent international assemblies on which sit representatives of the member states. The range of issues that these organisations debate can even be very wide. The organs that debate them may be diplomatic (committees of ministers, of ambassadors, of experts) or they may be quasi-parliamentary (assemblies of delegates elected by the national parliaments, but which, it is occasionally suggested, could even be elected by the citizens directly). In any case, these assemblies only ever issue recommendations, which the states remain completely free to accept or to reject. It is mistakenly believed that the custom of sitting down and conducting discussions in the ambit of institutions with prestigious-sounding names, like the League of Nations, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Western European Union, is enough to induce the states gradually to obey a superior entity, even one totally devoid of powers.

In fact, these institutions, not having any decision-making capacity,

are entirely impotent, and this impotence turns the debates that are conducted within them into meaningless chat. No common will can be born of institutions that, by definition, are unable to act.

d) *The functionalism and "specialised authorities" solution* is advocated above all by functionaries in public administrations, who are able to recognise the crisis afflicting the nation-states, but not their own ignorance of the fundamental problems of politics. In some clearly defined sectors, the states can entrust a supranational technical body, not equipped with powers of coercion, the task of carrying out a mandate that they themselves have, in a treaty, drawn up in the most minute detail. During the two world wars, the allies frequently had recourse to supranational authorities, such as single military commands and common funds for the purchasing and distribution of raw materials. The belief is that as these authorities are developed, one after the other, the entire terrain of affairs needing to be pooled will gradually be covered, and that Europe will be united without it ever having been necessary to tackle directly the problem of the limitation of national sovereignties. The European Coal and Steel Community is the only recent example of creations of this kind. But in fact there exists no European problem for the solution of which some technician, blessed with a fertile imagination, has not dreamed up some specialised authority. Some of these have remained firmly in the realm of dreams, whereas others have been taken up by governments in search of false European solutions, turned into (more or less elaborate) draft treaties, only, in many cases, to disappear into thin air even before coming into being. The green pool, the pharmaceutical pool, the transport pool, the European army, Euratom, and the common market are the most famous of these projects.

In actual fact, the functional approach works only in a few clearly limited cases that do not really lend themselves to further developments. In wartime, when all the political will of a coalition's member states is geared towards the relatively straightforward objective of victory, it is possible to increase the number of military, economic and even diplomatic supranational agencies. But when this absolute coincidence of political will is no longer there, because victory has been won, or because one of the members of the coalition has broken away, the supranational authority always ceases immediately to exist. In peacetime, when it cannot be taken for granted that the political will of the different states will be simple and congruent, it is easier to plan specialised authorities than actually to create them.

The sectors that are to be brought under the control of a supranational

authority cannot be established arbitrarily; it is a question of taking basically coherent areas of public affairs and deciding whether these should be left under the control of the nation-states, or brought under that of supranational authorities. The common coal and steel market will never be able to grow in strength as long as the harmonisation of the economies as a whole remains in the hands of the states; the common market of all factors of production cannot even come into being as long as general monetary and economic policy remains the province of the states; the common European army is meaningless if it is an instrument of autonomous foreign policies; and a rational atomic energy policy is impossible if the competent European authority has no scope for controlling its industrial and military applications.

It is for all these reasons that all the designs for specialised authorities so far drawn up have all been conceived by technical bodies, executors of precise mandates issued by the states, and on which the states are always careful not to confer power of coercion. These specialist authorities have to be content with the states' promise that their decisions will be respected. Devoid, as they are, of any power of their own, they cannot become centres for the progressive gathering of interests, feelings, and European will, while they do allow national interests and sentiments to gather around the respective states, the only ones endowed with real strength. These authorities thus fall into a state of paralysis and evaporate as soon as the states no longer wish to keep them alive.

Functionalism deludes itself that the problems relating to the organisation and implementation of force can be resolved without actually being tackled. In other words, it believes that it is possible to deal only with the way in which certain affairs are administered, without raising the question of who, in fact, holds the effective power of execution. When these attitudes manifest themselves in civil servants, one can accept that these people are merely ingenuous; when politicians, whose job it is to concern themselves with the correct use of force in society, declare their support for the functionalist approach, then we can only conclude that they are either fools or liars.

e) *The free exchange and international cartels solutions* are the ones supported, sometimes as alternatives to one another and sometimes together, by capitalist groups who believe that the sum of their business relations can replace politics. It is imagined that by allowing international trade to develop freely, both under the effect of competition and through the actions of international monopolies, a level of interdependence will be reached between the nations that will render their union an absolute

necessity. According to this view, the unity that is so difficult to achieve through the states and through politics can spontaneously come about through the unification of the markets. But in reality, far from taking the place of politics, a market presupposes the presence of a political power, responsible for establishing the general legal and political rules by which it operates, and for ensuring that these rules are respected. If this power is not unitary, but divided among many sovereign states, then the market becomes extremely fragile and is able to operate only as long as these states are willing to have the same laws, the same currency, and the same economic policy. The history of Europe over the past century is the proof of the incapacity of free markets and international cartels to withstand the destructive influence of the sovereign states.

f) *The solution of the Internationals* is advocated above all by those militant members of national parties who have, in some way, understood the need for European unity, and think that their parties can be important factors in the building of it.

Since the socialist, liberal and Christian democratic parties have supranational ideologies, it is often imagined that it is possible, within them, for similar tendencies present in different countries to achieve a unity of action. The socialists have produced many Internationals, and more recently the Christian democrats and liberals have done the same; there have also emerged European movements inspired by these three political currents, in the mistaken belief that the respective parties might finally be induced to engage in an effective European action.

In reality, the ideology that characterises each of Europe's democratic parties is a propagandistic superstructure that does not alter in the slightest their true nature, which is that of national parties engaged essentially in promoting the national political agenda of their respective states. This explains why the Internationals and the European movements that have grown up out of the national parties, not daring to highlight the contradiction that exists between their ideological appearance and their political reality, not only formulate their requests in extremely vague terms, but are condemned to witness regularly the falsity of their parties and of their men: each time these reach positions of responsibility within the government they are obliged to set appearances aside and display their true nature as servants of the nation-state and of its deepest aspirations.

All the attempted solutions presented here are false European solutions, because without exception they forget that the problem of European unity lies in the creation and development of a European political force that is different from those of the states, and that has the capacity to

set itself in opposition to them and to their claims. These so-called solutions, on the other hand, all rest on national political forces and on the institutions of the nation-states, counting on their good will and failing to realise that this good will can only be the will to preserve their character as national political forces and institutions.

[...]

## VI

### The Federalists' Battle for the European People

#### *The Federalists and the National Parties.*

The European federalists differ radically from all the other political currents present in Europe today. These currents, albeit sometimes professing to believe in Europe, all set out to administer and serve the nation-state; they invite their fellow citizens to respect the nation-state as their nation's powerful idol and protector, since they all view the nation as the Europeans' only natural form of society, and the nation-state as their natural and insuperable form of political organisation.

The European federalists, on the other hand, regard the sovereign nation-states as the main enemies of the Europeans' civilisation, freedom, security and progress. Accordingly, they call upon the Europeans to unite in protest against their now abusive powers, and to force them to relinquish them.

Contrary to those who see, in Europe, only the nations, with their permanent and insurmountable differences, the federalists recognise the existence of the European people — a people that has inherited a common civilisation, that is bound by a common destiny (which may be rebirth or decline), that is capable of tackling its common problems with common democratic institutions, and that is held captive by the system of sovereign nation-states, which deny it the chance to express itself and to act, thereby preventing the birth of a European democracy.

The question has often been raised of whether the European federalists are, or should be, a party. The European federalists are much more than a party, at least in the sense the term has now acquired in European political language.

All the parties in Europe today, be they in government or in the opposition, be they democratic or anti-democratic, serve to mobilise national forces, in the national framework, in the service of national life.

When they do talk of Europe, they see it only as a part of national foreign policy. Thus they continue to work out national social and economic, foreign and military policies, without ever entertaining even the vaguest doubt that the governments, which they intend should implement these policies, are no longer equipped to manage public affairs in these spheres.

The federalists know that European problems are no longer only problems of international relations between the old European states, but rather all the problems of economic, social, foreign, and military policy of Europe as a whole. And they contest the capacity of the governments, parliaments and national parties to tackle these problems successfully. They regard the nation-states' assumption of the role of policy-maker in these areas as a usurpation of power, and the national parties' claim to be able to develop and implement the nation-states' policies as a deceptive illusion.

The aim of the federalists is not to become part of and to serve the national governments, and they therefore do not set out to compete with the national parties in this regard. Their aim is to plant, in the very souls of the Europeans, a rejection of the nation-states' position, which has become abusive, and an awareness of a European democratic legitimacy. They aim to take political energies away from the framework of national life and to organise them in a European framework. They set their request for the construction of a European democratic government and a European programme of government in direct opposition to the programmes of the national governments. Their opposition, not being directed against a specific policy of one national government or another, but against the nation-states system itself, is more radical than any opposition that accepts the national framework.

To conduct their action successfully, the federalists cannot therefore be organised along the lines of the traditional parties, that is to say organised with a view to rising to national government.

Not wishing to suppress, only to limit, national political life, the federalists do not interfere in the affairs of national politics that should rightly remain national affairs. Once the nation-states have been released from all the functions that currently weigh them down, and are able to concentrate on the administration of national affairs, political life will alter profoundly in all the countries; however, the federalists do not, by definition, have a clear stance in relation to these affairs and, in the national sphere, can even belong to opposing currents.

But in the battle for a federation, the federalists do not recognise any role for the national parties, and they need to find their own form of

political organisation, one which is consistent with the objective they intend to pursue.

The federalists come from all countries, from all walks of life, from all parties and from all spiritual, moral, religious and political families that acknowledge the value of human freedom. They do not demand the breaking of any of these bonds. Unlike the ideological parties, they do not point out an ultimate goal for mankind. They merely want to create the institutional instruments that will allow the European people to formulate and pursue its goals. The federalists wish to be builders of institutions, not leaders of souls.

But, like all human action, theirs, too, demands self-limitation and a strong concentration of will. The federalists know that human reality is infinitely complex and that what they wish to achieve is only a part of that reality. They know that their contribution does not embrace all human values. While aware, then, that reality is not simple, they are determined to make, for the good of their contemporaries, a simple political contribution: the European federation. To succeed in this, they have decided to arm themselves with a strong, simple will, leaving to others all that does not pertain to the attainment of this goal, fighting relentlessly against those who oppose it, and stirring up all that they can in order to promote its realisation.

To make this battle possible, the federalists accept, for their own part, the need to subordinate their political action in the national field to their European action, all national political schools to the European school, and even their loyalty as citizens of their nation to their loyalty as European citizens.

### *The Federalists and the Governments.*

When, following the catastrophes of the Second World War, some of the European nation-states' heads of government attempted for a few years to pursue a policy of European unification, the European federalists, despite being aware of the ambiguities and the reservations that lay behind this policy, calculated that the gravity of the general situation and the extraordinary coming together of favourable circumstances would facilitate a turning of words into deeds, and they took it upon themselves to point out the best route to follow. They paid a price for this approach: much of public opinion ended up confusing the reforming spirit of the federalists with the conservative spirit that ran through the pro-European governments. But it was a price that the federalists were willing to pay,

convinced as they were that upon the eventual birth of a European democracy all the ambiguities would disappear and the true nature of their thought and action would emerge loud and clear. Indeed, up to a point and for a certain period of time they were heeded, because they gave voice to the profound logic of the action that those governments were seeking to carry out, but when they expressed the bold and thus more provocative elements of their thought they were listened to carelessly, with ill-concealed irritation, and even with profound dislike. When these governments' pro-European interlude ended in failure, all of sudden the federalists stopped being listened to altogether, and began to be regarded as visionaries entirely out of touch with reality.

At this point, some of them, by now trapped by this tactic, lacked the courage to break a political alliance that had lost all its meaning and preferred to relinquish their mission, surrendering their own federalist thought and accepting one of the false European solutions. But, stripping away this dead wood, the European federalists have decided to reclaim their freedom of action. Having verified that European unification will never come about as long as it remains the prerogative of experts, diplomats, governments, parliamentarians and national parties, and realising that the United States of Europe can be the creation only of the European people, they have set about organising a European popular political force.

#### *The Vanguard of the European People.*

The federalists know that they are the conscious vanguard of the vast majority of the Europeans. From whatever perspective they consider the interests of European civilisation, they see that almost all Europeans have everything to gain from the creation of the federation, and that only very small minorities are definitely hostile to it, and interested in keeping alive the old system of the nation-states. In opposition to the false nationalist culture that can thrive only if national divisions and enmities remain, there stands the glorious European culture which, having no boundaries of its own, is deformed or distorted by national boundaries. In opposition to the narrow military, diplomatic and administrative frameworks of the higher echelons of the national bureaucracies, the forces that truly dominate the state apparatuses, there are the countless local, municipal, regional and even national administrations, which are suffocated by the centralising demands of the sovereign state. In contrast to the groups that run the political organisations, whose only concern is to become part of

the national governments, we can set the vast masses of their followers and electors, who actually believe in the universal ideals preached by these parties. Against the monopolistic and corporative groups, which the state guarantees reserved national markets, we can set all those entrepreneurs and workers who would benefit from the opening up of large markets, and all the consumers who, were the trade barriers to be brought down, would see their standard of living raised. Against the profiteers of the tensions and the risk of war caused by national divisions, we have huge masses of men and women whom European unity would offer greater guarantees of peace. Against the social groups in the different countries who enjoy privileged positions that could not be maintained in the absence of national sovereignty, we can set the social groups that are damaged by the existence of these privileges, and those who are condemned, within the national framework, to languish in depressed circumstances. Whereas, on the one hand, we have the old generations, who have grown used to conceiving of the nation-state as the only form of political existence, on the other we have the young generations, for whom nation-state is synonymous with political and social inertness, international humiliation and impotence, and a progressive narrowing of the horizons of ideals. Against the interests of some administrations and enterprises, selfishly attached to the continued pursuit of their nations' colonial policies, we can set the aspirations of the more developed groups in the overseas territories, whose ideas have been shaped by European civilisation and which are keen to see relations between their peoples and Europe based on equality of rights and human solidarity.

Yet as long as they remain framed, deformed and dominated by the national structures, even the groups most interested in European unity are unable to see how this might be achieved, and they continue, in vain, to attempt to pursue their ideals and interests in the national setting. The federalists aim to awaken the knowledge, in all these groups within European society, that Europe is the alternative to national political life, and to stir up the desire to realise it.

The federalists are asking all those who recognise that the time has come to mount a European protest against the abusive positions of the nation-states, and all those who refuse to accept that all their political life should unfold in the national sphere, to unite in a single large permanent Congress of the European People, which would allow men and groups from different countries to get to know one another, to recognise the profound solidarity that, beyond national boundaries, binds them together, and to get ready, as one, for the battle to abolish the abusive national

sovereignties and create a European federal democracy.

The Congress of the European People cannot and must not respect either national divisions, or the divisions that exist within the single national societies. The Congress appeals to workers and to entrepreneurs, to intellectuals and to common people, to local communities and to professional groups, to religious and to non-religious groups, to those on the political left and also to those on the political right. It accepts no criterion defining progressive as opposed to reactionary forces, other than the one established by the battle for Europe: progressive forces are those that promote the federal unity of the European people, whereas reactionary forces are those that, even in spite of their words, favour of the conservation of the abusive national sovereignties.

The federalists know that the enormous pro-European feeling will not be able to transform itself into full political awareness before the European political institutions have been created. Until such a time, their action will meet with widespread incredulity; many will be drawn to them in the good times, only to abandon them when the struggle seems hazardous and difficult. For a long time, the Congress of the European People will represent only the most conscious minority of the European people. But it is important to realise that whereas the normal lives of the peoples are, as a rule, influenced by the average consciousness of the majorities, the major changes in their lives are never wrought by majorities, or by the average consciousness. They are wrought by active minorities that represent and express the latent sentiments and interests of the majorities. The Congress of the European People is the first instrument of European political action that, thanks to the work of the federalists, will be at the disposal of the European people as, gradually, they become aware of their own existence.

#### *The European Constituent Assembly.*

The primary and permanent objective of the Congress is to claim, for the European people, the right through democratic methods to equip itself with the federal constitution that it needs. The Congress is not asking the national governments to draw up the European Constitution and to get it approved by their parliaments. The political institutions of the nation-state, being the place in which the particular national interests come together and are expressed, are by their very nature and as they have amply demonstrated, incapable of fulfilling this task. The building of the United States of Europe will begin on the day on which, put under

pressure by the federalist action, the national governments recognise that they are ill-equipped to decide Europe's fate, and put the power to do so into the hands of the European people.

In precise legal terms, the Congress will have to ask the national governments to draw up and approve a treaty — this will be the last international treaty that they will be called upon to establish — decreeing the birth of European democracy. The single states will undertake to get a European constituent assembly elected, on their soil and by their citizens, through free and direct suffrage. This assembly will be the only body qualified to define the constitution of a federal European government responsible for running the economic and social, foreign and military affairs of the European people, and for guaranteeing all the European citizens the highest legal protection of their freedoms. The constitution approved by the European Assembly will be ratified, through free plebiscite, by the single states, which will thus decide, without intermediaries, whether or not to transfer to the federation some of their state's sovereign prerogatives. The constitution will immediately come into effect in the countries that ratify it, and will remain open to adoption, in the future, by all the others.

The day on which, through the first European elections, the European democracy comes into existence is the day on which the destiny of Europe will have been wrested from the hands of its opponents. Without doubt, the latter will continue to fight tooth and nail to defend their privileges, but the old national political balances, which ensured that nationalist points of view automatically prevailed, will be turned upside down by the European elections. European sentiments and interests, finally having come into possession of their natural and legitimate means of expression, will gain a growing awareness of themselves, will ignore national boundaries, will group together according to European affinities, will have a decisive influence on the composition of the assembly, and will remain vigilant throughout the work of the latter.

The European constituent assembly, being the product of a massive popular vote, and thus feeling itself to be the legitimate representative of the European people and of its aspirations, will have a strong and proud sense of its mission, will be unwilling to succumb to the nations' flattery or pressure, and, however it is comprised, will be capable of reaching the agreements and compromises needed to arrive at the ratification of the federal constitution.

Finally, the European constitution, by showing how the nations can be guaranteed both their own permanence and an efficient European

government, will throw into such sharp relief the absurdity and the meanness of the system of national sovereignties that the citizens of the different nations will very likely be induced to approve it with large majorities in all or almost all of the countries.

*The Strategy of the Federalist Action.*

The opponents of European federal unity, who may be more or less open about their position, and the defenders, sincere or hypocritical, of the national sovereignties know that the day on which the European people are given their say is the day on which the movement towards the federation will become unstoppable. They therefore doggedly resist this request, and will cave in only under the dual pressure of a strong action mounted by the Congress of the European People and a clear and serious demonstration of the inadequacy of the old order.

Neither the Congress of the European People, nor its life-givers — the federalists — must allow themselves to be under any illusion that this is a battle that can be won easily.

The gradual disintegration of the old European system of national sovereignties is now a constant and irreversible process. Every day that passes inflicts new diplomatic humiliations on one country or another, endangers and destroys the independence of one country or another, threatens one national economy or another, halts the social progress of one country or another, and stirs up one colonial revolt or another. The individual national governments can no longer change this historical course, but they constantly come up with new devices for establishing new and transient balances that serve only to conceal from themselves and from their peoples the terminal disease that afflicts them. But the contradiction between the dimensions, now European, of the problems with which history has brought Europe, as a whole, face to face, and the dimensions, still national, of the governments that have to tackle these problems, continues to be rife and to deepen, and occasionally it bursts to the fore in the form of a crisis not of one state or another, but of the whole nation-states system.

It is only when the current European regime finds itself in these moments of severe and widespread crisis that the forces and groups intent on national conservation suddenly become aware of their impotence, and incapable of thinking, acting, or imposing their point of view; the bewildered leaders search in vain for an alternative policy, which, because it does not exist, they are no longer able to find on a national level.

These are the serious and decisive moments in which the Congress of the European People, guided by the federalists, have to intervene with all their strength and with all their determination to oppose the claims of the nation-states, to obtain from the latter the first abdication of their sovereignty and the first recognition of the sovereignty of the European people: its right to elect the European constituent assembly and to ratify, through direct vote, the federal constitution.

Should the Congress of the European People fail to be sufficiently strong and resolute, should it allow itself to be taken in by the assurances of the governments and the national political forces, these will promise to build European unity themselves, will convene diplomatic assemblies for this very purpose, will prepare treaties, and will put these treaties to the national parliaments for ratification. If this happens the battle will necessarily be lost. The only objective of such moves would be to take control of the process of building Europe out of the hands of the European forces so as to place it in those of its natural opponents. As long as the situation is critical, the national diplomatic corps, governments and parliaments let it be believed that they can and intend to keep their promises. But as soon as the critical moment is over, they reveal their true intentions: national diplomats and experts refuse to draw up treaties that go against their usual approach to international affairs; the governments are incapable of reaching agreements; and the parliaments are no longer willing or able to find the majorities that would allow them to strip themselves of a large share of their prerogatives. Like all acute crises, those of the old system of national sovereignties are, because of their nature, transitory. In the wake of a brief period of tension, during which it would have been possible to break the vicious cycle of the national sovereignties, a new social, economic, diplomatic and military balance is usually formed within the old national frameworks. Diplomats, chiefs of staff, large monopolies and corporations, and nationalists of all colours reorganise their forces around the nation-state and regain full control of it. The crisis of the European system is not unfolding along a straight line, but following a spiral that, while nevertheless following a downward motion, continues to turn back on itself. Periods of anxiety, humiliation, disorder and desperation are followed by short-lived periods of détente, tranquillity, prosperity in business, and minor social progress.

Neither is the struggle for the European people a linear and progressive series of small, partial victories. Because it follows a cyclic pattern, like that of the crises afflicting the system of national sovereignties, it goes through periods in which, running counter to all the appearances of

the moment, it swims against the tide. In these periods it cannot succeed, only extend its influence, strengthen its position and voice increasingly loudly its opposition. But finally there comes the critical moment in which its constructive force, coinciding with the growing disorder into which the old European system is plunged, turns the nation-states' first — and decisive — capitulation into a real possibility. If this capitulation does not come, then defeat is inevitable, and the federalists are left with no choice but to start from the beginning, doggedly drawing strength from their knowledge that there is no path to Europe's future other than that of the federation.

[...]

## The New Course\*

ALTIERO SPINELLI

The collapse of the EDC and the London and Paris agreements mark a profound turning point in European politics, and also as regards the role that our movement should play within it. For us, this is the start of a phase of reflection and debate that here I intend merely to get under way.

The question now is what to do in the current circumstances, and in order to answer it properly, we must first analyse what we have done over the past years, the reasons for the grave defeat we suffered last summer, and the situation that has been created in its wake.

### *The Era of the Europeanist Governments.*

During the period that ran, roughly, from the announcement of the Marshall Plan in 1947 to Mendès-France's rise to government in France, there emerged in Europe an extraordinary situation that will not easily be repeated: the governments of six countries, while bound, like all national governments, to protect the sovereignty of their respective states, found themselves led or influenced by men who, more or less explicitly, set out to limit these national sovereignties and to create supranational European institutions. It is worth pausing for a moment to look at the reasons for this state of affairs, and also at how it came to an end.

The nation-state is normally sustained by a series of things: by the armed forces, by the diplomatic corps, by the central administrations, by certain groups of economic interests, and by the nationalist mentality that is fuelled by certain political forces. However, at the end of the war, and for a number of years afterwards, these props were lacking in the continental countries of Western Europe.

The national armies, after hardly covering themselves with glory, had been destroyed and no longer existed. The military generals, far from

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\* In *L'Europa non cade dal cielo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1960.



being able to portray themselves as the proud recipients of military honour and as the guarantors of their countries' security and independence, were forced to adopt a low profile and keep quiet.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic corps were quite unable to generate any faith in their capacity to secure their countries a place on the chessboard of international politics. Passively, and with bowed heads, they could only wait for the world's big players — America and Russia — to decide what position the European countries should occupy, and whose friends or adversaries they would be.

The national bureaucracies, barely able to fulfil their most basic duties, had to relinquish their arrogant belief that they were the only ones capable of keeping their countries in order. All the economic groups, capitalists and workers, that for decades had taken refuge in the nation-state, managing to convince themselves, and others, that it was state's responsibility to guarantee them exclusive markets, monopolies, and a corporative system, were reduced to silence by the general disintegration of the national economies, which were no longer able to meet even the most basic needs of the populations.

The magnitude of the catastrophes that had been generated by the nationalist way of thinking was such that those parties that could accurately be defined nationalist were swept away, while the nationalists spread among all the other parties were forced to hide away, starting to speak a language that sounded wrong on their lips. Meanwhile, the parties of Catholic extraction that, after the war, found themselves leading, or at least contributing to the leadership of their respective countries, were less pervaded by nationalist tendencies, being still mindful of the mutual animosity that, in countries like Italy, France and Germany, had for so long existed between the state and the Church.

To these internal European factors can be added two enormously influential external ones. First, Stalin's Russia was striking fear into all the countries of western Europe with its dangerous determination to expand, and was thus prompting these countries to unite. Second, America, which, through its economic aid and its military support, exercised enormous influence over democratic Europe, was convinced that it was its duty to help Europe to unite.

It was thanks to this set of circumstances, which rendered fragile not only the de facto sovereignty of the democratic states of continental Europe, but also their desire to affirm this sovereignty, that their governments were able to develop a foreign policy hitherto inconceivable in Europe: that of supranational unification. Lacking both the practical

experience and the political doctrine of federal state building, their progress was slow and hesitant, their projects were confused, and their fears were great in the face of the adventure upon which they had embarked. Thus, in the conviction that they were being wise and keeping their feet on the ground, instead of exploiting the favourable moment in order to proceed quickly and methodically, they in fact allowed circumstances to lead them towards inadequate solutions.

This is the political background that must be borne in mind if we are to appreciate the intentions behind the actions of the federalists. We possessed the political doctrine that Europe's leaders needed to adopt in order to realise their supranational aspirations. We therefore sought, during this period, to take on the task — not particularly high-profile but important nonetheless — of inspiring the governments' European policy. While we did not have the power to determine that policy, we were able to make ourselves heard, at least in part and at certain decisive moments in time, by the governments and by the political forces that supported them, because our suggestions were the logical and coherent expression of the very impulses that were driving these governments.

If the ECSC possesses certain supranational characteristics, this is due to the level of inspiration provided by the federalist Monnet. If the EDC project contained elements of a supranational political evolution, and if these elements began to be embodied, even prior to the ratification of the EDC, in the constitutional statute drafted by the Ad Hoc Assembly, then this too is a reflection of the degree of inspiration provided by the federalists.

In one crucial regard, however, the federalists, despite their best efforts, were not able to make themselves heard. From the very outset they always recognised, with perfect clarity, the extremely transitory nature of the favourable moment; over and over again they pointed out that time was working against Europe and that speed was of the essence. But the men and the parties of government failed to heed their warnings; they believed they had decades at their disposal, whereas in fact they had only a few years; they maintained that it was prudent to be empirical, as they put it, in other words, to be slow and imprecise, whereas the wise thing would have been to act decisively and rapidly; they allowed themselves to make mistakes when what was needed was clear thinking and clear intentions. In short, they allowed the forces of national conservatism to re-gather and the favourable moment to slip through their fingers. Ultimately, they lost the first great battle for Europe.

All that remains for the federalists is the bitter satisfaction that comes

from knowing that they did their duty. And they must be proud of this if they still want to continue the battle. All battles can be won or lost; a defeat in battle is not a demonstration that one was in the wrong, and any movement that, when its past actions were right, is unable to be proud of what it has done — even in defeat — surely lacks the vigour and potency it needs in order to go on.

*The Return of Nationalism.*

The Europeanist men of government, through their contradictions and hesitations, allowed the forces of nationalism to regain the upper hand. All the time the governments were pursuing their Europeanist designs, the path for this return of the old regime in Europe was, little by little, being paved.

The national economies recovered, thanks to the aid given by the Americans to favour European unification, and all the protectionist, restrictive, sectionalist, monopolistic and National Socialist elements that existed within them began again to exert a growing influence over the state.

The armies reformed and the general staff were once more ready to defend, with increasing vigour, if not their own countries, at least their own national armies.

The national bureaucracies clawed back their control of their respective countries and became daily more intolerant of the prospect of having to relinquish even a single one of their functions to supranational bodies.

The nationalist mentality crawled out of its hiding place and began to spread everywhere; right-wing nationalist groups reformed; the right- and left-wing factions which saw themselves holding power alternately with Christian Democrat governments, sensed the way the wind was blowing and stepped up their nationalist allegiance, accusing the governments of not being patriotic enough; ultimately, even the Catholics were beginning to love these states that, fortunately, they had once mistrusted, but that now they governed.

The international situation also changed. Following the death of Stalin, the new men at the Kremlin, weakened internally, toned down their policy of expansion and began to preach détente. The American administration, under Eisenhower, while continuing to favour European unification, lost some of the democratic, idealistic impetus that had characterised the Truman administration, and thus wielded considerably less influence over the European states. Our national diplomatic corps

were at last able to raise their heads again and were soon anxious to take control of their countries' destinies, which had remained for too long in the hands of Europeanist ministers.

The communists quickly saw the need to try and keep democratic Europe immobilised within the system of national sovereignties, realising that this would render the disintegration of the democracies an unstoppable process and would thus increase their chances of success; and they did not hesitate to enter into the most bizarre of alliances in pursuit of this objective.

This slow return of nationalism in the European states assumed, externally, a range of different forms, but these were essentially identical in each of our countries, and it was like a profound and irresistible movement. The nation-state, merely by virtue of still being intact, became the focal point around which all the forces of nationalist conservatism gathered and grew in strength. And since the European institutions had yet to emerge, there lacked, to counter this, a focal point around which the pro-European forces might gather and strengthen; indeed, practically all of them remained latent and passive.

The question of the ratification of the EDC thus became the trial of strength between the nationalists and the Europeanists. For a long time, the struggle was uncertain, and it was because of this uncertainty that the federalists felt bound to commit themselves completely to the cause. In the end it was won by the nationalists in France, Europe's oldest nation-state. The first partial victory came when Schuman, hated by the Quai d'Orsay, was replaced by Bidault, an individual much more ready to bow to the wishes of the French diplomatic corps. With the rise to government of Mendès-France and the rejection of the EDC, the victory of the nationalists was complete. It would be a serious mistake to believe that the current French government is different from those that have preceded it simply because it represents a different parliamentary mix. The truth is that it differs radically from previous ones because it now has behind it, in positions of power, all the French nationalistic forces of the military, of the bureaucracy, of the diplomatic corps, of the economy, and of politics, both on the right and on the left. In France, a country where governments are often unsteady and fragile, the present government could easily be brought down, over practically any issue. But even if the men in power were to change, this would not remove the prevailing political constellation, which reasons and acts in national political terms.

This remarkable reversal of the power relations between the Europeanists and the nationalists that took place in France was repeated,

albeit "silently," in the other European countries in the space of a few days following France's rejection of the ECD. The French nationalists, of all colours, had fought, and won, their battle not only for themselves, but for nationalists throughout Europe. The governments of the other five countries lacked the courage to hold firm, and to force the French to face up to a long political crisis in the (ultimately vain) attempt to find an alternative European policy to that of unification; instead, abetted by British foreign minister, Eden, who hurried to all the capital cities of Europe to convince them to reason in terms of the formation of alliances between nation-states, they allowed nationalist viewpoints to prevail over European ones. Adenauer may well blanch internally at the thought that his European policy is ending in the rebirth of a German national army, but caught between a right and a left both pressing for a recovery of sovereignty and national power, he cannot oppose it. De Gasperi may well be heartbroken by the prospect of an imminent end to the attempt to unite Europe, and the Italian politicians may feel deeply saddened by the thought that, without a European federation, Italian democracy is doomed, but even as they do so they are being pushed back towards the old paths of diplomacy that the country followed under the House of Savoy. Spaak may well have been president of the European Movement, but he has still become foreign minister of a Belgium that is again beginning to live in fear as much of the collusion as of the rivalry between France and Germany.

Thus, the era of the Europeanist governments ended on the 30<sup>th</sup> August, and Europe's democratic states are now striving, through the traditional system of alliances between sovereign states, to find a satisfactory way that they can coexist. The words Europe, Union and the like are now nothing more than dust in the eyes of fools.

The first consequence of all this, for the federalists, is that the methods of action employed thus far have become meaningless. To seek to be a source of inspiration and suggestion made sense as long as there were governments ready to be inspired, and ready to listen to suggestions; as long as there were ministers who were themselves convinced of the need to move in the direction of supranational institutions. Then, to accept, or even to propose, a compromise, to strive for a partial success in order to obtain a complete one, had a precise and concrete political meaning. Political manoeuvring serves a purpose when there is good reason to believe that one still controls the movement imparted to things, and that this movement can still be directed towards one's chosen objective. Over the past years, the federalists had reason to believe that the governments

did indeed plan to stay on course for supranational unity; all the manoeuvres and concessions thus had a meaning. But, now, to continue to act according to this strategy indicates a failure to understand what has happened, that is to say, that the European governments today are once more under the predominant influence of the social and political forces of national conservatism and that, as a result, they have become deaf to any federalist suggestion or inspiration.

It is this change in the framework of the struggle, and not any perceived tactical error in the past, that today obliges the federalists to change their approach.

As when any revolutionary movement loses a battle and is forced to reform its ranks and work out new plans, in our case too, enormous confusion currently reigns both at the grassroots and at the heart of the European federalist organisation. Some of its leaders, particularly Frenchmen and Germans, although this also applies to some Italian federalists, have failed to appreciate the extent of the victory won by the nationalist reaction. Allowing themselves to be deceived by the lip service now being paid to Europe by our governments, they still favour the tactic of inspiration and suggestion. Accordingly, they want us to press the governments into introducing at least an arms pool, a common uniform, a minimum of democratic control over a non-existent European political power, and into attempting, at least, confederal solutions, and so forth.

However, this action implies more than winning the governments' attention. In the effort to come up with something that the governments might listen to, and accept, these federalists are being induced to abandon their basic demands, and to propose seeming solutions whose content is, in truth, the opposite of what they should be striving for. We never asked for the creation of the EDC; since the governments had come up with the idea of creating the EDC, what we asked for, on the basis of the internal, supranational, logic of the EDC, was the creation of a European government and a European parliament. If, today, on the basis of the Union of Western Europe, whose internal logic is the preservation of national sovereignties, we were, absurdly, to request an arms pool, Franco-German arms cartel, which would disintegrate at the first conflict between the two states, we would foolishly be applying a tactic that had been valid in entirely different circumstances, and instead of making progress in a supranational direction, we would instead be moving towards the swamping of federalist ideals by a nationalist way of thinking. We would be disuniting the federalist movement without obtaining anything positive at all.

### *No to a False Europe.*

The first thing that the federalists need to make clear and denounce is the falseness of all the assurances currently being given out by the governments, parties and the press with regard to the new agreements that have replaced the EDC. It is practically certain that these agreements will be ratified quickly and that they will form the basis of European policy over the coming years. But this does not mean that we should not denounce them as a danger to democratic Europe. They represent the sum of what the European states can achieve when taking as their fundamental starting point the maintenance of their sovereignty, but precisely because they are taking this as their starting point the European states can, in fact, no longer work towards anything but the destruction of their own peoples.

The self-styled Europe that is the product of the conferences of London and Paris cannot resolve any of the three fundamental problems that make the European federation necessary today.

It cannot undermine the national economic policies, because there is no European political power that can draw from the national societies the forces needed to demolish the national economic programmes and impose one law for all (without which no common market, nor any common social solidarity, is possible).

It cannot prevent the armed forces from being at the service of the nation-states, because there exists no supranational power that can have the armed forces at its disposal, independently of the nation-states.

It cannot prevent the emergence of divergent foreign policies, because each state will continue to act alone in the diplomatic sphere, and to follow paths that are different from, or even that oppose, those of its allies (when what is needed is a single European power pursuing a common European foreign policy).

By failing to resolve these problems, the so-called Western European Union keeps the national economies in a state of stagnation or dangerous agitation, renders any true defensive preparation problematical, and puts the European states, particularly France and Germany, at the mercy of Soviet diplomatic manoeuvring and of American reactions to this; in other words, it turns Western Europe into the Balkan states of the world, increasing international tensions and the risk of war.

And since these miserable states guard their sovereignty so jealously (even though they have no possibility of holding on to it, only of perpetuating chaos in Europe) their preparations for European unification are being made not under a freely adopted federal law, but rather

under the heel of a future ruler.

For the federalists, this is the start of a difficult period in which they will have to have the courage to set themselves, and to remain, in opposition. We do not know whether European federal unity will become a reality, but we do know that it will become a reality only if the ruinous nature of all nationally-oriented policies is fully appreciated. Favourable circumstances may again emerge in six months' time, or in a decade from now; we are not the ones who will determine them; but for these circumstances to be exploited, for the magic circle of the national sovereignties to be broken, there will have to have been people who have tirelessly denounced what is wrong, and who have laid bare the falseness of the claims of all the parties (without exception) which accept the national framework as the normal framework of their activity, and which promise, within that setting, things that they cannot deliver.

The federalists differ from all the other political factions, both democratic and anti-democratic, with regard to what they perceive as the enemy that must be destroyed — the very thing that all the others regard, in their different ways, as an idol to be worshipped or served: the nation-state.

### *What Is to Be Done?*

Had it been accepted, the EDC would have opened up the way for a series of political struggles that could have led, quite quickly, to the creation of a European government and parliament. We had grown accustomed to reasoning in terms of objectives that could be realised quite quickly. The premise was the creation of a single European army, that is, the collapse of the main pillar of the national sovereignties.

But the rejection of the EDC has changed our outlook, and we must recognise this. Our task now is to understand ourselves, and to convey a need that today scandalises not only the man in the street, but also many of those who consider themselves federalists. Briefly, it is this. The sovereign nation-state is not an absolute entity that must be respected come what may, and obeyed come what may. It is an instrument at the disposal of men, from whom it demands obedience in order to render certain services. Now, however, it demands obedience of its economic policy, but is no longer able to deliver the service of promoting economic progress; it demands obedience of its foreign policy, but is no longer able to deliver the service of guaranteeing international security and reducing the risk of war; it demands obedience, even the sacrifice of life, to defend

the country in times of war, but is no longer able to deliver the service of guaranteeing defence. This means that in the areas of economic, foreign and military policy, the sovereign nation-state makes laws and governs unlawfully; its power in these areas has become illegitimate.

The federalists must demand the direct election, by the free European peoples, of a European constituent assembly, and that the constitution voted on by this assembly be put to popular referenda for ratification. They know very well that, at the present time, no government is ready to accept this procedure. They outline it as a way of underlining their total rejection of the nation-states, to make it clear that the European constitution must, at its outset, possess European democratic legitimacy, in other words, that the organ that draws up its constitution cannot be made up of diplomats or national parliamentary delegations, but must comprise representatives of the European people, chosen to carry out a European action; equally, its sanctioning upon completion must have European democratic legitimacy: the Yes or No must come from the peoples, not from their national parliaments, which can legislate only on national matters.

What we must obtain from the national governments and parliaments is that they relinquish their illegitimate sovereignty in those fields in which they are no longer able to exercise it, agreeing to the convening of a European constituent assembly.

This relinquishment may be secured only when a new, blatant demonstration of the impotence of our states — and this day will come, sooner or later, in some situation or another — coincides with a rebellious federalist consciousness, a hundred times stronger, more widespread and more self-assured than it is today.

To prepare for this new action, so different from and yet so profoundly consequent upon that which we have carried forward until today, is the task that faces us now.

## Towards the European Union\*

ALTIERO SPINELLI

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to begin by thanking President Maihofer, and the Institute, for giving me the honour of delivering this sixth Jean Monnet Lecture and, even more, for the contribution they have made to the work done by the European Parliament's Committee on Institutional Affairs.

This month, the European Parliament enters the final year of its mandate, during which time it will have to carry through its undertaking to propose a reform designed to turn the Community into a true political and economic union, equipped with the competences and the institutions it needs in order to be able to tackle effectively and through democratic procedures the serious and growing problems shared by our peoples.

To understand the significance of this undertaking, we need, I think, to answer three questions: 1) Why has the European Parliament taken on this constituent task? 2) What is the substance of the proposal that the Parliament is about to advance? 3) What will the Parliament have to do in order to ensure that its proposal is adopted by the member states and brought into effect? Let us begin with the first question.

### *The Reason for the Reform.*

When the directly elected European Parliament set to work four years ago, the Community and its collateral structures had been in a state of deep crisis for some time. Yet, initially, the Parliament was not driven by any great urge for reform; indeed, there were few revolutionaries and doctrinarians in its ranks. There is no doubt that most of its members were proudly conscious of the fact that they had been invested with the highest political legitimisation imaginable in our democracies (election by popular vote), and that they thus wielded considerable political authority. But

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\* This is a translation of the "Jean Monnet Lecture" given by Altiero Spinelli on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1983. These are lectures organised annually by the European University Institute of Florence.

on European questions they were, with the odd rare exception, moderates: all of them, from the far right to the far left.

Despite being aware of the crisis enveloping the Community, they set about carrying out their mandate with caution, sticking closely to the competences assigned them by the Treaties and hoping, in this way, to help to re-start the process of building Europe.

The European Parliament is, essentially, an observatory before which all the problems relating to the establishment of European responsibilities are brought and discussed. This role exposed its members to a series of different and unexpected experiences.

*The first experience.* The European Parliament was equipped with limited budgetary powers and the first time it was called upon to ratify the EC budget it proposed various changes that, while leaving the structure of the budget largely intact, revealed the Parliament's determination to put a stop to budgets that were little more than records of the costs of decisions already taken, and to use the budget, instead, as a serious indicator of policies needing to be introduced or developed.

Since the Council of Ministers stubbornly refused to embrace this thinking, the Parliament, in December 1979, resoundingly rejected the proposed EC budget, which it had the faculty to do.

This seemed, at first, a great victory, a breathing of new life into the Community. But it was not long before the Parliament was forced to acknowledge that rejecting the budget was, as a weapon, a "blunt sword," since the Commission, in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Treaties, could go on using the system of provisional twelfths indefinitely. All it needed was for the Commission and the Council, between them, to let six months elapse before the presentation of a new budget, and there would be, by mid-year, very little planning for the current budgetary year left to do. This meant accepting a budget that was practically the same as the previous one.

Every year brought some new clash over the EC budget, and every year it could be seen that the Council had pretty much the final say on it, not to mention a very dismissive attitude towards it. It was also clear that the Commission was strangely in thrall to the Council.

*The second experience.* In accordance with the provisions laid down in the Treaties, the Parliament regularly and conscientiously expressed its opinions on the proposed rulings and directives that the Commission put before the Council. And it saw that while the Commission, in its unquestionable freedom, would sometimes take into consideration suggestions made by the Parliament and include them in the proposals that went

before the Council, the Council, in turn, would always ignore, entirely and disdainfully, the Parliament's proposals, and base its decisions solely on agreements reached or not reached in intergovernmental negotiations between member states.

*The third experience.* Wanting to urge the Commission to be enterprising, and the Council to make laws from a broad perspective and taking into account the current situation and problems, the Parliament took it upon itself to tackle a series of major areas of Community policy. It has thus proposed various initiatives regarding, for example, the new resources needed by the Community, the creation of monetary union, agricultural policy reform, the setting up of a transport policy, and a new research policy. The Committee on Institutional Affairs has gathered together, in a single publication, all the proposals on common policies needing to be introduced, developed or modified (these include both proposals already adopted by the Parliament by large majorities, and others that will have been by the end of its mandate).

The Parliament has thus shown not only that it is keenly aware of what needs to be done in the interests of the peoples of the Community, but also that it is possible to gather considerable political consensus around these proposals, both on the left and on the right.

But the Parliament has been forced to realise that the Commission remains almost entirely deaf to these requests and will consider them — I cannot go so far as to say approve them — only as far as the Council allows it to. The Council, with its hints and its enigmatic phrases, is the true initiator of Community policies, and it disregards entirely the proposals advanced by the Parliament.

*The fourth experience.* Feeling that Europe has political, economic and moral responsibilities that extend far beyond the limited economic competences of the Community and the areas dealt with in the ambit of European Political Cooperation, the Parliament has taken to expressing its opinions and issuing invitations in relation to international political problems of security, human rights, the keeping and restoration of peace, and so on, and it has to be said that the Parliament, in its adoption of these stances, may be criticised for a frequent tendency to display emotional responses. Furthermore, while, on the one hand, these debates have allowed it to draw attention to the need for a common foreign and security policy, on the other, the Parliament has had to realise that nothing can come of its discussion of all these issues, because the natural and necessary interlocutor is lacking. In other words, there is no executive responsible for common foreign policy, which, through its concrete

action, establishes definite points of reference for parliamentary debates.

*The fifth experience.* Finally, seeing that the institutions work badly, and hoping that it might prove possible to improve substantially their *modus operandi*, through adaptations and adjustments made within the framework of the existing Treaties, the Parliament has put before the Council and the Commission a whole series of proposals along these very lines. And it has found that, with the exception of a few fine words, no real response to its requests has been forthcoming, either from the Council or from the Commission, because the Commission scarcely dares claim back powers that have been usurped by the Council, and the Council is too busy struggling with its own incapacity to overcome the problem of similar calls for institutional adjustment originating from within — I may cite, for example, the report of the ‘Three Wise Men’ and the Genscher-Colombo Plan — to be able to pay any attention to those coming from the Parliament.

*The sixth experience.* Every six months, the Council’s incoming president sets out, before the Parliament, all that the Council proposes to do. These meetings should really be the most important occasions for the Parliament; after all, the whole European structure is founded on the principle that whereas, on the one hand, all common endeavours can be delegated to the Commission, the Parliament controls the work of the Commission, and the Court of Justice guarantees the upholding of the law within the Community, on the other, the power to decide which rulings and directives are introduced and how they are applied, which policies are adopted and which are not, and which decisions and reforms are proposed and which are not, is practically all in the hands of the Council of Ministers.

So, every six months, the Parliament listens dispiritedly as the outgoing president of the Council relates how little the Council has actually managed to achieve. And in addition to him, the president of the European Council regularly comes along to remind the Parliament just how serious Europe’s foreign policy problems are, and just how vague, full of gaps, and lacking in any guarantee of continuity the meagre advances obtained through political cooperation.

If the political and economic questions, internal and international, that face the Community and demand to be resolved through common actions were few in number, of secondary importance, and even on the decline, then today’s inefficient system could be tolerated, or indeed simplified. The Parliament, with its cumbersome periodic elections and its demands to be involved in decision making, could be suppressed. The

Commission, with its independent administration, could be reduced to a streamlined secretariat serving the Council. The few common actions needed would be undertaken only by those wishing to undertake them, and could be entrusted to specialist agencies controlled by intergovernmental committees. In short, there would be a return to the “good old days” of cooperation — casual, desultory cooperation, of limited duration. It is no secret that there are some who do, indeed, envisage such a future for the Community, and who believe that these ideas are original and adequate for the current situation. Once there was talk of Europe *à la carte*, then of variable geometry Europe, and now, the Europe of agencies...

But the fact is that, year in, year out, the European Parliament, practically on a daily basis, finds itself addressed by the Commission, by the Council, and even sometimes by statesmen from third party nations, on the subject of the numerous, growing, and severe economic and political problems that would be better tackled collectively by the Europeans, or indeed that the Europeans can only tackle collectively. On this occasion, I will spare you, ladies and gentlemen, the full list of these problems, since those who speak out on the subject of Europe are perfectly capable of drawing it up for themselves, and indeed do so. The Parliament’s own awareness of these problems is demonstrated by the relative ease with which, in its work, the Institutional Commission has managed to identify and define the great issues facing the future Union.

The fact that it seems impossible to impart continuity to each of these, and to deal with them with the due sense of perspective and solidarity, must be blamed essentially on the decision-making method used within the Community.

In any organised political body, decisions are worked out on two fronts, which ultimately converge: there is the strictly political maturation of the decision, and there is also its bureaucratic maturation. The political groundwork that must be done ahead of decisions of a European dimension should involve debates, electoral campaigns and compromises, all serving to reveal the degree of consensus, among the citizens, on which these decisions need to rest. This is why we have elections and a European Parliament. And, over a number of years now, the Parliament has shown that it is capable of working out genuinely European stances. But none of this counts in the actual taking of the decisions, which is done by a number of ministers (first six, then nine, then ten, and soon twelve) whose political roots lie in the terrain of national rather than European political life.

On a bureaucratic level, the groundwork for decisions pertaining to Europe should be carried out by European administrative offices that can guarantee their continuity with the existing Community patrimony. This is, indeed, the reason why the Commission holds the right of initiative in the Community lawmaking process. But none of this counts in the actual formulation of the decision, which the Council of Ministers does on the basis of six, nine, ten, and before long twelve dossiers, drawn up by as many national offices, each of which (being bound to prepare, for its ministry, a dossier that highlights and imposes, above all, the national interest) has reduced the proposal of the Commission to little more than a working document.

In other words, there is the realisation, in the Community, that common problems exist; there is the sense that these problems need to be met with common responses; and there is the capacity to plan these responses in a European political sphere and in a European administrative sphere; but the Community method makes it very difficult and often impossible to develop the European concept and the gathering of European consensus around this concept, while it encourages, indeed magnifies, the development of national interests, and favours the gathering of consensus around these.

The entrusting of EC decisions to such a procedure has made it quite impossible to guarantee the Community's orderly development, because the decisions taken cannot be anything other than the algebraic sum of the processes and decisions, unfolding at national level, that preceded them, and between which there is no preordained accord; which, in fact, are highly likely to present divergences, due to different customs, political balances and so on.

Intergovernmental decisions are thus very often impossible, and on the rare occasions when they are reached, they are reached late, and are inadequate, disconnected from one another, and lacking in any guarantee of continuity.

It must be added that the Council is not only organically ill-equipped to pursue the policy of the progressive building of European unity. It is also an extremely arrogant body, since, contrary to all the evidence, it considers itself to be capable of tackling and carrying forward absolutely any common policy that Europe might need. When the problems multiplied, it, too, multiplied into a series of specialist councils. When, later, it proved necessary to confer unity on this increasingly fragmented and disparate series of councils, it spawned so-called summits, and subsequently the European Council of Heads of State and Government.

Yet, despite the fact that the general inefficiency was still every bit as bad at the time ministers Genscher and Colombo sensed the growing discontent rife in the European edifice, and also saw the need for Europe to tackle, as one, other issues, such as security, all they were able to suggest was: to extend, to new areas, the method of intergovernmental cooperation, already seen to be ineffective; to reduce further the autonomy of the Commission; and to keep the Parliament devoid of any real powers.

The glaring contradiction between, on the one hand, the need for more Europe, and on the other, the incapacity of the Europe of the Council of Ministers to respond to this need, clearly could not be overcome. It was the realisation of this bitter truth that prompted the European Parliament, despite being made up of moderates, to adopt the proposal first advanced by the nine MEPs (from different political parties and from different nations) who, meeting in July 1980, had founded the now famous Crocodile Club. In this way, the European Parliament, on behalf of the citizens that had elected it, took on the task of drawing up and proposing a global reform of the Community and of its other collateral structures.

#### *What Does the Reform Contain?*

Having given the Committee on Institutional Affairs (in July 1982) a few general pointers on the direction in which it should move, the Parliament is now getting ready to debate, point by point, a long resolution, prepared by the said Committee, which sets out in detail what the future Treaty will contain.

After the Parliament has approved this resolution in September, the Committee will transform it into a clear draft Treaty establishing the European Union. The Parliament will then be required to examine and, in the first months of 1984, to approve this draft in its final version, thereby crowning its mandate, which ends in June 1984, with this clear proposal for institutional reform.

Let us look briefly at what the Committee on Institutional Affairs has put into this draft Treaty, albeit not yet in its final version.

The first problem the Committee faced was that of how to preserve the existing Community patrimony — known as the *acquis communautaire* — while also redefining competent institutions and decision-making procedures.

The option of drawing up a treaty containing a series of amendments to the existing Treaties had to be discarded. First of all, this would have



resulted in a document incomprehensible to most people because of its continual references to other texts. Furthermore, to amend the existing Treaties, a specific procedure has to be followed, as laid down in the Treaties themselves: the Commission must first put forward an initiative — it has always obstinately refused to do this — which assigns the Parliament a subordinate consultative role, attributes the power to make proposals and amendments to the Council (which has repeatedly shown, as currently in its treatment of the Genscher-Colombo plan, that it is unable to fulfil this task), and leaves it up to the member states to organise a diplomatic conference among themselves, and to have their own diplomatic services draw up the texts of any amendments.

It was the sheer impracticality of the amendments route that induced the Committee to draft a Treaty formally establishing the Union from scratch, an approach that allowed it to decide coherently the Union's structure and competences, as well as the stages in and manner of its creation.

In this way, the Committee not only enabled itself to present a comprehensible text, but also extracted itself from the obligation to adhere to the absurd decision-making procedure in place for amending the Community Treaties.

The new political body will be given the name Union, because this is the expression that has been used, ever since 1952, to indicate the ultimate objective of the European constitution.

In order to preserve the *acquis communautaire*, the Treaty will establish that the institutions, aims and competences of the Union will replace, entirely, the institutions, aims and competences of the Communities, of political cooperation, and of the EMS, while all the legislation contained in the EC Treaties, as well as all the rulings, directives and decisions issued by the Communities, or in the ambit of political cooperation and the EMS, will remain in force until they are amended by the Union through application of its own procedures.

Having, in this way, guaranteed that the transition from the old Communities to the new European Union will be characterised by legal and political continuity, our resolution brings to an end the fragmentation due to the multiple presence of Communities, cooperation, and monetary system; it brings the entire European edifice under the banner of the Union, and establishes that all acts of unification will, from now on, be accomplished within its ambit, and in accordance with the forms and procedures set out in the Treaty establishing the Union.

One of the most important aspects of the draft Treaty is that while, on

the one hand, it clearly outlines the Union's institutions and their competences, on the other, it makes provision for different degrees of integration.

It recognises the sphere of intergovernmental cooperation, a sphere of necessarily basic and uncertain integration. Above this sphere lies a field of actions destined to become common actions, that is to say, actions that will eventually be decided and carried out by the Union's institutions but that, for the time being, are still managed by the member states, and will continue to be until the Union takes their place. Finally, there is a third area in which only the Union, through its decisions, can act.

The transfer of competences from each of these areas to the next is governed by the principle of subsidiarity. In other words, it occurs only when tasks are more effectively carried out by the member states acting in concert, as opposed to separately, or when they can only be carried out in concert. Procedures and special guarantees, which I will not dwell on here, are in place to guarantee the transfer from one level of unity to the next, higher level.

This approach has made it possible to avoid the mistake of attempting to define in advance, rigidly and definitively, what falls within the province of Europe as a whole and what falls within that of the single nations. In the current situation, any attempt to make this distinction would very likely result in excessive diffidence in the face of each definition, and in a prevalence of restrictive interpretations and incorrect allocations.

Moreover, it has introduced procedures more streamlined than Treaty revisions in order to advance the process of putting together common policies and laws.

The resolution of the Institutional Affairs Committee proposes that the institutions of the Union should be, as far as possible, the same ones already present in the Communities, but with some important changes.

Accordingly, the European Council becomes an institution of the European Union, but is clearly distinct from the Council of the European Union. The European Council is made up of the heads of state and government, and it is the assembly where cooperation actually takes place.

The European Council can decide to transform some forms of cooperation into common actions, entrusting the Union's legislative and executive bodies with their management. In other words, it has been calculated that force of circumstance will very often lead the heads of government to see the need for common actions, but when they do see this

need they will be required not to entrust their own ministers and national functionaries with realising their vision (because were they to do this, everything would quickly be seep back into the old national frameworks), but rather to assign the task to the appropriate Union bodies.

The European Council, in choosing the president of the Commission and inviting him to form the Commission, also fulfils a role similar to that of the heads of state.

The Council of the European Union, not to be confused with the European Council, is made up of government representatives, who, depending on the Treaty in question, will make decisions by more or less qualified majority voting, but never by unanimity. The Council of the Union and the Parliament will share legislative powers and, together, will be responsible for approving the budget and giving the Commission its mandate. The Parliament will cease to be a purely consultative body and will become a branch of the legislative and budgetary authorities.

The Commission will become a true centre of government with a political physiognomy and political responsibilities. It is formed by a president, nominated by the European Council.

The Commission becomes operational only after it has presented its programme to the Parliament and to the Council and received its vote of investiture.

The Commission's term of office is aligned with that of the European Parliament, but the Parliament has the faculty to dismiss the Commission on the basis of a motion of censure passed by a large majority. Retaining the current form of censure, the idea of the Institutional Affairs Committee is to combine the custom of the vote of no-confidence, which exists in all our countries, with the idea of a directorial government, like that which exists in Switzerland. No-confidence votes are not admissible at the drop of a hat, but only in the event of major conflicts between the Parliament and the Commission.

The Commission becomes the Union's sole executive body. In particular, it acquires the power to issue application regulations, thereby putting an end not only to its current obligation to obtain, in relation to practically all such regulations, opinions from the Parliament and decisions from the Council, but also to the practice, usurped by the Council, of — through its advisory committees — taking the ruling away from the executive, and appropriating it.

The Court of Justice sees its powers strengthened on the basis of predominance of Union law over national law. The areas in which the Union extends its competences — potential, concurrent or exclusive —

and acts through its own institutions are those of economic policy, social policy, foreign policy and security. But in addition to all these areas, there is the undertaking, lacking in the present Communities, to respect, and to oblige all the member states to respect, civil and political as well as social and economic rights.

The financial autonomy of the Union is guaranteed, as is — thanks to periodic consultations and the development of pluriannual financial programmes — a permanent relationship between the needs of the European and the national taxation systems.

This, broadly, is how the proposal of the Committee on Institutional Affairs looks. The design proposed by the Committee undoubtedly constitutes a qualitative leap forwards in terms of the structure of the institutions, because it recognises the importance of the representations of the single member states, and indeed leaves them complete sovereignty in the whole area of cooperation, whereas in that of common actions it takes away their monopoly on legislative power, and denies them the instrument of the unanimous vote.

The plan improves the idea of competences, too, in that it leaves their boundaries very loosely defined, recognising that it is impossible to establish in the abstract, and in advance, exactly how far they should be extended, but at the same time it demands strong consensus, both within the Parliament and within the Council, before any real advance can be sought.

The project, which is realistic, rests on the idea that the effective building of a European economy, a European society, and a European foreign and security policy must necessarily be gradual. It therefore makes provision for transitional phases, steps, and trials of consensus. But in so doing, it makes sure that there is no room for the current perversion of the formation of political will, by which I mean that process that suffocates European but heightens national political will. In this project, the two are at least placed on an equal footing, which means that, in each situation, one will have to prevail over the other, thereby doing away with today's automatic assumption that national political will is the stronger.

The draft Treaty developed by the Institutional Affairs Committee probably presents numerous defects, but, in the balance it strikes between courage and caution, it clearly surpasses all those that have preceded it. If the European Parliament adopts it, as I hope it will, it may justifiably be proud of the work it has done.

And now I come to the third and final question.

### *What Is to Be Done With the Draft Treaty?*

The greatest mistake the Parliament could make would be that of believing that its political battle ends with the approval of the draft Treaty, thereby allowing the text to be merely referred to in a resolution ending with the sacramental phrase that closes all resolutions: "The Parliament instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments of the member states."

Were this to happen, one may be quite sure that the Commission would just shrug its shoulders; the Council would probably remark that the text was not admissible, not being in conformity with art.236, and, in the best possible scenario, would entrust it to one of its committees, after which it would end up exactly as the project of the Ad Hoc Assembly, the Tindemans Report, and the Genscher-Colombo Plan all did; the text would probably never actually reach the single governments, despite their being cited as its intended recipients, because in a sense it would, on reaching the single members of the Council, be regarded as already having arrived at its destination, and go no further.

The Parliament must realise that its battle for the European Union, far from ending, will, in reality, begin with its definitive approval of the draft Treaty, and that it will have to have its own political strategy in place, which we might summarise as follows.

The text that the European Parliament will have approved is, in content, a genuine constitution, because it defines the institutions, competences, and aims of a political body that is distinct from its member states, even though it is still linked to them in the ways indicated in the text.

From a formal point of view, the text is, instead, a treaty, because it can come into force, and produce the effects for which it makes provision, only if it is ratified by the states that are destined to become its members.

This dual legal character of the Parliament's design demands that, as a constitution, it be processed and voted by the assembly that legitimately represents all the citizens who are called upon to be part of the Union. As a rule, it is parliamentary assemblies that vote on constitutions, because it is in parliamentary assemblies that the different political families to which the citizens belong freely exchange their views, and freely find the convergences around which the greatest possible degrees of consensus can be gathered. There is no reason why the Constitution of the European Union should not come into being in the same way, through this kind of coming together, this kind of quest to find points of convergence and

consensus, particularly since the Union is the product of the natural maturation and metamorphosis of the Community, that is to say, of a political body already distinct from the states, in existence for over thirty years, and equipped with its own, directly elected parliament.

The drawing up and voting of this Constitution is the European Parliament's exclusive political right — not written, but valid because it is based on a solid democratic tradition — and the Parliament must claim this right, doggedly resisting all attempts to transfer this work to experts, diplomats, ministers, or anyone else. Were the European Parliament to give way on this point, were it to admit that its work has been preparatory, destined to be manipulated by others, then it would become little more than a talking shop and spontaneously relinquish its role as representative of the citizens of the Community. In so doing, it would deny the very purpose for which the elections took place. Many voices will be raised in protest against the European Parliament's claim — we can be quite certain of this — but the Parliament must know that it cannot abandon this position without the whole front line of its battle for the European Union collapsing.

As a treaty, the European Parliament's proposal can come into effect only if it is ratified by the states called upon to be members of the Union, each according to their own constitutional procedures.

No constitution, written or unwritten, in any of our countries lays down the procedures for drawing up treaties. This means that there is no legal obstacle preventing the draft Treaty from being drawn up by a parliamentary assembly (rather than the usual intergovernmental diplomatic conference) that adequately represents the citizens of the state it will be called upon to ratify.

Instead, in one way or another, the constitutions of all the EU states decree that only a country's government (or alternatively, in France, a referendum) has the authority to request its parliament to ratify the treaties. Having approved the draft Treaty establishing the European Union, the European Parliament must thus dispatch, to all the governments of the EC member states, delegations who will ask the governments to present it to their parliaments (or to referendum) for ratification.

It cannot be expected that the governments will rush to request this ratification. Some will be more and others less well disposed to do so, but they will all stall for time because it is entirely natural that they should want to weigh up the political impact of the European Parliament's request before deciding what to do about it. It is thus of primary importance that among the draft's final provisions there is one that

decrees that the draft Treaty establishing the European Union should come into force, and the European Union be founded, when a critical mass of support is reached, for example a group of states whose populations together account for two-thirds of the entire population of the Community. This would prevent a single government from being able to stop the creation of the Union, simply by deciding not to respond to the European Parliament's request.

There is thus set to be a hesitant and uncertain period during which the European Parliament, together with its members and the political groups who voted in favour of the proposal, will, with dedication, have to work to overcome the indecision, doubts and opposition present in each country.

The second European elections in June next year, coming just a few months after the approval of the draft Treaty, will provide the first and fundamental opportunity to carry out this action. For a period of around two months, candidates and parties in all the EC countries will, simultaneously, be urging the citizens to consider the fundamental problems of the Community, and to elect MEPs who will go to Strasbourg and act with a view to solving them.

In this scenario, the MEPs and parliamentary groups that voted in favour of the draft Treaty will be particularly determined to convince their parties, who will be conducting the electoral campaign, that the question of Community reform is destined to be the central problem on which the electorate will be called upon to decide — the question that will invest the elections with European-wide political significance. They will then have to win popular support, to ensure that there is, in the new European Parliament, a secure majority determined to see the previous Parliament's proposal accepted. Popular support will be needed, too, to ensure that the parties present first in the European campaign and then in the European Parliament — but also present in the national parliaments and governments — demand, at government level, when these parties are in government and otherwise through the tabling of parliamentary motions, that the governments bring before their parliaments (or put to referendum) for ratification the draft Treaty establishing the European Union presented to them by the European Parliament.

The current European Parliament must approve the draft Treaty and transmit it to the single governments before the forthcoming European elections. This is hugely important, because this is the only way in which this crucial question, clear and equally applicable to everyone, can next year be posed at European and at national level — this question to which

citizens, parties, parliamentarians and governments will be required to respond with a yes, or a no.

If the current European Parliament ends its mandate without carrying out this action, the next electoral campaign will merely be a cacophony of slogans, insubstantial and demanding no commitment, that will differ from country to country, party to party, and candidate to candidate, and we will have lost the opportunity for a great popular mobilisation, homogeneous and conscious of its aim.

It is more than likely that the electoral campaign will not be sufficient to make resistances buckle, and that the battle to obtain the ratifications will have to continue after the elections. But, in the wake of the campaign, many resistances will very probably have started to waver, and there will also have been a strengthening of feeling in favour of ratification; furthermore, the Parliament that emerges from the '84 elections will be a strong political centre that will feel committed to continuing this action.

No one, today, can say how long the battle for ratifications will last, or what its outcome will be. But what is certain is that if the Parliament and its new members and the Europeanist groups prove able to act within the time frame and in pursuit of the objectives just now indicated, then the battle will take place, and the chances of wearing down resistances, of convincing the hesitant, and of winning it will be great.

Do not come to us and tell us that there is no government, today, that would accept our proposal. My answer to this would be that our governments are all convinced of the need to move Europe forward, but are incapable of putting together a few ideas in order to get it effectively on its way, because they draw all their ideas from the intellectual arsenal of their diplomatic services, that is to say, from a source that proposes only futile intergovernmental action.

Since the governments' impotence in European matters gives them a very guilty conscience, we need to exploit this, showing that the Parliament's proposal is the answer, the only answer, to the need — a need which they feel as well — for greater European unity.

Do not come to us and say that the parties, today, are not aware of European problems and do not concern themselves with them. Why ever should they, since they never run into them directly? But in the next elections they will run into them, and because of this we will be able to urge them to start opening their eyes and ears.

Do not come to us and say, finally, that all this is too ambitious, that we need to keep our feet on the ground and advance by small steps.

You can all see the disastrous point to which we have been led by feet-

on-the-ground and small-steps policies, mistakenly defined the policies of pragmatism, but which are, in truth, policies based on a lack of ideas and vision, or, to be more accurate, based on intellectual enslavement to old ideas that are now entirely inadequate. In the next electoral campaign we must make everyone see that Europe should count for a very great deal in the world, yet counts for nothing; that it should be doing a lot for its citizens, but is capable of doing very little at all; that for these reasons it is necessary to found, and to found quickly, a true European Union.

I have finished, ladies and gentlemen, but if you will allow me, I would like to end with a brief personal reflection.

It is highly probable that my advanced years will not allow me to follow this action for very much longer. But when I think that the first elected European parliament would today be a quite different thing from what it actually is, had it not taken on the constituent role of which I have spoken, and when I think that my now long life as a champion of Europe has culminated in this action, then I cannot help murmuring to myself, with a measure of pride, the words of Saint Paul, "Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi."

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