

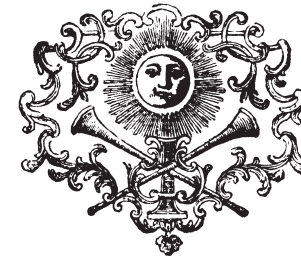
# THE FEDERALIST

a political review

THE FEDERALIST, YEAR LII, 2010

*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



---

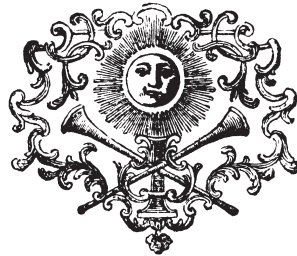
YEAR LII, 2010

# THE FEDERALIST

a political review

*Editor:* Giulia Rossolillo

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



*The Federalist* is published under the auspices of the Fondazione Europea Luciano Bolis and the Fondazione Mario e Valeria Albertini by Edif, via Villa Glori 8, 27100 Pavia, Italy. Single annual issue. Subscription rates: Europe 35 €; other countries (by air mail) 50 €. All payments should be made by cheque directly to Edif.  
[www.thefederalist.eu](http://www.thefederalist.eu)

## CONTENTS

<i>Tunisia, Egypt and Europe</i>	p.	3
<i>The Future of European Union</i>	»	6
SERGIO PISTONE, <i>Francesco Rossolillo's Contribution to Federalist Culture</i>	»	15
CLAUDIO FILIPPI, <i>The Energy Question and Europe</i>	»	34
LUISA TRUMELLINI, <i>Federalism and Human Emancipation</i>	»	52
NOTES		
<i>The Future of the European Social Model in the Era of Globalisation</i> (Anna Costa)	»	72
THIRTY YEARS AGO		
MARIO ALBERTINI, <i>Uniting Europe to Unite the World</i>	»	85

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ANNA COSTA, Member of the Central Committee of the Movimento Federalista Europeo.

CLAUDIO FILIPPI, Member of the Central Committee of the Movimento Federalista Europeo.

SERGIO PISTONE, Member of the Executive Bureau of European Union of Federalists, Professor in History of European Integration, University of Turin.

LUISA TRUMELLINI, Member of the Central Committee of the Movimento Federalista Europeo and of the Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists.

# Tunisia, Egypt and Europe

The recent revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, whose outcomes are hard to predict, mark a break with the old political balances that will inevitably impact directly on Europe. As this issue of *The Federalist* goes to press, the implications of the popular uprising in Egypt are still uncertain, while in Tunisia the transition towards a new democratic system promises to be fraught with difficulty. What is clear, however, is that the Arab world is entering a new phase and turning its back on the past: quite unexpectedly, this area's decadent and corrupt regimes (supported up until now by the West, partly for economic reasons, but above all because they were deemed important allies against the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism and valid protectors of the delicate Middle Eastern balances), incapable of responding to the problems of their countries, have begun to collapse. A handful of days is all it took for a seemingly stable system (albeit one with problems) to start crumbling. As is often the case with implosions, revolts and other transformations signalling epochal transitions, no one saw this unrest coming, and no one now seems prepared to indicate concrete ways forward, capable of opening up real prospects for democratic progress and civil advancement in this region.

The recent events in these two Arab states, events that are being echoed in uprisings elsewhere in the region, from the Yemen to Algeria, have prompted many to analyse the situation in these countries; these analyses have highlighted the political corruption and authoritarianism of the region's governments and their failed economic development plans, which, not getting off the ground, have not succeeded in generating national added value, or jobs, leaving unemployment extremely high, particularly among the young. In short, these are countries whose governments have not kept their promises and which have proved unable to overcome their dependence on income from oil, from tourism, and even from their own nationals abroad (who send money home). Finally, globalisation has left them competing, in traditional sectors, with the strong developing countries, and the weight of this competition has crushed their weak and backward manufacturing sectors. This whole

situation, whose political and social consequences are obvious, was rendered explosive by the crisis in the West, which has made it more difficult for these populations to emigrate, and by the global shortages of raw materials in the food sector, which have caused the prices of essential foodstuffs to rocket.

This whole scenario is the product of an accumulation of delays and failures, and it provides an illustration of how a political system can degenerate; more significant than this, however, is the fact that it signals the start of an epoch change in international balances. As highlighted by Fareed Zakaria in a recent interview published in the *Corriere della Sera* (30 January), the recent events in North Africa are an effect of the new “post-American” era: basically, a phenomenon that, a few short years ago, was still just a hypothesis of political science is now rapidly becoming an overwhelmingly dramatic reality. It is, indeed, clear that the United States can no longer play a determining role in Arab North Africa (however much it goes on trying to exert its influence) and this fact is having profound repercussions on political balances. The changes taking place are thus the result of the transition towards a new global order, which, however, remains to be clearly delineated. Indeed, with nothing on the horizon as an alternative to the *pax Americana*, there is a very real and serious risk, above all for the populations of this part of the world, that the struggle for democracy and progress will not find effective avenues. This would obviously lead to growing tensions and leave the way clear for the emergence of new oppressive regimes.

That this is, as things stand, a possible scenario is shown by the instability of the whole of the Middle East, which has spread even as far as Pakistan. Thus, the future of North Africa is now at stake, given that no one seems able to support a true process of political and economic growth in this part of the world. While the USA, in the wake of its failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, lacks the instruments to do any better in this region, it seems premature to think of China in the role of political power, shouldering responsibility for managing the balances in such a vast and troubled area (and China may not even be seeking such a role). That leaves Europe, but it is clearly impossible to imagine today’s profoundly divided EU, which tries to speak through a diplomatic service but has no foreign policy worthy of the name, effectively tackling this problem.

Europe, what is more, has a long history of failures as regards its policies in Africa. At the birth of the European Community, the process of European unification was meant to serve as a guide, a model, and a stable point of reference for the whole of Africa, both continental Africa

and Arab North Africa. However, because the Europeans have failed to unite politically, they have failed in their mission to provide this innovative institutional model; moreover, their division has meant that far from providing a stable point of reference for the African continent, they have actually used Africa for the pursuit of their own small national ambitions, acting in isolation and even in opposition to one another. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the bilateral agreements of association, commercial treaties and various other forms of cooperation stipulated from the 1970s on with some African countries have, like the so-called “Barcelona Process” of 1995, which was meant to be the start of a new era of Euro-African relations and to conclude with Sarkozy’s much trumpeted Euromediterranean Union, been a flop. The Lomé agreements emerge as the only (partial) exception to this. Europe, rather than seeking solutions, has merely looked on as Africa’s problems have deepened, and today it is still standing by and watching as a new phase begins in the Arab African countries, a phase whose evolution and outcomes will be crucially important for our continent.

It is surely clear to see that, with the American era drawing to a close and the USA’s scope for intervention and interests changing, voids are forming around our continent — voids that it is up to us, with vision and intelligence, to fill, in order to ensure the presence, around us, of stable democratic countries with which we might cooperate. To do this, however, the Europeans need to abandon their narrow national interests and create a truly European vision, born of dynamic, democratic policies designed to culminate, tangibly, in the actions of a European supranational government. In other words, they need to prove capable of making the leap from European Union to European federal state, beginning with a core group of countries ready to take the initiative in this sense. Because the price to be paid for continuing to see this objective as something that can continually be postponed to some vague future time (even though one may pay lip service to it) is countless future tragedies, both for we Europeans and for our neighbours.

*The Federalist*

# The Future of the European Union

Europe is currently experiencing three major crises. As explained by Alain Touraine in an article published a few months ago in *La Repubblica* (29 September, 2010), today's Europe, "left without a future", finds itself contemporaneously assailed by an unprecedented economic and financial crisis, by a dramatic political crisis (stemming from the European states' incapacity to meet the challenges before them, i.e. to stimulate growth and reduce unemployment — both essential for getting their public finances in order), and by a profound cultural crisis, born of the incapacity to formulate a long-term plan for the future development of European culture and civilisation.

On all three fronts, our countries are urgently called upon to provide some answers. In short, Europe now needs to do much more than make minor adjustments to the existing Community framework. It needs to lay new foundations for European unification, and this can be done only through a strong act of political will.

\*\*\*

Last spring saw Greece, the weakest link in the Eurozone chain, rocked by a financial crisis so severe that it threw into question the very survival of the monetary union and with it, that of the European Union itself. This crisis seems to have brought Europe, sharply, face to face with its own fragility. At the same time, by bringing out the contradictions that surrounded the birth of the single currency, it also seems to have forced the states, particularly those in the Eurozone, to appreciate anew the crucial need to think in terms of a common European destiny. This brutal exposure of the limits of the present European edifice has thus opened up a new phase in the process of unification, on whose outcome hangs the future of our whole continent.

The euro was the product of economic integration and the single market project, but also of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the



bipolar world order. The main objective behind its creation was political: it was considered necessary to strengthen the bonds between the Europeans in order to render their unity somehow “irreversible”, but also in order to obtain the binding commitment of Germany, newly reunified, to the European project. The thinking behind this “wager” — such may be defined this plan to create a currency without, at the same time, also creating a state — was that Europe’s political unification, however gradual, would, in any case, be unchallenged, and that the sense of solidarity between the European partners would remain constant over time. The Europeans deluded themselves that the birth of monetary union would quickly be followed by that of economic union, and by the implementation of a European growth and development plan. Although it was clear that the framework of the new European Union was not adequate to govern the single currency (this was already foreseen by the Maastricht Treaty, which indicated the need for a reform in this sense), it was hoped that the integration process would lead to gradual transfers of sovereignty in the political field too. From the economic perspective, it was believed that the criteria established by the Treaty to ensure homogeneity of the Eurozone (those relating to the national budget deficit, the public debt and inflation) would be sufficient to set all the members on the road to financial recovery and, providing there were no asymmetric shocks, guarantee harmonious trends across the different economies.

Instead (if we leave aside the euro’s successes as an international currency), the decade that has just ended saw the emergence and consolidation of trends, both economic and political, very different from the one that the introduction of the single currency had been hoped to trigger: the contradiction inherent in having a currency without a state has not become any less marked over time, and the steps that were meant to be advances towards stronger political unity have not been taken; on the contrary, the absence of adequate European institutions has actually triggered a gradual weakening of cohesion within Europe.

On the economic side, growth in Europe has been generally slow, leading even Germany, together with France, to fail to respect the very parameters that it had, itself, pressed for; in the countries that did manage to record stronger growth, this result was based on transitory and contingent strategies, which only led to an even more dramatic collapse once the global crisis exploded. The gap between the more solid economies, those of France and Germany in particular, and the shakier ones has widened dangerously, as it has become clear that the structural weak-

nesses were not restricted to budget discipline, but extended to productivity and the capacity to compete on the international markets. On the political side, the fact that the states were allowed to retain their ultimate sovereignty (albeit a sovereignty largely emptied of its true prerogatives), and thus their political power and capacity, has meant that the areas central to the national interest and those linked directly to the formation of political consensus (primarily taxation and foreign policy) have remained firmly in the hands of the member states. This framework has precluded the further advances needed to render the existence of the single currency politically rational and credible; in short, the states have shied away from investing their own resources in projects and programmes whose positive effects might strengthen, economically, commercially and industrially, the other members. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, in the strategic sectors (e.g. research and innovation, the cutting-edge branches of industry and areas of vital national interest, like the energy and military sectors), each country has always sought to defend its own competitiveness at the expense of that of the other EU countries, even when collaborating with them on joint projects.

As we endeavour to weigh up what these years of the single European currency have brought, we cannot help but note the European economy's structural difficulties competing on the world stage, the increasing social polarisation (due to the widening of the divide between rich and poor and the difficulties managing the problem of immigration), and also the emergence of a dangerous divergence, within the Union, between the objectives and interests pursued by different member states; from the political point of view, there has been a deepening of the division between the Europeans, to the point that the prospect of political unification is now being supplanted by a trend towards renationalisation, a trend that has even left some wondering whether there actually exists solidarity between the European nations.

The present crisis has laid bare the untenability of this situation, which the Europeans seemed to want to ignore: the markets were the first to grasp the fragility of this divided Europe and sought to put the governments' capacity to support one another to the test. The decisions taken last May to avert the risk of Greece defaulting on its debt (a situation that would have had immediate and extremely serious consequences for those member states holding large shares of Greece's debt and, above all, would have led to the disintegration of the monetary union) provided a clear sign that choosing not to save the euro, and with it the existing common framework, is simply not an option for the fragile European

countries: Europe's collapse would cost them all too dearly. Even Germany, which wavered until the last minute, blocking all the decisions reached by the Eurogroup, ultimately had to give in: in the space of a few hours, the Treaties, which made no provision for bail-out clauses, had been modified and, albeit amidst uncertainty and contradictions, a process to reform the Stability Pact had been launched, a move that will result in much tighter European constraints and checks on financial manoeuvres and on the states' budgets.

\*\*\*

The Greek crisis raised the problem of the need to save the euro precisely because it exposed the instability and contradictions of the single currency; this implies that the European Union, if it wants to find a new, sustainable balance, must break away from its past.

Until now, the response of the European governments and institutions has been to seek solutions that do not alter the current system. Indeed, behind the decision to tighten up the existing rules, and all the insistence that Europe's difficulties stem from excessive debt, lies a dogged intention to continue along the old road, in short, a widely-held view that Europe does not need to create a new "single" policy, only pursue a course characterised by budgetary rigor. After all, a true European economic policy would imply a real transfer of sovereignty by the states, and this is precisely what, at present, Europe's political leaders are not prepared to accept. In a speech given in September 2010, in Paris, during a debate organised by *Notre Europe*, the president of the European Council, Van Rompuy, who also heads the Task Force that, alongside the European Commission, is working out the new rules of European economic governance, explained extremely clearly the philosophy currently driving the Council (or rather the governments, although this actually applies to the Commission, too). According to him, the sole objective should be "Europeanisation of national politics", because it is not a question of overcoming the national sovereignties, but rather of improving their co-existence. As Van Rompuy explains, faced with the risk of disintegration of the EU and a resurgence of nationalism, the point is not to criticise, as excessive, the weight of national policies; this weight has always been present within the Union, so why should it be deemed negative and not, instead, a source of greater strength? Europe is "a fact of life", he says. "[W]ith its institutions it can force governments to cooperate"; it is a real entity that is founded on deep interdependence. The way in which Europe

has reacted to Greece's debt crisis has shown us "the invisible [...] forces that hold us together." Certainly, it has also provided "a fine example of what you might call the European tortoise: a slow, hesitant movement at first, which in the end surprised everyone—including the impatient stock markets!"; but of course, since "the European Union is not a state, decision-making procedures are complicated"; in the euro area alone, "we are dealing with 16 governments and 16 parliaments."

What lessons, in Van Rompuy's view, may be drawn from all this? First of all, that the Union must learn "to live with the dilemma of having a monetary union without a developed budgetary union. Since the euro was introduced the European institutions have been responsible for monetary policy, while the member states remain in charge of their budgetary policy and coordinate their economic policy. That creates tensions. Hence the sometimes tortuous decisions." But the question is: "Can the euro survive despite this innate tension?" Van Rompuy replies with "an unambiguous 'yes'", commenting: "Our capacity to react during the crisis clearly showed this."

As the continuation of this speech clearly shows, the crux of the matter is precisely the effort to ensure that the institutional balance on which the whole European edifice is built is never called into question, because to question it would inevitably raise the issue of the need to create a European federation equipped with sovereignty and its own resources. Anyone who believes that the current confrontation is between the intergovernmental method and the Community method is missing the point. As the words of Van Rompuy and also of Delors show, albeit from different theoretical standpoints, the two positions are actually almost identical. On the one hand, the President of the European Council (again during the speech delivered on the occasion of the debate organised by *Notre Europe*) explains that "when decisions are taken that concern the foundations of a currency and which also involve extraordinary amounts of money, it is quite normal that responsibility for those decisions should be taken by a head of government." After all, "[T]he European Council is the place where different sides can find common positions, i.e. European positions. We do this in close cooperation with the other institutions [...]; And the members of the European Council [...] must all in turn cooperate with national political players, their parliaments, etc. It is the combination of all these links that constitutes the strength of our Union." For his part, Delors, who laments the fact that the Community method is being destroyed and that Europe is somehow being led to ruin, when asked to say what, in his view, the European Commission's role

should now be — according to the Community vision it should embody the European executive power, but it has the structural defect of not being democratically legitimated —, replies: “It is not a question of asking the Commission to decide, the Commission is at the service of the governments: it should try and highlight the European interest, make proposals and oil the wheels. The better it plays its part, the better the Union works. [...] But the governments want to sideline it” (interview given to *Le Figaro* and published on 16 June, 2010).

The intergovernmental method and the Community method are therefore two sides of the same coin; they are both products and instruments of a process of European construction that, following the failure of the project to found, immediately, a European federal state, fell back on a system in which the states were willing to relinquish competences, yet without attributing the European institutions with the democratic legitimacy and political power that this should imply, in other words, without transferring sovereignty. Up until Germany’s reunification and the end of the bipolar world order, it was, in any case, clearly understood that these two methods were complementary and transitory, and meant to create the conditions for the birth of a European federation. It was only from the start of the ’90s, which coincided with the disappearance from political debate of the project to build a European federation understood as a federal state, that there emerged a tendency to theorise the idea that the Community was a sort of post-state model of democracy, to be preserved as such. What the crisis has revealed, in fact, is that blackmail on the part of the markets is a direct effect of the precariousness of the Community framework. The true challenge facing the Europeans, therefore, is to overcome both the intergovernmental method and the Community method by bringing about political unity, in other words, by transferring sovereignty and power to European level and putting an end to the states’ claim to be the sole source of democratic legitimacy.

\*\*\*

The problem that the Europeans must now resolve is that of creating a European federal state. This is a fact that has now become clear to all analysts, economists and, in particular, to the political world, especially outside Europe, even though few believe that we are capable of carrying the task through. Yet failure to unite will leave our countries dramatically impoverished and will lead to a return of social tensions and discriminations that we thought we had consigned to the past: in short, the end of

European civilisation, with all the consequences that this would have on the balances of power in the world as a whole. Such scenarios are a real possibility and not mere academic hypotheses.

It is clear, after all, that unless the political balances are radically changed, even the introduction of tighter rules of economic governance in Europe will serve no useful purpose (other than having, possibly, a short-term deterrent effect on some markets). Indeed, at the end of a dramatic recession that has ushered in a situation of stagnant growth, how can the states possibly manage to withstand the tensions generated by swingeing cuts made in the absence of realistic growth prospects? If it is true that deficit and debt reduction is crucial to prevent Europe from being bullied by the markets, why is it that the action of other countries in similar economic straits is not conditioned in the same way (Japan for example, to say nothing of the United States)? And why is it that Europe should be the region picked out, on the international financial markets, as the weakest link? How long can the European states struggle on in these conditions? As English historian Niall Ferguson, referring to EMU, pointed out in a book published a decade ago (*The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World, 1700-2000*), history can give us only examples of how monetary unions fall apart when national fiscal policy demands become incompatible with the constraints imposed by a single currency.

Van Rompuy's question of whether the euro can survive in the current international setting despite the structural handicap of being a currency with sixteen different and diverging fiscal and economic policies, would thus hardly seem to warrant his "unambiguous 'yes'", a reply both optimistic and unexplained. The problem of Europe is that, through the Community method, it has relinquished the possibility of conducting politics at European level; at the same time, the states have been left totally powerless by the depth of their inadequacy and their crisis at national level. This is the real reason for the weakness of Europe, which has become a continent that no longer plans for the future, that has lost the capacity to conceive of an original model of economic development, and in which investment of resources and mobilisation of society with a view to progress have become things of the past.

The point, then, is this: if the current crisis is forcing the states to start seeing things, once again, from a European perspective, on pain of disintegration of the Union, our first task must be to remove all the ambiguity that surrounds the term "European." Clearly, the answer to the crisis is not to try and increase the competences or powers of control,

necessarily conflicting, of the Commission, the European Parliament, or the Council. Such attempts (which, moreover, run the risk of being misleading) would only strengthen the reciprocal constraints and would inevitably lead to unrealistic economic recovery plans (of the kind repeatedly proposed and repeatedly seen to be worthless). Neither is it realistic to hope that, with the institutional instruments at its disposal, the EU is, today, already in a position to increase its budget, issue Union bonds to fund European economic recovery policies, assume powers of taxation, and begin harmonising the fiscal systems of the member states; to hope this is to fail to see that these are all steps that cannot be taken unless the states first display a clear will to unite politically. This, therefore, is the real issue: to understand *how* and *whether* this will can be elicited, at least in some of the states, and in particular in those with the most developed European consciousness, France and Germany first and foremost. The questions to be asked, then, are: how might it be possible to bring about a return to the original European project, whose aim was to build a European federal state, and also to make people aware, once again, that a currency is an integral part of a state that, to work properly, must be set within an appropriate institutional framework and be part of an overall political programme? How can we make people aware, once again, that a currency, if it is to last, cannot for long remain divorced from fiscal policy, or from foreign and security policy; in short, from political sovereignty?

\*\*\*

To go back to the analysis provided by Touraine, which we quoted at the start, the three crises currently assailing Europe are bound up with each other, and the quest to resolve them must start from the formulation of a new plan for the future development of European culture and civilisation. This plan can only be that of creating a European federal state: only in this new framework will Europe have a chance of returning to a situation of political and economic growth, and of reviving its fundamental values.

But turning this project into a solid prospect will demand the effort and commitment of everyone: citizens and society generally must start believing in it once again, not just wishing for it without any real hope of it happening. The question of Europe's political future must become the main focus of political debate at European and at national level; in other words, as in the past, this issue needs to mobilise minds, so that ideas can

be translated into action. Within Italy, France and Germany, in particular, given that these are the three countries that, for historical as well as political and economic reasons, are still the front on which the battle to build Europe will be won or lost, it has to become clear that the Europeans are faced with a choice of civilisation. It has to become clear it is the responsibility of these countries, first of all, to take the initiative in this sense, aware that the realisation of the federal state project depends on the presence of a vanguard to lead the way.

The road to be travelled is a difficult one, but the dramatic nature of the alternative makes it feasible that the states will be forced to set out on it. But for them to be able to do so — and this is indeed the first condition —, they need to have, as a guide, a clear vision of the ultimate objective. And this brings us to the first responsibility of those fighting for the European federation: to expose false solutions and point out, indefatigably, the road to be taken in order to build true unity.

*The Federalist*



# Francesco Rossolillo's Contribution to Federalist Culture

SERGIO PISTONE

The two volumes in which Giovanni Vigo recently collected the fundamental writings of Francesco Rossolillo,<sup>1</sup> who died on February 24, 2005 at the age of 67, bear witness to the enormous value of Rossolillo's contribution to federalist culture, which was bound up with his incomparable militant commitment to the struggle for a European federation. The questions that most deeply occupied Rossolillo were: the course of history and its relationship with political action, revolution, the meaning of popular sovereignty, European federalism and its relationship with territorial planning, the strategy of the fight for a united Europe, and the role to be played by the federalists; he also analysed and interpreted the major political and cultural events that a federalist militant must be able to come to grips with if the national perspective is to be replaced by the federalist one. These writings, which appeared between 1960 and 2005, provide essential support to anyone striving to gain a full understanding of the extraordinary intellectual and political experience, still very much alive, of those federalists who had Mario Albertini as their guide. To provide readers of *The Federalist* with a taste of this work, I will endeavour in the following pages to illustrate, albeit necessarily schematically, one of what I consider to be Rossolillo's essential contributions to federalist thought. To do this, I must start by defining precisely one of the key aspects of federalist philosophy developed by Altiero Spinelli and Mario Albertini, so that I may then try to give an idea of the important leap forwards that, in my view, Rossolillo subsequently made.

\* \* \*

Spinelli is the founding father of federalism understood as an active political philosophy, i.e. as a theory that can be translated into a concrete, political commitment aimed at changing reality. As Norberto Bobbio

pointed out<sup>2</sup>, the author of the *Ventotene Manifesto* is indeed responsible for the quantum leap made by the idea of European federation, that is, for transforming it into an out-and-out political programme. In other words, it was he who established an organic link between the theoretical clarification, extremely penetrating and far-reaching, of the reasons why a European federation is necessary and the precise political-strategic and also organisational principles that must guide a political movement whose objective is to realise supranational federalism.

On the theoretical side, Spinelli's ideas<sup>3</sup> may be summed up essentially in his view that the building of a European federation should take precedence over efforts to move the nation-states towards liberal and democratic values and social justice. He regarded the building of peace through the European federation — seen as the first historical milestone of, and driving force for, the ultimate objective of world federation — as the unavoidable path of historical progress. Basically, Spinelli concluded the debate begun earlier by Luigi Einaudi and by the British federalists at the time of the two World Wars, who had identified the historical crisis of the system of sovereign nation-states as the root cause of the evils of the contemporary world<sup>4</sup>. Reducing the concept to very simple terms, the crisis of the nation-state stems from the contradiction between, on the one hand, the expanding world of industrial production that, being characterised by an increasing level of supranational interdependence, creates a need for states of continental dimensions and thus constitutes a force for the unification of mankind, and, on the other, the narrow and historically superseded dimensions of Europe's nation-states. It is, fundamentally, this contradiction that gave rise to the World Wars and to Nazi totalitarianism, which must be seen as the structural elements, fundamental and interlinked, of an attempt to impose a hegemonic-imperial model as a solution to the problem of European unity. Whereas the system based on absolute national sovereignty prevented the achievement of socio-economic and political progress in Europe, the collapse of the power of the European nation-states opened up the way for their peaceful unification, which, according to Spinelli, must be pursued as the primary political objective, and thus take priority over efforts to reform the nation-states internally. Unless the condition of international anarchy can be overcome, through the founding of a European federation, the states' inadequacy vis-à-vis the basic supranational problems and the endemic conflicts that go hand-in-hand with absolute sovereignty will inevitably undermine any liberal, democratic and social progress, and allow new and terrifying catastrophes to wipe out civilisation. Hence the new

dichotomy — declared in the 1941 *Ventotene Manifesto* — between the forces of progress and those of conservation, a dichotomy that does not reflect the traditional division between the wish for more as opposed to less freedom, equality, and social justice within the single nation-states,<sup>5</sup> but rather the line that separates the defenders of absolute national sovereignty from those who would like to see absolute national sovereignty overcome through supranational federalism — the only system capable of managing, democratically and peacefully, the interdependence generated by the Industrial Revolution.

Spinelli's theory on the supremacy of supranational federalism over the objectives indicated by the modern world's great emancipatory ideologies (which, from the Enlightenment onwards have pointed out the path of mankind's progress) is, as already mentioned, combined with a political-strategic-organisational argument that clarifies the conditions necessary to ensure that the struggle for a European federation can be conducted in a pragmatic way (in other words, overcoming the essentially utopian approach that had up until that point prevailed). To convey its essence, this argument (already largely contained in the *Ventotene Manifesto* but refined by Spinelli in the immediate post-war years in order to get the fight for a European federation effectively off the ground) can be summed up in the idea that the democratic national governments are, at once, both instruments of and obstacles to European unification.<sup>6</sup> They are instruments in two ways. First, the peaceful and democratic building of European unity (as opposed to the hegemonic imperial unification of Europe) must obviously be based on decisions freely reached by democratic governments. Above all, however, there is a powerful and enduring historical factor that favours the European democratic governments' pursuit of a policy of supranational unification: the fact that the structural crisis of the nation-state presented them with a clear choice, i.e. to "unite or perish", and therefore created a deep-seated need to guarantee lasting peaceful cooperation as a condition for continued socio-economic, civil and political progress. However, while, from this perspective, the democratic national governments may be seen as instruments of European unification, they also clearly constitute obstacles to it, given the structural tendency of power (already illustrated by Machiavelli) to perpetuate itself. Achieving democratic and effective European unity means building a federation and, therefore, transferring a substantial amount of power away from the national institutions into the hands of the supranational ones. It is thus to be expected that the classes in whose hands national political power lies will tend obstinately to hold onto this power and will

be inclined to favour confederal forms of international cooperation rather than supranational federalism.

For the federalist struggle, this situation, characterising the problem of European unification, has three fundamental implications.

The first is the absolute need for the formation and sustained action of a political subject that, being entirely independent of the governments and national parties, has the capacity to push them to do that which, spontaneously, they are unable to do, in other words, to move beyond the internationalist-confederal limits of their European policy. There thus has to emerge an active federalist force that has supranational federal unification as its sole objective. This must be a force that strives for the union of all those who, despite differences in their ideological inclinations (which will nevertheless fall within the spectrum of the emancipatory ideologies), share this objective; that has a supranational structure (so as to be able to impose a single programme and a single discipline on all Europe's federalists); and finally that is able to mobilise public opinion despite remaining outside the struggle for national power.

Second, as regards the procedure for achieving European unity, the federalists, rather than having recourse to the usual intergovernmental conference method, must insist on a democratic constituent assembly (drawing inspiration from the Philadelphia Convention, which, in 1787, drew up the Constitution of the United States of America — history's first federal state). The protagonists of the IGC approach are representatives of the governments; their decisions, taken by secret vote, must be unanimous and their proposals (draft treaties) ratified unanimously by the states involved in the unification process. In this system, instances of nationalistic resistance can prove an obstacle to coherent and decisive federal outcomes. A supranational constituent assembly, on the other hand, is made up of representatives of the European citizens (who, having experienced the impotence and inadequacy of the nation-states, are mostly in favour of an effective and democratic union); conversely, its decisions are transparent and taken by majority, and provision is made for their ratification by majority. All this makes federal outcomes possible.

The third strategic line for the federalist struggle, identified by Spinelli, is to exploit the contradictions thrown up by the European integration that the governments are forced, by the structural crisis of the nation-states, to pursue. Indeed, because the tendency of power to perpetuate itself leads to inadequate functionalist and confederal choices and indefinite postponement of federal unification, European federation is not the automatic outcome of the integration process. This process

feeds serious contradictions that manifest themselves mainly in inefficiency and a democratic deficit. The inefficiency derives from the fact that the institutions of integrated Europe, which, ultimately, are founded on decisions reached unanimously by the national governments, are weak and have shown themselves to be incapable of functioning adequately in testing times, when the problems to be tackled are particularly difficult. This means that in critical situations the advances achieved in more favourable times are thrown into question. In this context, the continued failure to meet the expectations generated by the ongoing process of European integration generates frustration that could, and should, be transformed into support for federal solutions. The democratic deficit, on the other hand, is linked to the fact that, in the absence of genuinely federal institutions, crucially important decisions are referred to supranational level, in spite of the fact that no fully democratic system has been created at this level. This state of affairs is bound to produce unease within democratically-oriented parties and sections of public opinion, and this, again, is a sentiment that could be directed towards the idea of a supranational (i.e. federal) form of democracy. Therefore, the federalist strategy, implemented through the exertion of pressure stemming from a mobilisation of the citizens, must be to strive constantly to exploit these inherent contradictions of European integration and the critical situations to which they inevitably give rise, in order to trigger a democratic constituent procedure and, through it, obtain a European federal constitution.

\* \* \*

This, essentially, is Spinelli's federalist position and it is important to underline that it was the innovative and watertight nature of his argument that provided the foundations for the creation of a political movement (the European Federalist Movement, MFE) that, entirely independent of the traditional political organisations, succeeded not only in assuming its own personality and role, but also, by leading a supranational European front, in having a real influence on the process of European unification.<sup>7</sup>

Our next step is to consider Mario Albertini's fundamentally important development of Spinelli's position. Indeed, by adding to and probing several aspects of Spinelli's arguments, Albertini too made a decisive contribution to the advance of the federalist battle.

Summarising his contribution,<sup>8</sup> it can be said, first of all, that it reflects a deep commitment to the building of a truly and permanently auto-

mous federalist political force, in other words a force capable of steering all Europeanist organisations, but also all the Europeanists present within parties, socio-economic organisations and the cultural sphere, in the direction of an effective battle for a constituent assembly and, from that, a European federation. Albertini, who in 1960 replaced Spinelli at the helm of the MFE, was, on both a theoretical and a practical level, the moving spirit behind this drive for federalist autonomy that, in very essential terms, is based on three principles: one political, one organisational, and the other financial.<sup>9</sup>

The first principle, that of political autonomy, is illustrated by the refusal of the body of militants leading and managing the MFE to identify with any single national party. This choice allowed them, at opportune moments, to establish extremely useful relationships (collaborations and tactical alliances) with the democratic parties, yet without ever jeopardising the movement's complete autonomy. The second principle is related to the selection and training of militants. The main concern was to avoid the conditioning influences to which a cumbersome and costly administrative apparatus would have exposed the movement; indeed, had it had such an apparatus it would inevitably have depended largely on external funding in order to survive. It was thus decided that all federalist militants should be "part-time" militants, in other words, individuals with jobs of their own that guaranteed them economic independence but that also left them sufficient free time to devote to their federalist activities. In this way it proved possible to create an inexpensive organisation that was thus totally immune to pressure or coercion by political or economic forces. The third and final principle is that of the movement's financial autonomy. Indeed, when the MFE was established it was made clear that its members would be self-funding. What this meant, in real terms, was that MFE members were always aware that their federalist work would never bring them financial reward and, indeed, would likely cost them money. This understanding, which immediately became the financial basis of the MFE's autonomy, did not preclude it from receiving external funding, but it was established that such funding would be used above all, to pay for specific actions. Meanwhile, the organisation's permanent structure has always run on its "own resources", a fact that has strengthened its impermeability to external influences.

Going beyond all this, however, Albertini's great insight was to see that this autonomy (political, organisational, and financial) enjoyed by the MFE actually stemmed from its cultural autonomy, which he went on, brilliantly, to define. He realised that only a strong cultural motivation

(together with a strong moral compass of course), in other words, only the absolute conviction that the federalist doctrine (compared with prevailing political ideas) really did have something new to say — something of real value, capable of furthering understanding of the historical situation —, could, in fact, sustain a long-term, often burdensome and difficult endeavour, conducted not for power or financial reward, in a number of militants great enough to constitute an independent federalist force with the capacity to influence reality. The remarkable contribution of Albertini was to provide a detailed theoretical analysis of federalism that highlighted this motivation and enriched, beyond measure, federalist thought. It is, at this point, important to consider, albeit briefly, the two most significant results of this theoretical analysis.

First of all, Albertini levelled a radical criticism at the concept of nation.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, developing some of Proudhon's ideas, he showed that nations are not entities that pre-date the nation-states, but rather an ideological reflection of people's sense of belonging to the states, bureaucratic and centralised, that emerged in continental Europe in the wake of the French Revolution. In short, according to Albertini, the sense of nation that is prevalent in populations was not a premise for the formation of the nation-states, but rather a consequence of their creation, and of the creation of political programmes designed to impose unity of language, culture and traditions across state territories. The result of all this was the systematic destruction of spontaneous nationalities, in other words, of the sense of belonging to natural communities (meaning the territorial dimensions of individuals' birth, life and death — the nations in the etymological sense of the term), and the transfer, to the state, of the individual's sense of belonging, in order to create the exclusive loyalism characteristic of the nation-state, and, therefore, the basis of aggressive foreign policies.

By criticising the idea of nation, Albertini was trying to overcome a major limit of the political ideologies — liberal, democratic and socialist — held by the democratic political parties of Europe. These ideologies are universalistic and therefore, in principle, favourable to supranational unification. At the same time, however, they tend to mythicise the nation-states, which are seen more as “natural” institutions, in that they are founded on “pre-existing” nations (but as pointed out this is an ideological self-mystification), than as historically determined and thus historically supersedable institutions. Thus, in a structural sense (but also because of the tendency of national parties to cling on to the power they hold), these ideologies tend to interpret supranational power more as

cooperation between nation-states than as the overcoming of absolute national sovereignty.

It must be underlined that Albertini's theoretical work — his demystification of the ideology of nation — constitutes a hugely important development of Spinelli's federalist thought. Indeed, although Spinelli's ideas revolve around the concept of the historical crisis of the sovereign nation-state and what he considers the instruments and concrete political actions through which to pursue the overcoming of this institutional system, the founder of the MFE actually failed to provide a scientific criticism of the idea of nation, which is its ideological basis.

In addition to this important contribution to federalist thought, Albertini made another even more significant one, which also overcomes a limit in Spinelli's argument. As shown earlier, Spinelli's main theoretical line is his idea that the struggle for supranational federalism should take priority over efforts to transform the states internally, i.e. to move them towards liberal, and democratic values and social justice. This idea implies that federalism is the answer to the crucial challenges thrown up by the historical process driven by the late Industrial Revolution, and it thus indicates the path of historical progress in a period coinciding with the weakening of the forces unleashed by the great emancipatory ideologies born of the Enlightenment. However, this vision is accompanied by an excessively narrow idea of the federalist doctrine, which Spinelli sees essentially as the theory of the federal state, in other words as a constitutional method allowing the peaceful coexistence of a group of independent and coordinated governments. This framing does not really match up to the conviction that federalism represents the path of historical progress. This latter affirmation, to have a solid basis, needs to be supported by a definition, in the body of federalist doctrine, of the specific guiding value of federalist engagement and of its relationship with the values upheld by the emancipatory ideologies from which federalism is descended. The doctrine should also contain a clear and strong vision of the historical process, which brings out the value of federalism as a valid political response to the crucial challenges of our times and indicates the conceptual instruments that can be used to tackle, in a rigorous manner, the problem of understanding the historical process. Here, once again, Albertini, showing great insight, offers clarification, arguing that federalism, far from being merely the theory of the federal state, is itself a fully-fledged political ideology and thus on a par with liberalism, democracy and socialism. Federalism, however, not only contains, in the body of its doctrine, the fundamental ideas proposed by the modern world's great



emancipatory ideologies, it also manages to overcome their limits and to arrive at a more satisfactory understanding of the fundamental problems of our age.<sup>11</sup>

According to this vision, federalism, like the other ideologies, is characterised primarily by a value: whereas liberalism has freedom as its ultimate objective, democracy has equality, and socialism social justice, the ultimate objective of federalism is peace. And peace is not an alternative to these other values; on the contrary, it incorporates them at a higher level, given that the elimination of international anarchy (which implies the subordination of all other values to the need for state security) is the essential condition for the full expression of freedom, equality and social justice; in short, for the possibility of eliminating all forms of subordination of men by men. In this way, Albertini takes up the fundamental political, legal and historical-philosophical ideas of Kant (the height of the Enlightenment), which have been made relevant to our times by the crisis of the nation-states and the growing interdependence of human action beyond national boundaries, of which European integration is the most advanced manifestation.<sup>12</sup> Albertini regards these phenomena as the premises for the pursuit of world federation, that is, for the realisation of perpetual peace. And he also adds, with searing clarity, that the overcoming of exclusive national loyalism through European federation would start to put an end to the culture of the political division of mankind, which implicitly legitimises the duty to kill for the nation, and indeed constitute an affirmation of the right not to kill, with a view to its full affirmation through world federation. The World Wars, the discovery of nuclear weapons, and the growth of international interdependence all suggest that Kant's prediction is coming true: he believed, in fact, that only direct experience of the devastation of war, combined with mankind's innate commercial spirit (implying the growth of interdependence), would induce states to renounce their "wild freedom" and submit to a common law.

Federalism also has a characteristic structural aspect, the federal state being indicated as the form of organisation of power that makes it possible to overcome the closed and centralised structures of the nation-state. This can be achieved both below and above the level of the state: in the first case through the formation of truly autonomous regional and local bodies of government, and in the second through the creation of effective supranational forms of political and social solidarity. In addition, it is necessary to consider a historical-social aspect of federalism. Briefly, the overcoming of mankind's division into antagonistic classes

and nations creates the possibility of realising the pluralism typical of the federal society, summed up in the principle of unity in diversity; in this way, the historical setting is seen to be capable of allowing the realisation of a value through an appropriate power structure. Indeed, in federal societies, loyalty to society as a whole co-exists, in a non-hierarchical relationship, with loyalty to smaller territorial communities (regions, provinces, cities, districts). The fact that this social balance has been developed only partially in the federal societies that have existed to date has two explanations. First, the class struggle (which can be overcome only through the full development of the scientific revolution, and thus the overcoming of the proletarian condition) has caused the sense of being part of a given social class to prevail over all other forms of social solidarity, preventing other, deep-rooted strong bonds of solidarity from forming in regional and local communities. Second, the struggle between the states on the international stage (which can be eliminated only through the unification of the whole world, a process beginning with European federation) has resulted in a strengthening of central power at the expense of local powers.<sup>13</sup>

It is worth adding that Albertini, with regard to the idea of federalism as an ideology, also provides a highly convincing timeline of the phases in the development of federalist thought. The first phase, running from the French Revolution to the First World War, saw the affirmation, albeit only at the level of principles, of the concept of federalism as a cosmopolitan community, as a counter-response to the authoritarian and belligerent character of the nation-state. In the second phase, which began before the start of the Second World War, the criteria of federalism were used to interpret the crisis of the nation-state and of the European system of powers. In the third phase, which began after the Second World War and is still unfolding, we are seeing the conceptual schemes and political and institutional instruments of federalism being applied in order to solve the crisis of Europe.

The creation of a European federation thus emerges as the crucial event of our times, or rather as the first affirmation of the federalist course of history that will culminate in the full realisation of peace through the federation of the world. Federalism is thus called upon to play, in our times, a role similar to that played in the past by the liberal, democratic and socialist ideologies: through its development and affirmation of the culture of peace, federalism offers society a model capable of providing an answer to the greatest problems of our age (from the problems of global interdependence to security and environmental problems, which demand

both an environment-friendly transformation of the economic model and a multilayer system of territorial government), and thus makes it possible for us, once again, to envisage the future, a future that the traditional ideologies, having lost their revolutionary impetus, no longer allow us to see.<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \*

Albertini's conviction that federalism is, in the sense we have seen, an ideology opens up a vast field for theoretical reflection and analytical endeavour, both of which are necessary in order to demonstrate that this conviction rests on solid and rigorous foundations. This is the field in which Francesco Rossolillo conducted his intellectual work: the concept of federalism as an ideology, which he helped enormously to clarify, is, indeed, the main thread running through his writings. In my view, the most important aspect of Rossolillo's contribution, which I will here highlight, is his effort to develop a position on the question of the course of history and its relationship with political action, which is indeed the title of his most important essay and also the title given to the collection of his works.<sup>15</sup>

It must first be made clear that the course of history and its relationship with political action is a question that the concept of federalism as an ideology cannot avoid treating. If one is convinced that federalism represents, in technical and practical terms, the direction of progress, i.e. of the advance towards a better world, then one must develop a criterion for judging what "better" and "worse" mean, so as to be able to establish what progress actually corresponds to. To do this, one must, first of all, reject relativism and recognise the existence, as a crucial point of reference, of absolute values founded in the essence of the human person, thereby linking progress with the idea that history should be progressing inexorably (albeit asymptotically and with periodic backward steps) towards the realisation of the values that make up the essence of the human person. If this is clear, then the crucial task becomes that of tackling this whole question, which lies firmly in the realm of philosophy, in a convincing and rigorous way. In this regard, Rossolillo, through his reflections, made a contribution that federalists cannot ignore and whose essential lines I here attempt to present.

I begin by quoting a passage from the essay *Federalismo ed emancipazione umana*, which was written in 1990, but contains a declaration of the faith on which Rossolillo based his philosophical reflection from

1966 onwards. “Anyone who decides to become involved in politics in order to work towards a better world — and not with the desire to place himself centre stage or to gain power — makes, however consciously, a dual declaration of faith. He must believe that the word ‘better’, virtually at least, means the same for all men, both living and to come, in other words that it indicates situations closer than the present one to a model of co-existence founded on universally shared values. This means that he must also believe in the existence of absolute values. These beliefs must necessarily be accompanied by the conviction that the course of history brings the progressive realisation of these values, because to anyone fighting to transform the conditions of mankind’s coexistence it is clearly unthinkable that the results of his efforts within the chain of events might be the cause of irreversible regressions or backward steps in the process of mankind’s emancipation, which is what would be the case if history were just a tumultuous and casual succession of contradictory, and thus meaningless, events.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Rossolillo (who in this regard probes and develops points present in the teaching of Albertini), the basis on which it is possible to build a convincing position on the course of history is provided by Kant’s philosophy of history, which thus becomes an integral and fundamental part of the view of federalism as an ideology. What basically emerges from Kant’s reflections<sup>17</sup> is that the course of history — dominated by the tension between reason and instinct — is determined by the construction, in a process of endless progress, of a world based on reason and moral autonomy. The milestones of historical progress are: the creation of the state that, overcoming the wild freedom that characterises mankind’s natural state, eradicates within its own confines all violence between men; the republican transformation of the state, which in concrete terms means liberal and democratic progress; and peace, i.e. the elimination of violence in international relations thanks to the overcoming, through the federation, of the wild freedom of the states (that is, of their absolute sovereignty): this progress will make it possible to realise, fully, the republican regime — it will eradicate the problem of security as the primary concern (the rule of *raison d’état* imposed by international anarchy) — and thus to enter the realm of ends, in other words, the community in which all men will always treat other men as ends and not means, the condition in which the essence of man founded on reason and moral autonomy will reach its full expression.

The driving force of historical progress understood in this way lies in the dialectic between reason and instinct: in the language of Kant,

historical progress is the fruit of a “design of nature” driven by the objective factor of “unsociable sociableness.” Briefly, to survive as a species men are obliged to enter into increasingly close and intense relations with one another, a circumstance that inevitably triggers conflicts and, at the same time, the need to overcome conflicts, again to guarantee the survival of the species. This is the source of the driving force of progress as it advances through the stages that will ultimately lead to its goal: perpetual peace.

As already indicated in reference to Albertini, Kant, too, provides explicit and truly enlightening insights with regard to the objective driving force for peace that derives from man’s unsociable sociableness. It is the combination of his commercial spirit and thus his growing interdependence (which implies both advantages and conflicts), spreading gradually to the entire world, with the increasing destructiveness of wars (which is linked to relentless scientific and technical progress) that ultimately sets mankind on the road to his own destruction and raises the need to realise a general and effective system of resolving conflicts peacefully.

As Albertini clarified, Kant’s philosophy of history brings out the essential structure underlying the vision of the historical process on which the idea of federalism as an ideology is built. Rossolillo, however, also sees a need to identify and shed light on the theoretical foundations of Kant’s view of history as progress. To do this, he analyses and clarifies the connection between Kant’s philosophy of history and his moral philosophy.

Kant’s moral philosophy is based, fundamentally, on the idea that while the *a priori* (transcendental) categories of pure reason constitute the irreplaceable basis of knowledge, the irreplaceable basis of moral obligation (of practical reason) is provided, instead, by the categorical imperative, or the duty to act out of duty itself, which, being the content of conscience, is non-demonstrable, but nevertheless a factor without which it becomes meaningless to talk of moral obligation and of morality. The categorical imperative, which encompasses three maxims of morality: the universality of the law, the duty always to treat men as ends and never as means, and the imperative to act in accordance with the “kingdom of ends”, is the basis of the theory of the supremacy of practical reason that Kant uses as his starting point for identifying, in *Critique of Practical Reason*, its three known postulates: the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God.<sup>18</sup>

According to Rossolillo, this approach is taken further in the final part

of *Critique of Judgement* which reads: “The concept of the ultimate purpose is solely a concept of our practical reason; it cannot be derived from data of experience with a view to formulating a theoretical judgement on nature, nor can we apply it to our knowledge of the same. There is no possible use for this concept, other than in the ambit of practical reason according to moral laws; and the ultimate purpose of creation is that constitution of the world that coincides with what we are able to indicate as determined according to laws, that is, with the ultimate purpose of our pure practical reason, insofar as it is practical. Now, thanks to this moral law, which imposes this ultimate purpose on us, we have, from a practical point of view, which means that we can apply our forces to its realisation, the basis of the possibility, or realisability, of that ultimate purpose and therefore also....a nature of things that is compatible with all of this.”<sup>19</sup>

Kant’s argument, basically, is that morality and nature (or rather morality and history, understood as the process whose unfolding creates the conditions allowing morality to emerge) tend to co-exist. According to Rossolillo, then, there is a fourth postulate of practical reason that, albeit not made explicit, coincides with the idea that history is endless progress towards the formation of a world in which the full meaning of morality emerges: were it otherwise, moral obligation would be stripped of its reason for being and destined to sink in the meaninglessness of a world devoid of significance and prospects.

Rossolillo also seeks to combine Kant’s position with a more adequate vision of the role of conscious human action in the historical process. Kant indicates that the tendency of history and morality to converge is the result of a natural design (which exploits the unsociable sociableness of men), but he fails to specify the point at which the human person, prompted by a moral imperative, intervenes. This is a limit that can be attributed to the historical period, given that Kant was developing his philosophy of history at a time when the active role of men (and thus of men’s moral obligation) in the historical process was only just beginning to emerge (the French Revolution indeed provides the first example of this). In short, given that it made its appearance with the Enlightenment, the experience of men actively seeking to change the world was yet to become widespread. By this we mean the experience of trying make the world progress by applying, to society, a political philosophy, i.e. the liberal and democratic ideologies (and also the socialist one in its embryonic form). Indeed, the material basis of this experience lies in the Industrial Revolution, which was not even on the

horizon during Kant's lifetime.

Therefore, Kant's philosophy of history leaves a large gap between moral obligation and the historical process. Moral obligation is understood only as absolute morality (the categorical imperative), as it had yet to be appreciated how morality can, through the conscious action of individuals, become an agent of historical change.

Rossolillo maintains that this limit of Kant's theory can be transcended by combining Kant's philosophy of history with the moral theory of Max Weber, who introduced the distinction between absolute ethics (or the ethics of principles), and the ethics of responsibility.<sup>20</sup> The latter, unlike the former (which imply obeying the call of conscience regardless of the consequences of the resulting action), imposes the pursuit of an end, and thus the need to take into account the possible and predictable consequences, in relation to that end, of any actions taken. It reflects the fact that with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution man acquired the possibility (non-existent in the framework of the previous modes of production) of mastering reality, and thus of trying to determine it.

The ethics of responsibility may thus be seen as the means through which moral obligation becomes an agent of history and, as such, a conscious instrument of its progressive development. Like the morality of conviction before it, it has a view — even though in Weber, who had a relativist *Weltanschauung*, this does not emerge — of history as indefinite progress towards a better condition: precisely because of its affirmation that (within defined limits) the end justifies the means, it raises, primarily, the problem of the basis on which to justify ends that forfeit the purity of the categorical imperative; for this reason, it must inevitably be accompanied by a rigorous view of the historical process as indefinite progress towards a better condition: "We are in fact aware that the consequences of our actions will, in turn, have other consequences that will escape our control: if we thought these further consequences would be degenerative (at least definitively degenerative), and thus that the course of history were casual, we would never be morally legitimised in transgressing the imperatives of the ethics of principles, in uttering even a single lie, in the name of an ultimate purpose that, in the historical chain of events, might, in its turn, become the cause of catastrophes, wars and pain."<sup>21</sup>

This view, whose substance I have endeavoured to show, of the link between Kant's philosophy of history and his moral philosophy — in particular of the progressive concept of history as the fourth (implicit)

postulate of practical reason — and of the way in which Kant’s ideas can be integrated with Weber’s distinction between the ethics of principles and the ethics of responsibility, constitutes, in my view, Rossolillo’s fundamental contribution to clarifying the concept of federalism as an ideology. He offers a close examination of an aspect of the federalist philosophy that, while still requiring further work — federalism is, Rossolillo himself recognised, an evolving philosophy, a task far more than a result<sup>22</sup> — nevertheless represents an essential basis for those striving to arrive at a full understanding of the central role of federalism as a response to the challenges presented by our age.

A final remark. An argument like the federalist position according to Albertini’s school, which rejects relativism and thus believes in the existence of an essence of the human person (the basis of absolute values), in the quest for truth (on which no one clearly has the monopoly), and in history as indefinite progress towards a better world (which implies neither determinism, nor simplistic optimism), is in stark contrast to the currently extremely widespread tendencies towards forms of relativism, scepticism, or “weak thought” that see totalitarian overtones in all attempts to achieve global historical-social understanding and, therefore, in any view of history as progress. These tendencies, in reality, are a passive reflection of the crisis of the great emancipatory ideologies, of the inability to understand that, in the wake of the exhaustion of revolutionary impetus of these ideologies, it has become possible to understand progress, and, in a tangible way, to pursue it, through an ideology that overcomes this loss of impetus and indicates peace as the supreme political objective of our times.<sup>23</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Rossolillo, *Senso della storia e azione politica* (vol. I, *Il senso della storia*, vol. II, *La battaglia per la Federazione europea*), edited by Giovanni Vigo, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Norberto Bobbio, *Il federalismo nel dibattito politico e culturale della Resistenza* (lecture given in Milan in 1973 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the European Federalist Movement), published in Altiero Spinelli, *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> See: Lucio Levi, “Altiero Spinelli, fondatore del movimento per l’unità europea”, in Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*. Preface by Eugenio Colomi, introduction by Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, Milan, Mondadori, 2006; Piero Graglia, *Altiero Spinelli*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2008; Sergio Pistone’s *introduction* to the anastatic reprint of *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, edited by the Consulta Europea del Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte, Turin, Celid, 2007 (4th reprint).



<sup>4</sup> See: Altiero Spinelli, *La crisi degli Stati nazionali*, edited and with an introduction by Lucio Levi, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1991, and Lucio Levi, *Il pensiero federalista*, Bari, Laterza, 2002, English transl., *Federalist Thinking*, New York, University Press of America, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> It must be underlined that Spinelli is quite clear on the historical convergence of the liberal, democratic and socialist ideologies in the modern democratic state, which must also be both liberal and social. However, he overcomes the limits of the internationalism typical of these ideologies, which tend to see peace between states as an automatic consequence of the affirmation, within them, of liberal, democratic and socialist principles. On the federalist criticism of internationalism, see, in particular: Lucio Levi, *L'internationalisme ne suffit pas. Internationalisme marxiste et fédéralisme*, Lyon, Fédérop, 1984; Id., "Internazionalismo", in *Enciclopedia delle Scienze Sociali*, Rome, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996; Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, Rome, Carocci, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Altiero Spinelli, *La crisi degli Stati nazionali*, edited and with an introduction by Sergio Pistone, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1989.

<sup>7</sup> I refer readers to my writings: *The Union of European Federalists*, Milan, Giuffrè, 2008 and "Altiero Spinelli and European Unification", *The European Union Review*, n. 1 (2009), where I underline, in particular, that the fundamental advances of the process of European integration are also linked to the fact that it proved possible, by introducing some aspects of the Philadelphia model, to limit the exclusive monopoly of the governments with regard to the constituent function.

<sup>8</sup> Between 2006 and 2010 the full works of Mario Albertini were published in nine volumes: *Tutti gli scritti*, edited by Nicoletta Mosconi, Bologna, Il Mulino. Nicoletta Mosconi also edited two volumes collecting some of Albertini's most important writings: *Una rivoluzione pacifica. Dalle nazioni all'Europa* and *Nazionalismo e federalismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> In this regard, see, in particular: Francesco Rossolillo, "I rapporti fra politica e cultura nell'esperienza del MFE italiano", *Il Federalista*, XXVI, n. 1 (1984); *Il Movimento Federalista Europeo*, pamphlet published by CESFER, Pavia, 1986; *L'organizzazione della lotta federalista*, pamphlet published by CESFER, Pavia, 1986; Sante Granelli, *Movimento, partito o gruppo di pressione?*, pamphlet published by CESFER, Pavia, 1993. Also: Lucio Levi, Sergio Pistone, *Trent'anni di vita del Movimento Federalista Europeo*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1973; Sergio Pistone, "Il passaggio della leadership del Movimento Federalista Europeo da Altiero Spinelli a Mario Albertini", and Giovanni Vigo, "Mario Albertini: l'azione militante", in Fabio Zucca (editor), *Europeismo e federalismo in Lombardia dal Risorgimento all'Unione Europea*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Cf., in particular, Mario Albertini, *Lo Stato nazionale*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1960 (last ed. Bologna, Il Mulino, 1996), French transl., Lyon, Fédérop, 1978; Id., "Idea nazionale e ideali di unità supranazionale in Italia", in *Nuove questioni di storia del Risorgimento e dell'unità d'Italia*, Milan, Marzorati, 1961; Id., "Per un uso controllato della terminologia nazionale e supranazionale", *Il Federalista*, n.1 (1961); Id., *Il Risorgimento e l'unità europea*, Naples, Guida, 1979. For a framing of Albertini's criticism of the idea of nation in theoretical and political debate on this topic, see Sergio Pistone, *Friedrich Meinecke e la crisi dello Stato nazionale tedesco*, Turin, Giappichelli, 1969, and Lucio Levi, *Lecture su Stato nazionale e nazionalismo*, Turin, Celid, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., in particular, *Il federalismo e lo Stato federale. Antologia e definizione*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1963, republished with updates as *Il federalismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1979 and 1993; Id., "Vers une théorie positive du fédéralisme", *Le Fédéraliste*, 5, n. 4 (1963); Id., "L'utopie d'Olivetti", *Le Fédéraliste*, 7, n. 2 (1965); Id., *Proudhon*, Florence, Vallecchi, 1974. See also the chapter "Il federalismo come ideologia", in Lucio Levi, *Il pensiero*

*federalista*, cit. and Flavio Terranova, *Il federalismo di Mario Albertini*, Milan, Giuffrè, 2003. It is pointed out that the concept of ideology is used in this context not in the sense of a self-mystification (which dates back to Marx), but rather in the sense of a political doctrine, i.e. an active political philosophy that is geared at change and thus at the progress of human society.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Immanuel Kant, *La pace, la ragione e la storia*, edited by Mario Albertini, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> It is underlined that in his work, clarifying the historical-social aspect of federalism, Albertini used a critical reworking of Marx's theory of historical materialism and of the *raison d'état* theory, proposing, in particular, a synthesis of great heuristic value between the two approaches. In this regard, I refer readers to two essays by Luisa Trumellini, "Mario Albertini's Reflections on a Critical Reworking of Historical Materialism" and "Mario Albertini's Reflections on Kant's Philosophy of History and its Integration with Historical Materialism", published in *The Federalist*, 50, n. 1 (2008) and 51, n. 2 (2009). See also: Sergio Pistone, *Politica di potenza e imperialismo. L'analisi dell'imperialismo alla luce della dottrina della ragion di Stato*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1973; Id. *Ludwig Dehio*, Naples, Guida, 1977; Id. *Ragion di Stato, Relazioni internazionali, Imperialismo*, Celid, 1984; Lucio Levi, *Crisi dello Stato e governo del mondo*, Turin, Giappichelli, 2005; Roberto Castaldi, *Federalism and Material Interdependence*, Milan, Giuffrè, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> The concept of federalism as an ideology has both points of contact and divergences with the concept of integral federalism (whose leading exponent was Alexandre Marc) which, as pointed out by Lucio Levi (*Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit. p. 126), must be recognised "the merit of starting, in the 1930s, a harsh criticism of the authoritarian aspects of the structure of the nation-state and of the ideology that supports it, and also a global reflection on federalism as an alternative to the crisis of our times." On the other hand "its biggest theoretical limit is its failure, as a central concern, to work out the concepts needed to interpret the objective course of history... A federalist endeavour that refuses to settle for simply criticising (denying) reality, but that aims to succeed in its positive attempt to change the world must never allow itself to become detached from the real processes, but must participate in them actively in order to understand them. From this derives the requirement to define, within the ongoing historical process, objectives compatible with the historical conditions in of our times. Integral federalism is open to the same criticism that Marx and Engels levelled at "utopian socialism", which, rather than seeking, within the historical process and its contradictions, elements favouring the affirmation of the socialist alternative, relied instead simply on the strength of ideas and of good intentions". For an overview of integral federalism, see Alexandre Marc, *Europa e federalismo globale*, Florence, Il Ventilabro, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Rossolillo's essay *Senso della storia e azione politica*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1972, is republished in the collection of writings edited by Vigo. The topic treated in this essay is developed in many other writings collected by Vigo, and we recall in particular: "Considérations sur l'essai sur Lénine de Lukacs" (1966); "Quelques considérations sur le concept de sens de l'histoire" (1968); "Note sulla coscienza rivoluzionaria" (1970); "Il federalismo nella società industriale" (1984); "Il federalismo e le grandi ideologie" (1989); "Federalismo ed emancipazione umana" (1990); "Appunti sulla sovranità" (2001); "Il rivoluzionario" (2005).

<sup>16</sup> *Senso della storia e azione politica*, vol. I, op. cit., p. 657.

<sup>17</sup> In this regard, Kant's fundamental essays are: *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose; An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'; Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History; On the Common Saying: That Might Be True in Theory, but it Does not Apply in Practice; Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch; A Renewed*

*Attempt to Answer the Question: 'Is the Human Race Continually Improving?'*

<sup>18</sup> It must be specified that when Kant refers to God, what he has in mind is the rationalist theism of the Enlightenment, not the God-in-person of Christianity.

<sup>19</sup> *Senso della storia e azione politica, op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 45-46. On the overlap in Kant between the concept of the universal kingdom of ends and the concept of community, see Alberto Pirri, *Kant filosofo della comunità*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Max Weber, *Politik als Beruf*, a conference held in 1919 and published in the collection edited by Johannes Winckelmann, *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1958. In the Italian edition of "Politik als Beruf" (*La Politica come professione* in *Il lavoro intellettuale come professione*, Turin, Einaudi, 1948) the translator, Antonio Giolitti, renders the expression *Gesinnungsethik* (which corresponds to *Verantwortungsethik*: ethics of responsibility) with "ethics of conviction." Rossolillo prefers "ethics of principles" despite realising that this translation, too, is imperfect, given that the expression *Gesinnung* does not denote principles considered independently of the men who believe in them, but rather the principles of someone. On the other hand, the expression "ethics of principles" does succeed in denoting, more clearly, an attitude guided by unconditioned obedience of a principle that does not take into account the consequences of the action; instead, in the ethics of responsibility, the subjective element of conviction is embraced.

<sup>21</sup> *Senso della storia e azione politica, op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> *Senso della storia e azione politica, op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 655.

<sup>23</sup> For criticism of relativist ideas that see totalitarian implications in any system of thought that aims to achieve a global vision or global emancipation, it is worth consulting Slavoj Žižek's extremely valuable book *In difesa delle cause perse. Materiali per la rivoluzione globale*, Milan, Ponte alle Grazie, 2009.

# The Energy Question and Europe

CLAUDIO FILIPPI

## *The Energy Problem.*

As the global economy has evolved, the impact of human activity on the environment has become increasingly problematical. This parallel trend has led us to the present situation in which many believe that the very survival of our civilisation is at stake. Global public opinion and governments are particularly alive to the problem of global warming. Most experts now accept that one of the main causes of this phenomenon is the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as a result of the use of fossil fuels — crude oil, natural gas and coal — to produce the energy on which the global economy depends. The disruption of climatic patterns that global warming in turn produces is having very serious negative effects on the environment, on the world's economies and on international balances.

However, although the effects of global warming are, apparently, already manifesting themselves, and attracting widespread attention, climate change and environmental degradation are not the only problems created by our society's large-scale consumption of energy. Indeed, there is a serious risk that if we continue to consume oil and natural gas at the current rates, reserves of these fuels may well run out within the next four decades.

Throughout the development of modern civilisation there has been concern over the exhaustion of natural resources. As early as the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Thomas Malthus, in *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, first published in 1798, was already highlighting the relationship between population growth and the availability of resources:

*“I think I may fairly make two postulata. First, That food is necessary to the existence of man. Secondly, That the passion between the sexes is necessary, and will remain nearly in its present state. ... Assuming then my postulata as granted, I say that the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.”*<sup>1</sup>

Malthus was immediately criticised, above all for failing to take into account the role of technological innovation and government policies, both capable of favouring harmonious social development. In this regard, Ralph Waldo Emerson's aphorism, for example, is memorable:

*"Malthus, when he stated that the mouths went on multiplying geometrically and the food only arithmetically, forgot to say that the human mind was also a factor in political economy, and that the augmenting wants of society would be met by an augmenting power of invention."*

Around fifty years after the publication of Malthus' essay, a certain amount of interest grew up in England around the coal question. To tackle the risk of exhaustion of the mines, which were crucial to the economy of the world's leading industrial power, the English government began to encourage the development of technologies that would allow coal to be used more efficiently; this led, among other things, to the rise of Watt's steam engine. William Jevons, however, pointed out that more efficient use of coal would lead to an increase in its use, rather than a decrease:

*"If the quantity of coal used in a blast furnace, for instance, be diminished in comparison with the yield, the profits of the trade will increase, new capital will be attracted, the price of pig-iron will fall, but the demand for it increase; and eventually the greater number of furnaces will more than make up for the diminished consumption of each."*<sup>2</sup>

Technological innovation, then, can be a double-edged sword: while it is true that technology combined with the market economy and astute government policies have allowed our species to achieve great things over the last few centuries, this has been at the cost of an ever-increasing use of the world's natural resources, particularly its depletable energy sources.<sup>3</sup> To provide a means of taking this effect into account, economists introduced a unit of measure called "energy returned on energy invested" (EROEI), which expresses the amount of energy gained in relation to the energy expended in order to gain it. It was then noted that the EROEI for fossil fuels declined constantly over the last century: what this trend shows is that it is necessary to produce ever-increasing quantities of energy not only in order to keep the economy running, but also in order to produce the energy it needs.<sup>4</sup> For example, whereas in 1930 a barrel of oil had an EROEI of 100, by the 1970s the ratio had dropped to 1:23. The most recent data, relating to oil, natural gas and coal, give differing values, partly because of a lack of consensus on how EROEI should be calculated, but they are all around the 1:15 mark;<sup>5</sup> the EROEI estimates for non-conventional oils, like bituminous sand oil, and

for the use of advanced extraction techniques are even worse. The situation is aggravated by the fact that all the alternative energy sources, from nuclear energy to hydroelectric and renewable energy, have very low EROEI factors. Of the renewable energy sources, only wind power and hydroelectric energy perform better than oil, even though the values they record are, nevertheless, under 1:20; photovoltaic and biomass energy have EROEIs of less than 1:10, while biofuels can even record values of less than 1 (in other words, the amount of energy expended to produce them is greater than the amount derived from their use). The EROEI of nuclear energy appears to be in line with that of oil, although there is uncertainty over the estimates in this case, on account of problems linked to the storing of waste and the dismantling of power stations.

In 1956, M. King Hubbert advanced the theory<sup>6</sup> that production of oil in the United States would peak between 1968 and 1970, after which it would, gradually and inexorably, decline. He found that the production of oil — and of raw materials generally — follows a bell-shaped curve: initially, production increases constantly until the peak is reached, which coincides with the point at which the discovery of new oil deposits is no longer able to compensate for the exhaustion of the ones already being exploited. From this point on, production begins to decline, as rapidly as it had increased. Even though the American economic and political world did not take Hubbert's prediction seriously, energy production in the USA did indeed peak when he had said it would — 1970 in the case of oil and 1973 in that of natural gas —, after which the United States had to begin increasing its oil imports in order to compensate for the dwindling supply from its own wells. The years that followed were ones of severe global economic crisis and international instability. In 1974, the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbours caused oil prices to rise and led the OPEC countries to start using the oil embargo as a means of putting pressure on the Western powers, exploiting their dependence on this raw material. In the same decade, the Club of Rome<sup>7</sup> attracted the attention of public opinion worldwide following the publication, in 1972, of its report *The Limits of Growth*. This report, based on a computer model of the global economy, created and subsequently refined at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), predicted that economic growth could not go on indefinitely on account of limits imposed by the availability of natural resources and the Earth's capacity to absorb polluting substances. As in Malthus' case, the model on which the Club based its conclusions was criticised by economists, who felt that it did not properly take into account the roles of the market and of technological

innovation. Indeed, according to classical economic theory, when a commodity begins to be in short supply, its value increases, making it opportune to invest in technological research to identify a less costly alternative to it, or to find ways of using it more efficiently.

Despite the interest initially aroused by the report *The Limits of Growth*, the overcoming of the 1970s oil crisis fed a general conviction that the predictions of the Club of Rome would not come true and this issue was soon dropped. It is true that the ground still contains large quantities of oil that, according to some sector experts, could see the world economy through another hundred years.<sup>8</sup> The problem, however, is that the technologies needed to find and extract this oil are becoming increasingly costly, both in economic and in energy terms, a fact that lends weight to the idea that EROEIs are declining. Nowadays it is possible to reach oil that lies under 6000 metres of rock in seas that are 3000 metres deep; to extend the life of wells, or to extract oil that is too thick for traditional methods, it is possible to inject steam, natural gas and water, or carbon dioxide in order to push the oil to the surface; the possibility of using chemical solvents and microbes to make thick oil less viscous is being explored; fires are also lit in oil fields to render the oil more fluid, exploiting the pressure produced to drive it upwards. The devastating explosion of the BP oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico shows us, however, just how a high price can be paid for these new technologies. In short, it cannot be assumed that technological advances will automatically result in achievement of the objectives that have been set. When oil prices were sky high in the 1970s and '80s, huge investments were made in research into nuclear fusion, yet without producing the expected results; now, this source of energy is no longer even considered a valid alternative to fossil fuels.

### *We Are Running a Real Risk.*

Despite the economists' criticisms and the scepticism on the part of sector operators, data are now emerging that bear out the forecasts of the economic model on which the limits of growth theory is based: if we take the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as an indicator of pollution and the prices of the main raw materials as indicators of the availability of resources, and consider the two-hundred year period from 1900 to 2100, the current values are substantially in line with the forecasted ones. Unless countermeasures are taken, and in time, the effects of the limits of growth could already be manifesting themselves in a few years' time —

in around 2020.<sup>9</sup>

As far as oil supplies are concerned, the data seem to show that Hubbert's peak was reached in around 2008 and that we have now entered the plateau phase supposed to precede the decline in the availability of this resource. According to figures released by the Association for the Study of Oil and Gas, even though oil consumption is continuing to increase, for the past three decades, i.e. since the end of the last intensive period of drilling activity (the one that followed the end of the 1970s oil crisis), the amount of new oil discovered each year has been falling sharply. Added to this, the first decade of the new century saw an exponential increase in the price of oil, which rose from around 20\$ a barrel in 2000 to more than 130\$ in 2008, the year in which the present financial and economic crisis exploded. Even though this crisis provoked an economic recession that caused the price to tumble, it quickly started to rise again, and this rise will probably become vertical as soon as the world economy starts to pick up. The 2008 food crisis was linked to rising oil prices and to the use of corn to produce biofuels and it can be regarded as a foretaste of the dramatic global crises we could see in the future.

Thus, several international bodies and organisations have started sending out alarm signals. The International Energy Agency (IEA) recently warned that 2013 will see a crisis, due to oil shortages, worse than the one experienced in 2009: according to the IEA, when the economy starts to recover, there will inevitably be an oil supply crisis, since most oil companies, despite the fact that many important oil reserves have started to fail, have postponed or cancelled the exploration programmes and other investments necessary for continued extraction. As a result, the IEA says, oil prices are destined to rocket once again; this will stifle the nascent economic growth and produce another very serious recession.

The United Kingdom has set up a parliamentary commission to monitor the oil peak issue, while its government, on 22 March, 2010, held a meeting (kept secret) with around twenty representatives of industry and experts on this topic. All the reports presented on that occasion highlighted the extreme severity of the problem, the lack of awareness among governments and the need for immediate action. Yet the debate that ensued can only be described as disturbing, because in the face of the very real risk (recognised by everyone present) that the problems could start to manifest themselves within as little as three or four years, the proposals advanced all revolved around interventions at national and local level, it being taken for granted that the forces of the market cannot be opposed and that the role of politics is inevitably changing: from the



redistribution of wealth to the dividing up of an increasingly small pie.

Certainly, even though the Western countries, being less equipped than China and India to cope with volatile prices, are bound to be more severely affected by the problem of energy in irregular and short supply, the European governments, when they are not ignoring the problem, seem resigned to playing a low-key role, which consists of merely guiding the transition towards the more sober models of life imposed by a low-energy world, while seeking to avoid social conflict. In particular, no one seems to have any ideas on how the countries deeply indebted by the financial and economic crisis, which are major importers of energy, might find the resources to fund the major investments they desperately need to make.

The most detailed analysis of the oil peak problem to date produced by a government is the 2005 report prepared by Robert Hirsh for the US Department of Energy. After beginning by explaining that the global oil peak exposes the USA and the whole world to the risk of an unprecedented crisis, whose effects — economic, social and political — would be dramatic, the report sets out three alternative scenarios relating to the different time scales with which the USA and the world might respond to this challenge. To prevent the negative effects of oil depletion from manifesting themselves, counter-measures need to be taken at least 20 years before the oil supply curve starts to drop; if, instead, these measures are introduced 10 years late, it will still be possible to mitigate the effects of energy shortages, but the world will suffer a decade of scarcity; instead, waiting for the first consequences of the peak to manifest themselves will, instead, expose the world to two decades of crisis.

### *There Is Still a Long Way To Go.*

Even though a clear awareness of this problem has yet to emerge at the level of governments and public opinion, it is, in practice, already possible to see two distinct but parallel lines of conduct emerging, both geared at reducing the risks linked to energy dependence: first, people are being encouraged to reduce consumption of fossil fuels through energy saving strategies and the replacement of these fuels with alternative energy sources, and second, governments are moving carefully on the international stage, seeking, in a climate of increasingly fierce competition between the states and especially between the most important ones, to ensure that the necessary supplies are constantly available.

The US and Europe, as well as striving to increase the efficiency of

means of transport and production processes, are also focusing on replacing fossil fuels with nuclear energy; prominent, too, are their policies to develop renewable energy sources. At world level, we are currently in a situation in which wind, solar and biomass energy covers between just 1 per cent (Japan) and 6 per cent (Europe) of the energy needs of the most developed countries; to this we can add the approximately 8 per cent covered by hydroelectric and geothermal energy (a share that seems unlikely to increase further). The level of commitment and investment poured into the development of renewable energy sources (both in the ambit of technological research and in that of the creation of plants and infrastructures) will have to be considerable if these sources are to become a real, credible alternative to traditional fuels.

Obama, shortly after his instatement as President of the United States, stated that “the nation that leads the world in clean energy will lead the global economy.” The current drive towards renewable energy is thus strong in America and is part of the US government’s strategy to support the economy through the present crisis situation, create jobs and reduce the nation’s dependence on imports. Even though the 2009 recession put the brakes this trend, over the previous five years, the power produced by wind turbines had increased at a rate of 40 per cent a year, which is in line with the results recorded in the fields of solar energy and other energy sources, thanks above all to subsidies from both the central government and the state governments. In 2006, for example, the state of California, under the California Solar Initiative, launched its Million Solar Roofs programme, aiming to install 3 gigawatts of solar capacity (solar panels) on the roofs of homes by 2016. October 2009 saw the completion of the Roscoe Wind Farm in Texas, which covers an area of over 320 km<sup>2</sup>, has 630 turbines and cost 1 billion dollars; built by German power giant E.ON, it has a total capacity of 782 megawatts which allows it to power more than 200,000 homes.

The size of the installations is, in fact, one of the biggest problems of alternative energy sources and a main focus of technological research. One need only consider that the Roscoe Wind Farm, currently the largest in the world, barely supplies the amount of power generated by a medium-sized/large gas powered plant. In this field China is particularly active given that, thanks to the size of the Chinese state, its centralised development policies and the government’s tight control on the economy, it is in a position to channel vast financial resources into targeted projects. China indeed has some colossal projects in the pipeline, which few countries will be able to match. It plans to build a 2-gigawatt solar thermal

power plant, which will be four times as powerful as the two plants that the USA is due to start building in 2011 in the Mojave Desert. In the field of wind power, China has a project for a farm 25 times the size of the Roscoe Wind Farm, and in the photovoltaic sector it has plans for a 2-gigawatt plant, which will be 33 times bigger than the one (in Spain) that is currently the largest.

The European countries are struggling to keep up with the USA and China in this field. With the 20-20-20 programme they have set themselves some ambitious targets in terms of the spread of renewable energy sources and energy saving, one of which is to meet 20 per cent of total energy demand from renewable sources by 2020. But instead of creating a single programme and setting aside the resources that would make it possible to follow a single political direction, the European Union has opted to entrust the implementation of the programme to the member states, many of which have already expressed doubts over some of its objectives. The European states actively promote the policy of incentives for energy saving and for domestic and small-scale renewable energy installations, the only ones that can be implemented relatively efficiently at national level, whereas the larger and more important projects are left to the initiative of private industry and to the sphere of cooperation between states. One of the most ambitious European projects is the one to build, at a cost of around 30 billion euros, a large electrical energy grid (Supergrid) which will network the offshore wind turbines of the North Sea, Germany's solar panels and Norway's hydroelectric dams. The aim is to provide the countries participating in the project with a continuous supply of clean electrical energy. With all the energy coming from a single grid, changing weather conditions in the areas involved will not be a problem, and any surplus energy will be used to pump water into the Norwegian hydroelectric reservoirs, to be used when weather conditions are unfavourable.

In Europe, it is private companies that are behind what is, to date, the most ambitious project in the field of renewable energy: in December 2009, a group of leading banks and multinational enterprises (mainly German) operating in the energy sector created the Desertec Foundation which aims to create, in North Africa, a network of concentrated solar power plants, capable, by 2050, of covering 15 per cent of Europe's electrical energy needs. The plan is to use around 80 per cent of the electricity generated by this network to meet local demand, exporting the other 20 per cent to Europe. The idea underlying the project is actually even broader — to link up the solar power plants with a series of offshore

wind farms along the Atlantic coast of Europe and Africa and with hydroelectric power stations and photovoltaic and biomass installations located within European territory. The foundation is currently carrying out lobbying activities and feasibility studies in a bid to draw new companies into the project, generate political will in the states involved, secure the necessary investments, and modify the laws and regulations that impede the project. The foundation estimates that it would take 45 billion euros to produce 100 gigawatts of energy, a sum that is within the capacity of the enterprises and states involved: considering that the cost would be shared among 30 states and spread over 10 years, each state would only have to invest around 150 million euros a year. The Desertec consortium has achieved a first important objective, getting the project included among those promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean (so important to Sarkozy), but the chances of this project — already highly ambitious — succeeding are jeopardised by the climate of distrust currently dominating relations between Europe and the countries of North Africa, a climate fuelled by talk of terrorism and by the political instability of North Africa and the Middle East, and further aggravated by the political weakness of Europe.

### *The Problems of Electricity Grids.*

One of the merits of the Supergrid and Desertec projects is the fact that they have highlighted the problems linked to the major changes that will have to be made to electricity grids if they are to be able to cope with the demands placed on them by the new models of production and consumption of electrical energy. The present grids were created over a very long period of time, from 1800 onwards, on the basis of a hierarchical model in which electricity is produced by large centralised generators in order to exploit factors of scale, and distributed to users via a dense and extensive distribution network; for this system to work, a very strict control mechanism must be in place to regulate the amount of energy produced, ensuring that it always corresponds, exactly, to the amount consumed: if the level of consumption exceeds the production capacity, due to unforeseen peaks in demand or problems with plants or power lines, the grid collapses, leaving vast areas without electricity. Unfortunately, the new sources of renewable energy, like the wind and the sun, cannot be regulated and their availability is difficult to predict. If the percentage of energy produced from these sources becomes significant, it will be even more difficult to regulate production levels in such a way

as to ensure that production always corresponds to demand (wind turbines, for example, are sometimes deactivated even when it is windy, precisely in order to avoid overloading the grid). The present electricity grids, therefore, are not ready for a future in which recourse to wind and solar power will be constantly on the increase.

Furthermore, the growing trend to produce energy from renewable sources is having the effect of modifying the topology of electrical energy production and distribution systems. Whereas the production of electrical energy is currently concentrated in few places and entrusted to large-capacity power stations, the growth and spread of renewable energy will increase the number of “producers” (companies and families) of electrical energy: this will result in a meshed rather than a hierarchical network, in which energy can be generated and consumed locally, as well as collected and distributed over large distances.

On the electrical energy consumption side, too, new requirements are emerging and, together with those of production, throwing the current organisation of distribution networks into disarray. Industry and governments today see electric cars as the main means of reducing pollution and saving energy. The Electrification Coalition, an association of business leaders including Nissan, Cisco Systems, PG&E and Johnson Controls, created in the USA to promote policies and initiatives that will facilitate the spread of electric vehicles on a mass scale, recently issued a report<sup>10</sup> highlighting not only the challenges faced in relation to technology and industrial reconversion, but also the changes that will have to be made to the infrastructures in order to allow 75 per cent of cars to be electric by 2040. There can be no spread of electric cars without a radical overhaul of the current electricity marketing models and without a dense and extensive network capable of delivering the high power levels needed to charge vehicle batteries quickly.

If both energy demand and the quantities of energy produced become difficult to predict, it will clearly become impossible, in the future, to control and manage grids using the current systems. The answer is to introduce intelligence into the systems (there is, indeed, talk of “smart grids”), creating networks of sensors and computers whose distribution matches the distribution of the points of energy production and consumption. To achieve this, projects are under way throughout the world to replace traditional meters with intelligent meters that can be read and monitored through the telecommunications network, thereby making it possible to collect highly detailed information on levels of demand and production capacity. The subsequent step will be to develop the informa-

tion infrastructure necessary to regulate both energy demand and energy supply. It will also have to be made possible to apply complex pricing policies, with prices differing according to the availability of energy and the different uses, even to the point of being able to charge for the electricity supplied by a single plug. To maximise the efficiency of the system, the network should also be capable of distributing energy automatically between the production centres and the points of consumption.

In Europe, the European Commission is striving to promote the regulatory reforms and technological innovation necessary to safeguard the leadership of European companies in this sector.<sup>11</sup> Among these, ENEL, for example, is playing an important part: it was one of the first utilities to replace all its customers' traditional meters and it has launched a 77 million euro pilot project to install new-generation medium-voltage substations in the electricity distribution network. However, in this field, too, it is the USA and China that are setting the pace: on 27 October, 2009, Obama announced a 3.4 billion dollar smart-grid programme that takes to 7.1 billion dollars the total spent by the USA Department of Energy on modernising the country's electrical energy network. According to a Bloomberg report on 26 May, 2009, China's expenditure on extending and modernising its state grid could reach 10 million dollars a year; in 2012, when the current five-year economic plan comes to an end, China will have a system of sensors and meters covering the whole of the country;<sup>12</sup> furthermore, its main electricity distributor, China State Grid Corp., plans to build a national smart grid by 2020.

### *Europe and the Question of Secure Supplies.*

The United States is currently the only major power capable of acting at world level in order to secure its oil and natural gas supplies. Control of the oil fields, particularly those of the volatile Middle East, is perceived by the USA as crucial to the success of its policy to reaffirm its role as the leader of the international community in the wake of the Bush era. Meanwhile, China, for its part, is entering into agreements with Russia, and with oil producers in the Middle East, Africa and South America, in order to guarantee its supply of the energy on which its growing economy depends; in this context, China is able to exploit its vast financial resources, offering to invest in the infrastructures and economies of countries ready to supply it with energy. By contrast, Europe's capacity for action is woefully inadequate. The EU member states, despite

together forming the world's second largest economy and despite their great dependence on imported fossil fuels, have still not managed to create a common energy policy. Furthermore, the European Union does not carry enough weight on the international stage to guarantee its own energy supplies.

The situation is particularly critical with regard to natural gas. Europe has always been a net importer of energy and in particular of natural gas. Whereas it can choose from a number of suppliers of oil, which is transported by sea, in the field of natural gas Europe depends on its supplies from one country, Russia, which is also the main threat to its security. In 2007, gas imported from Russia covered a quarter of Europe's total gas needs, and accounted for a hefty three-fifths of the total imported. If, instead, we consider the absolute values, we find that these, too, are very high and are destined to go on increasing in the future, in spite of the trend towards alternative energy sources.

Even though liquefied natural gas (LNG) can be transported by sea, the tankers that carry it and the systems used to load and unload it are based on sophisticated technologies and demand large investments; therefore, when gas has to travel distances of less than three or four thousand kilometres, it is more economical to transport it via high-pressure gas pipelines, which, however, can only connect the wells with the specific consumer basins for which they were built. Whereas, on the one hand, this favours the establishment of long-term supply contracts, which guarantee, in terms of quantities and prices, more stable supplies than are possible in the case of oil, on the other, these supplies are much more inflexible and greatly influenced by the policies of the producer, of the consumers, and also of the states through which the pipelines run. To ensure the stability and security of gas supplies, it would be in the EU's interests to build a strategic partnership with Russia and to encourage the stabilisation of that country and of all the countries crossed by the gas pipelines that supply Europe. From the Russian point of view, too, closer links between Russia and Europe would render its energy exports more secure, and thus the financial income they bring. Instead, confusion reigns in Europe over the question of Russian gas, which is unsettling. Basically, in spite of all the declarations in support of a common European energy policy, each EU member state is still negotiating its own agreements and striving to resolve independently the problem of its own energy supplies. The incapacity of the European Union to represent a reliable partner for Russia in the energy field was clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the EU-Russia summit held in Helsinki in the autumn

of 2006. The European Union had been trying for years to get the Kremlin to sign a treaty that would make it easier for European companies to invest in the energy sector in Russia, and would also allow them to use Russian gas pipelines. Prior to the summit, Putin, in return, had requested that Russian companies be allowed to invest in western Europe; in addition, he had asked Europe to use its influence to get the United States to ease its restrictions on US exports of high technology, and had also requested that the treaty include measures to open up the nuclear fuel market in which Russia was investing. Putin's intention, in advancing these requests, was to show that the two sides were dealing with each other on an equal footing, and also to increase Russia's integration into the Western world. However, the Europeans proved unable to respond to the Russian requests. Despite this, during the summit, the European Commission, led by Barroso, nevertheless invited the Russians to sign the treaty; the Russians refused.

The weaknesses of the European Union and Russia, and their incapacity to establish stable and coherent relations with each other, foster instability in eastern Europe and give the United States an opportunity to influence, in an anti-Russian sense, the policies of the eastern European states. The Russian-Ukrainian gas crises are the most dramatic symptom of this situation, which Europe has tried to address by shouldering most of the costs of building a new gas pipeline, North Stream, which will avoid the countries of eastern Europe. The pipeline, which will become operational in September 2011, links Russia with Germany, passing under the Finnish, Swedish and Danish waters of the Baltic Sea and increasing the strategic importance of Germany in the field of gas supplies to western Europe. Furthermore, wanting to give Europe an alternative to Russian gas, the European Commission, with the support of the United States, launched the Nabucco pipeline project. This pipeline is to connect Austria with the Caucasus, where large quantities of gas have been discovered, and potentially also with deposits in Iran and the Middle East (via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary).

But even with these new infrastructures in place, Europe will still not be rid of its dependence on the gas supplied via the pipelines that cross the Ukraine and Belarus, which will continue to carry a large share of the gas Europe needs; neither will it be free of its dependence on Russia, which will still be able to use the threat of cutting gas supplies as a lever against Europe. Russia responded to Nabucco by deciding to build South Stream, a pipeline that will connect Russian and Caucasian gas fields to Italy via the Black Sea, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Slovenia. South



Stream, furthermore, seems to be ahead in the race between these two pipelines since Russia is proving to be better than the European Commission at reaching agreements with the governments of the Caucasian states in order to reserve gas supplies; the Europeans on the other hand, wary of upsetting the Russians in the delicate ambit of energy supplies, but also of upsetting the United States by failing to support its policy to contain Russia, are being less whole-hearted in their support of Nabucco.

*The Risks and Opportunities for Europe.*

With regard to the energy question, the performance of Europe, weak and divided, is severely lacking on all fronts: it is failing to come up with alternatives to fossil fuels, failing to make the investments necessary to build the new electrical network that is so badly needed, and trailing in the international race to secure access to the traditional energy sources that will continue to be indispensable for a long time to come. Energy security and energy questions generally are perceived by the governments, justifiably, as issues central to the interests of their countries that, for this reason, cannot be referred to the present European institutions, which, as events have clearly shown, are not the place in which strategic questions can be dealt with efficiently. The European Union, despite having long discussed this issue, has failed to draw up a common energy plan — a plan that would not only provide European society with a concrete example of a collective programme, but also allow the building of the crucial political framework of reference in which other initiatives, in the industrial, social and research fields, could also be developed and implemented. Indeed, such a programme, to be created and realised, demands instruments of government that, being typical of states, the EU institutions lack; furthermore, the single European states, even the largest ones, are simply unable to muster the level of resources, human, economic and financial, that are required. In short, neither the European Union nor the single European states currently have the capacity to unite companies, research centres and citizens in a great common effort to tackle the challenges presented by the energy question. As long as Europe continues to lack a federal state, the outlook for the Europeans will remain bleak: European enterprises will be increasingly at a disadvantage compared with their competitors from the large continental states and will lose the position of leadership that, at present, they still occupy in the energy field; the European states will find themselves ill-prepared to tackle the crises that are looming, and their citizens will be forced, more

than others, to suffer their dramatic consequences.

The consequences of the absence of a European federal state are apparent not only at domestic level, in the ambit of the economic, fiscal and innovation policies necessary to rise to the challenges of technological progress in the energy field, but also at European level, in the field of energy security. In a world that is becoming multipolar and in which the United States' role as the guarantor of international order and of free access to raw materials is no longer unchallenged, Europe is not in a position to rely, as it once did, on American support to ensure its access, at favourable conditions, to the energy market. As we have seen, the energy problem will be an enduring one and we face a future in which energy will become a more and more valuable commodity that is increasingly difficult to source. In a world of growing energy scarcity, competition between countries increasingly short of this resource will become fierce. As the history of the past hundred years confirms, the need to secure energy supplies has always been one of the most sensitive issues for modern states; as the reality of dwindling oil supplies begins to hit, we will see an increase in the forces tending to turn the current competition, governed by economic laws, into a lawless struggle in which the political weight of the rival parties will easily prevail over the rules of the free market. This tendency could even undermine the very foundations of the current global economy, and have unimaginable consequences.<sup>13</sup> Today it is already possible to see the premonitory signs of new international conflicts in the energy field: the decision of the US congress to prohibit Chinese enterprises from acquiring shares in American companies operating in the energy sector; China and India's agreement to strengthen their presence in the international energy industry and to work together to gain control of the fields useful to the development of their economies; Russia's decision to renationalise its energy sector, also with a view to using energy as a lever, to influence its relations with its European and Asian neighbours.<sup>14</sup> In this competitive scenario, once again, neither the European Union nor the single European states have the possibility of playing a significant role.

It is not only at the level of the world's major powers that interests and *raison d'état* within the energy sector have started to diverge; this trend is even emerging within Europe. In the absence of a European energy policy, the main European states are finding themselves having to compete with each other for access to energy sources. Germany, in particular, is abandoning its old fears about acting independently on the international stage and is trying to use its economic and political weight

to secure the resources it needs, even if this means openly setting itself (as in the case of policies pursued in Africa) in opposition to France. Furthermore, thanks to its economic power and its geographical location at the heart of Europe, Germany is the main collecting point for Europe's primary energy imports; from this perspective, the creation of the new North Stream gas pipeline is an important development. This is a role that already makes Germany well placed to become a partner to Russia and it is one that the country may in the future exploit in order to affirm itself as Europe's main regional power. The links between the energy question and European defence have always been fundamentally important. One need only recall that the whole process of European integration began with the creation, sixty years ago, of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Robert Shuman, in his declaration on May 9, 1950, indicated both the final objective of the process that was being started — European federation — and the instrument through which it could be achieved: he spoke of the decision, taken by a group of key European states, to transfer to a "High Authority" real power capable of defusing a crisis situation that was threatening Europe.<sup>15</sup> Sixty years on, the problem of energy is very much to the fore again and its re-emergence has shown that the common market and cooperation between governments are no longer enough to guarantee Europe's wellbeing and security.

The energy question is just one of the many questions that the European Union is unable to tackle due to the shortcomings in its institutional framework that the new Lisbon Treaty has failed to remedy. In this setting, Europe's citizens have gone back to asking their own governments, increasingly forcibly, for the things that Europe cannot give them. What they do not realise is that, by so doing, they are favouring the re-emergence of the old divisions that had seemed definitively consigned to the past, and are forcing their economic and political systems to compete with those of their neighbours at a time when there is far more need for the European Union to rise, as one, to the challenges of international competition.

If it is true that intergovernmental cooperation has lost its driving force and is probably no longer able to guarantee the European Union a future, it is also true that it is no longer enough to tackle separately the challenges that the world is presenting us with, creating new "High Authorities" in specific fields and not altering the European states' essential prerogatives. Jacques Delors, in a recent study of the energy question, proposed setting up a European Energy Community using the instrument of enhanced cooperation envisaged by Lisbon Treaty.<sup>16</sup> But,

as this article has tried to show, the domestic and international challenges connected with the energy question are now such that only a state of continental dimensions can guarantee the necessary level of involvement of the citizens and production forces, and the necessary instruments of government. Delors recalls that “When six European states decided in 1951 to integrate two key sectors of their economies to create a Community, their purpose was to replace conflict with cooperation and antagonism with prosperity.”<sup>17</sup> Anyone who harks back to the example of the ECSC should, however, have the honesty to recall that that experience succeeded because the objective of the European federation was not just a rhetorical expedient, but rather the fundamental principle that made cooperation between France and Germany possible. The faltering pursuit of that objective explains the present difficulties now afflicting the European Union and the very serious risks, illustrated by the crisis of the single currency, that it is now running.

What is needed is for Europe’s leaders to appreciate the responsibilities they bear, not only towards their electorate, but also towards the future of Europe as a whole. In particular, it is up to the leaders of the European countries that led the integration process, and in which the idea of a united Europe is still alive, to exploit the opportunities offered by the crisis that Europe is going through in order to take the initiative and found the United States of Europe, restricting the endeavour, initially at least, to their countries — the only ones that can give Europe a future again.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (first edition), Chapter 1, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> William Stanley Jevons, *The Coal Question* (2nd ed.), London, Macmillan and Co, Chapter 7, 1866.

<sup>3</sup> Charles A.S. Hall, John W. Day, Jr., “Revisiting the Limits to Growth After Peak Oil”, *American Scientist*, 97, n. 3, May-June 2009, p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> C.J. Cleveland, R. Costanza, C.A.S. Hall, R. Kaufmann, “Energy and the U.S. Economy: A Biophysical Perspective”, *Science*, New Series, 225, n. 4665, Aug. 31, 1984, pp. 890-897.

<sup>5</sup> Charles A.S. Hall, John W. Day, Jr., *op. cit.*, Fig. 5.

<sup>6</sup> M. King Hubbert, “Nuclear Energy and Fossil Fuels”, report presented at the Spring Meeting of the Southern District Division of Production, *Drilling and Production Practice*, American Petroleum Institute, 1956.

<sup>7</sup> The Club of Rome was founded in 1968 by Italian entrepreneur Aurelio Peccei and Scottish scientist Alexander King with the aim of bringing together eminent entrepreneurs, scientists, intellectuals and political leaders interested in analysing the changes taking place in our society and, in particular, problems relating to limits on the consumption of resources

in an increasingly interdependent world.

<sup>8</sup> L. Maugeri, “Squeezing More Oil Out of the Ground”, *Scientific American*, October 2009.

<sup>9</sup> G.M. Turner, “A Comparison of the Limits of Growth with 30 Years of Reality”, *Global Environmental Change*, 18, n. 3, August 2008, pp. 397-411.

<sup>10</sup> *Electrification Roadmap – Revolutionizing Transportation and Achieving Energy Security*, Electrification Coalition, November 2009.

<sup>11</sup> In 2005, the European Commission created the European Technology Platform (ETP) for the Electricity Networks of the Future (SmartGrids), which brings together all European sector operators with the aim of making the EU more competitive in the electricity networks sector. The documents produced by the SmartGrids Platform can be consulted on the official website: [www.smartgrids.eu](http://www.smartgrids.eu).

<sup>12</sup> *Panel Session: Developments in Power Generation and Transmission—Infrastructures in China*, IEEE 2007 General Meeting, Tampa, FL, USA, 24–28 June 2007. Electric Power, ABB Power T&D Company, and Tennessee Valley Authority (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers).

<sup>13</sup> M.R. Simmons, *Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy*, New York, Wiley, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> *Uno Stato federale europeo per affrontare il problema energetico*, document of the “Campagna per lo Stato federale europeo” published with the support of the Mario and Valeria Albertini Foundation, [www.euraction.org](http://www.euraction.org), February 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Shuman said, in his declaration: “By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realisation of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.” And, further on: “The essential principles and undertakings defined above will be the subject of a treaty signed between the states and submitted for the ratification of their parliaments. The negotiations ... will be undertaken with the help of an arbitrator appointed by common agreement. He will be entrusted with the task of seeing that the agreements reached conform with the principles laid down, and, in the event of a deadlock, he will decide what solution is to be adopted.”

<sup>16</sup> Sami Andoura, Leigh Hancher, Marc Van Der Woude, *Towards a European Energy Community: A Policy Proposal*, Notre Europe, March 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Jacques Delors, “A Call for a European Energy Community”, in *Towards a European Energy Community: A Policy Proposal*, *op. cit.*

# Federalism and Human Emancipation\*

*LUISA TRUMELLINI*

The idea of federalism as a new political ideology was one of the cornerstones on which Albertini, from the 1960s onwards, built up the European Federalist Movement (MFE). That the MFE, founded in 1943, has managed to survive for more than sixty-five years in a political and cultural setting that, in spite of the advance of European integration, has tended gradually to sideline the federalist option can be attributed, more than anything, to the fact that Albertini grasped and developed the concept that federalism is more than just an institutional theory and a solution to the specific problem of the end of the European state system; indeed, he recognised that it is the global political answer to the challenges facing mankind as a result of the continuous evolution of the mode of industrial production. Albertini's work made it possible to develop the radically innovative idea, introduced into European politics after the Second World War by Spinelli, that progress in our continent can now be pursued only through the ground-breaking struggle to found a European federation. Through further theoretical exploration of this idea, he succeeded in illustrating the universal value associated with federalism, and brought out its true historical and political significance; and, since the MFE derives its power only from its quest for truth, Albertini, through this reworking of Spinelli's ideas, provided the organisation with the bedrock of its existence.

On this solid foundation, the movement was able to build its cultural and, by extension, its organisational autonomy. And it is in this setting that the federalists have acquired a stronger awareness of the historical and political role they are called upon to play.

Indeed, it should never be forgotten that a revolutionary movement (which, by definition, cannot expect any real return within the existing

---

\* This is the outline of a report given in Verona on April 17, 2010, at a seminar organised by the MFE; in the light of developments in the ongoing debate, this report has been reviewed and updated.

framework of power) can feed the moral impetus of its militants only by developing conceptual categories that enable them to understand the ongoing historical process and allow them to work out how they stand vis-à-vis the great political conquests of the past; and also that can help them find answers to the new challenges facing mankind. Unlike the class-related ideologies of the past, federalism is not linked to the defence of specific interests. Indeed, all that can sustain espousal of the federalist cause and engagement within the movement (which must stem from a totally free choice) is an awareness of the nature of the historical situation in which mankind currently finds itself and a determination to change that situation; this is, indeed, the reason why the movement's action revolves, essentially, around the quest for truth. Thus, in the future too, the survival of the MFE will depend on its capacity to go on sustaining federalism as a form of active political thought that represents both the transcending (in a Hegelian sense) of the traditional ideologies that preceded it, and the alternative to the existing power situation, which is still based on the categories of nationalism.

Before moving on to an illustration, necessarily brief and schematic, of the fundamental points of the theory of federalism as a new political ideology, it is important to recall that the cornerstones of this theory were laid by Albertini, while Rossolillo subsequently took up and developed several of its decisive points. Spinelli's view of the historical and political significance of the struggle to found a European federation, being the basis of organised federalism, must be seen as a point of no-return. So, too, must Albertini's theoretical-political view of federalism as an interpretative key and as a basis for action, and the further insights provided by Rossolillo. What this means is that while there is, of course, still scope for clarification and enrichment of this theory, there can be no ignoring the intellectual advances already made, which have proved fundamental and must inevitably constitute the basis of any further evolution.

That said, we need to guard against falling into the trap of *ipse dixit* dogmatism, in other words the tendency to repeat formulas ritualistically, thereby rendering them hollow. Indeed, it must be appreciated that what the federalists have inherited is a living system of thought, which they must be capable of feeding, mainly by constantly putting it to the test, to see how it stands up when considered in the light of the events of the unfolding historical and political process; but also by working out, using the instruments it gives us, the answers to the contradictions afflicting today's constantly evolving society, European and global. It is therefore

necessary to continue exploring federalist thought, first of all to understand it and learn how to use it, but also in order to identify the aspects of it that demand further investigation.

It goes without saying that this is a task that can be carried out only collectively, through the free and rational debate that must continue to characterise the life and work of the MFE.

\* \* \*

One feature of federalism is that it is historically connected with the great ideologies of the past (liberalism, democracy and socialism, the latter including its variant, communism). First of all, it was the great battles (and victories) of these currents of thought and of action that created the conditions that made the federalist struggle possible; moreover, it was the historical affirmation of the core content and values of these ideologies — freedom, equality and social justice — that brought to an end the historical phase of class struggles and allowed the European states to evolve towards that *republican* regime that Kant had already indicated as the essential condition for their possible union, and thus that opened up the possibility of the historical affirmation of federalism. Furthermore, all three of these great ideologies of the past succeeded in identifying (as federalism has today) the institutional bottleneck of their times, which was preventing the evolution of the forces of production, and in indicating a solution through which it could be overcome; they each identified the universal value bound up with the political revolution for which they were fighting — the value whose affirmation would create a framework in which to further the emancipation of mankind; and to do all this, they first produced an analysis of the historical-social conditions that would make it possible to realise their objective.<sup>1</sup>

The novelty of federalism compared with the ideologies of the past (i.e. the element that allows it to overcome them) is linked the fact that it does not oppose the kind of government or regime in power but, rather, pursues the goal of changing the type of state. Unlike them, it is not concerned primarily with the balances of power that exist within the state; instead, it identifies the current form of state (the sovereign nation-state) as the cause, through its inadequacies, of the institutional bottleneck that is suffocating the forces of production. The nation-state was the political-institutional instrument through which Europe put an end to the *ancien régime*, allowing subjects to become citizens and sovereignty to pass into the hands of the people; in short, the nation-state provided the framework



for the birth and affirmation of liberalism, democracy and then socialism. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was an evolving framework within which, albeit with growing difficulty, deeply innovative solutions were found to the need to increase, substantially, popular control over and participation in the life of the institutions. But at the same time, precisely because of the growth that its institutional framework allowed, which was accompanied by growing sense of belonging to the national community — a sense also fostered by domestic political reforms (designed to counter the division of society into opposing classes) —, the sovereign nation-state formula gradually became insufficient and inadequate. Despite growing interdependence at continental level (linked to the evolution of the means and the forces of production) and deepening social and political integration in the different countries, the dimension of politics, and thus the organisation of civil life, remained national, a contradiction that, ultimately, definitively upset the balances in Europe. There developed unsustainable competitive tendencies and tensions within the European state system that, aggravating and triggering the aggressiveness inherent in nationalism, made it impossible for the different countries to live peacefully together and led to their devastating political regression (this is, in fact, the deepest root cause of the advent of fascism in Europe). In this way, there also emerged, the intolerable and unsustainable contradiction of great political ideologies that can fight to affirm universal values (freedom, democracy and social justice) within the sphere of single countries while lacking the political and cultural instruments to pursue these same values in international relations, or to apply them to other peoples.

The federalist project was thus conceived as a response to the historical crisis of the European nation-states, with two objectives: first of all, to pursue the historical affirmation, initially in Europe, of a new model of state representing the path to follow in order to overcome the division of mankind into sovereign states and achieve universal peace, unifying peoples and extending the orbit of democracy through the creation of a state of states (the federal state) capable of replacing international relations founded on force and on power with relations based exclusively on the rule of law, guaranteed by a federal constitution and expressing the will of the citizens; and at the same time to create, through the new institutional framework, the conditions making it possible to relaunch, on a higher (truly universal) plane, the battle to realise, fully, the values of freedom, democracy and social justice. As Kant teaches, “the problem of establishing a perfect civil constitution is subordinate to the

problem of a law-governed external relationship with other states, and cannot be solved unless the latter is also solved.”<sup>2</sup> A universally just law cannot be established until violence is eliminated from all social relations, because as long as there exists an ambit based on relations of force, oppression and domination will continue to be necessary, and thus justified, evils.

In this sense peace, through federalism, becomes the priority value, on whose realisation depends the radical “material” transformation<sup>3</sup> that will free mankind from violence and create the conditions for the birth of a *perfect civil constitution*, in whose framework it is possible for men to behave in a completely moral way.

From the federalist point of view, therefore, peace does not equate with the absence of war, or even with the feeling that war has become a remote phenomenon that no longer constitutes a danger. It is worth underlining this truth and bearing it in mind, certainly in our times of muddled cosmopolitanism, in which the idea of the progressive affirmation of a universal right, administered by international courts in a framework of inter-state cooperation that is guaranteed by international organisations, seems to pass for peace as Kant understood it. Peace is the condition that is created only after all the states have relinquished their sovereignty and adopted a single legal constitution, thereby bringing into being a *state* community. Peace exists only when international politics no longer exists and the only politics that does exist is domestic politics, which is controlled by the citizens directly, through the democratic mechanisms established by the constitution.<sup>4</sup>

This possible scenario is bound up with a new concept of history as the process by which peace is progressively affirmed, a process that goes hand in hand with the realisation of a new model of state: the world federal state.<sup>5</sup> The state is, in fact, the entity that realises and guarantees peace and law among citizens and creates the conditions for the formation of a community of destiny, within which it becomes possible to achieve dialogue and pursue the common good, on the basis of free and rational exchanges between the citizens. But the existence of a number of nation-states is the negation, at a higher level, of the values enshrined in the state, and it condemns mankind to live in a world of “common goods” that are unshakably opposed to one another. “The state is therefore an institution marked by a radical contradiction: it is at the same time the affirmation and the negation of law”, because it is, “in the relations among its citizens, the guarantee of peace and law, and therefore of all other political and social values”. But it is also the agent and the cause of war in international

relations. In short, “while it arms citizens for war against other states, it disarms them in civil life.” To overcome this antinomy, “the state must be conceived of as an institution in progress, which has been realised up to now in history in imperfect forms, but which tends to overcome its own limits and to advance towards the realisation of its idea, which is that of its full identification with the rule of law” and with the idea of the universal common good. “The complete realisation of the idea of the state coincides with the creation of a *worldwide* state as a federation of *republics*.”

\* \* \*

The acceleration of the process of globalisation linked to the end of the Cold War and the concomitant development and spread of information technologies have, together, further highlighted the already dramatic need to eliminate the institutional bottleneck that is making it impossible to govern globalisation, and making the federalist revolution more urgent than ever.

Rapidly growing interdependence is an inherent aspect of the evolution of the mode of industrial production, and it certainly constitutes the material basis of the transition, in the wake of the Second World War, from the European to the global state system. Within the framework of the global system, the recent transition from the bipolar to an unpredictable and still poorly defined multipolar order also stems, ultimately, from the evolution of the means of production. But the absence of adequate political models, equipped both to exploit the huge potential for progress and to face up to the new problems and new contradictions (all the new “needs of production”, to use Marx’s expression) that this evolution brings and injects into the system, is leading mankind to the brink of dramatic crises.

The potential harboured by the evolution of science and technology was apparent from as early as the 1960s, the period that saw the start of the debate on the new scientific, post-industrial mode of production. At the time, the new, innovative production characteristics were only just appearing and seemed to prefigure an absolutely unprecedented phase of social progress — one that would not only free all men from material need, but, above all, would put an end to repetitive, physical work, which would instead be done by machines; this, in turn, was expected to produce exponential cultural (and thus also civil) growth, throughout the population, and a dramatic increase in the quality of life, with the drastic

reduction of the working day giving all individuals the freedom to unlock their creative energies. It was thought that society, being made up of men who enjoyed far greater freedom than those of the past, would develop much more progressive and just forms of social coexistence, based on openness and solidarity. This was not a utopia, but a model that could have been realised, had politics only been able to — and above all, known how to — guide the evolution in that direction. But the MFE was the only setting in which there was a real awareness of the condition on which the realisation of this model depends, namely, the historical affirmation of federalism as a new form of state and a new political culture, initially in Europe, where it may serve as a model for the world. The federalists knew that unless this new model was introduced into the historical process, the contradictions of the new mode of production would, as the latter became more and more established, inevitably prevail over its potentialities.

Some of these contradictions were already apparent forty years ago, when many were warning of the risk of environmentally unsustainable economic development, or starting to raise the problem of the need to replace rapidly depleting sources of fossil fuels; at the same time, the existence of atomic weapons was endangering the very survival of mankind, and making peace (Kantian), and the need to create a universal power capable of disarming the states, an urgent issue.

The difference today, compared with then, is that the global framework has become much larger: until as recently as the end of the 1990s, the Third World countries were confined to the edges of global development and politics; now, following the emancipation of much of the Third World, it is Asian and South American powers that are challenging the USA for its position of global leadership. This integration into the global framework of areas that were once peripheral is a positive effect of the evolution of the production system (in the sense that the evolution of the production system was a necessary precondition for its occurrence, even though this does not mean, of course, that it was the only necessary condition or that it was, *per se*, sufficient). At the same time, the rapid development of these vast areas is increasing the dangers linked to the environment, the energy question and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is clear that while the world, even more than in the past, needs to find, urgently, the means of progressing to the world federation, the federalists know that this transition will be possible only by starting with the creation, in Europe, of the first example of a federal state born of the overcoming of national sovereignties. This will be a model of unification

of peoples and a demonstration that there exists a more advanced form of state than the nation-state and that the concept of the federal people is not utopian, but rather an achievable reality capable of giving rise to a new type of political community, founded on an open and inclusive identity. As long as Europe goes on failing to show the world this model, and continues to embody not the possibility of creating a state of states, but rather the difficulties of completing the process of unification, not to mention the inertia of national power, the world will go on being at the mercy of the excruciating process that is currently leading it in the direction of a competitive multipolar global order. Only the desire of each individual state to preserve an open global market will provide grounds (poor grounds) on which to seek forms of cooperation, albeit, very likely, in a context of increasingly divergent political and strategic interests; in such a scenario, it is only the existence of nuclear weapons and of an implicit balance of terror that keeps the risk of global war at bay. Conversely, these factors do not eliminate the risk of new crises breaking out more locally — since the end of World War Two there have been many such outbreaks —, and neither do they guarantee that we will not see disastrous resurgences of protectionism or phases characterised by dangerous international tension. Above all, what we can say, for certain, is that this global power framework will continue, for a long time yet, to prevent the development of the potential that is inherent in the new means of production. The political culture and political instruments that mankind currently possesses are incapable of guiding the process of human emancipation, and there will be a heavy price to pay for this incapacity, in terms of inequalities, injustice, violence, oppression and a profound crisis of democracy.

\* \* \*

This, finally, leads us on to another aspect worth considering, namely, the role of federalism as a response to the profound crisis of democracy that we are witnessing throughout the world.

Nowadays, there is much debate on the states' loss of power as a result of the process of globalisation, which is stripping them of instruments of control and of government precisely because they are institutions operating in a circumscribed territory, but having to reckon with a global financial system and an economy that no longer has a territorial basis. There have been numerous analyses of this phenomenon, which have also highlighted the negative effects it has on democratic life, and the

conclusions reached are generally clear and reasonable.

Furthermore, the events of recent decades have belied the maxim that economic growth almost necessarily brings with it social progress and the affirmation of the liberal democratic model. Today the idea that development equals progress is challenged on different grounds: not only because growth, when not governed with a view to achieving redistribution of wealth and the social and political advancement of the entire population, also generates exploitation and heightens inequalities, but also because it has been seen that the drive for democratic participation in the developing countries has remained weak. China and Russia, in their different ways, are two autocracies that enjoy strong consensus among the citizens — citizens who demand more respect for the rights of the individual, greater personal and economic freedoms and, above all, a better standard of living for everyone, but who do not question the single-party dictatorship (in China), or lend their support to the more liberal forces (in Russia), to the point that, in the latter case, the fault for the failure of the current power system to evolve in a democratic direction (despite its having initially shown a certain openness in this sense) probably lies mainly with them. The case of Russia certainly seems to provide a good illustration of how little is to be gained from democratic mechanisms when these are merely formal and not accompanied by correct institutional balances and by a real demand for democracy on the part of society, in other words when they do not correspond to real participation of the citizens in the political life of the country. The first decade of “democratic” life in Russia (the 1990s under Yeltsin) was a real tragedy for the Russian people, even threatening to destroy their state framework. The disintegration of the USSR, with all its catastrophic consequences, furnished China with a negative reference model as it carefully negotiated its entry into the global market and the global economy.

In many ways, an autocracy that encourages free initiative on the part of the citizens, that guarantees good standards of efficiency, that increases the wellbeing of society, and that governs the economic process with care, aware of the problems and imbalances it can generate, which it endeavours to resolve, is, in the absence of a strong grassroots drive for democracy (which would seem to be the product of a long process of social evolution, for the most part still difficult to understand), well equipped to compete with the existing democratic regimes. Certainly, the latter have not been any more successful in dealing with the problem of social inequalities. This applies not only to the democracies of the (so-

called) developing countries, which are undoubtedly still fragile — some are characterised by populist tendencies, as in South America, and even the more solid ones, e.g. India, have a highly complex society that has remained static for centuries —, but also to the West. Indeed, even in the West, social inequalities are no less prevalent than they once were, it is simply that widespread wellbeing, tending to give everyone a decent standard of living, has rendered them more tolerable; today, however, with poverty once again a growing problem in the USA and in Europe, as a result of certain political choices and, above all, of the growing competition mounted by the new economic powers, the Western democracies no longer seem able to offer a project capable of fostering the social and civil growth of the whole of society. All this weakens social cohesion and the citizens' support for the democratic institutions.

Although this phenomenon is most marked in Europe, where all the current crisis factors converge, it affects all states, albeit to greatly differing degrees depending on the level of power that each state wields on the world stage (and on the consequent level of autonomy and of sovereignty that it effectively enjoys), on how developed its society is, and on the expectations of its citizens. The root cause of this crisis is, more than anything else, the inadequate dimensions of the state; in the Western world, this problem is particularly acute in Europe, where it actually began to emerge more than a century ago. Other factors are, first, the inflexibility, in international relations, of the nation-state model (here meaning, broadly, a political community that, seeing itself as a sovereign entity in the international setting and concerned primarily with safeguarding the security and interests of its own citizens, sustains, in a structural sense, the friend/foe dialectic in its dealings with the outside world, an attitude that makes it impossible to find forms of integration that might help to overcome common, global problems, and encourages rigidity in the internal organisation of civil life, e.g. closed minds, micro-nationalism, a moving of society away from universal values); and second, the fragmentation of society, which was the result of the process of individualisation and detraditionalisation<sup>6</sup> that gradually took root in the nineteenth century, before being speeded up and rendered unstoppable by the end of the rigid class system and the evolution of the production system.

The impact of this detraditionalisation of society is felt strongly at political level, as it implies the loss of the binding and formative relationship between the individual and the community, founded on ties and pre-established social patterns, structured at many levels, starting at

that of the family. It is a process that is destroying the basis that, in the last century, underlay the possibility of translating the citizens' needs into political programmes and of organising the people's direct participation in politics. The parties are the instruments that were formed for this purpose, while the great ideologies provided the theoretical-practical criterion capable of directing choices; but, as mentioned, the concrete basis of all this was the existence of bonds determined by set social patterns (which also reflected clearly structured interests).

Today, politics at national level has no project to propose (for the reasons already outlined); what is more, it is no longer able even to find the instruments through which to tune in to society and mobilise it (if, that is, we exclude its tendency to play on society's fears, insecurities and growing egoism and to manipulate information). Meanwhile, the individual (in theory free to form his own identity), lacking institutional points of reference, ends up living an unstable existence, and tends to let himself become ensnared by the new forms of standardisation and dependence that the market has created. Nowadays, it is not citizens that take shape in society, but consumers, and the effects of this new reality in democratic life are inevitably devastating. The problem for politics today is not that of identifying new blocks of opposing interests, but rather of identifying new institutions, capable of creating a socio-political dimension within which there might emerge, spontaneously, new territory-based forms of political participation, capable of giving rise to human relations based on a conscious and responsible sharing of a collective interest, which is in turn based on support for moral values and universal policies.

It is, in other words, a question of bringing about self-government at all levels. Once again, federalism is the only school of political thought that has consciously raised this issue, because it is the only one able to see that the historical phase of class liberation has run its course and that the task now is to work out how to pursue the emancipation of the individual, creating the conditions that will allow him, freely, to develop an awareness of his identity as a responsible citizen. This is, indeed, the perspective developed by both Albertini and Rossolillo in their profound reflections on the communitarian aspect of federalism and the new forms of democratic participation in growth and territorial planning made possible by the existence, from district to world level, of many levels of self-government; and on the new means of forming political opinion and participation, culminating in the development of a new concept of militant democracy.<sup>7</sup>



Here, I mention this aspect merely in passing, even though it is one that, like the cosmopolitan aspect of federalism, would be very much worth revisiting and exploring in greater depth. Political debate today — a setting in which the question of community self-government is studied and debated strictly within national frameworks of reference — shows that this issue reflects a profound need that, if left outside the federalist framework of reference, becomes a vehicle of regression. What our society instead needs is to create new forms of democratic participation at all levels, precisely in order to be able to restart the process of human emancipation and thus leave future generations a better world.

This is why this objective, which we are pursuing in Europe through our struggle for the foundation of a European federation, is so profoundly important for the future of the whole world. If, in Europe, we manage, through the historical affirmation of the federal model of state organisation (which allows many different levels of political representation), to overcome the institutional bottleneck that is preventing the growth of civilisation, a new historical phase will finally begin, a phase that will lead us closer to Kant's universal peace.

### Notes on Historical Materialism

Albertini's reflections on federalism as an ideology are strictly related to his critical reworking, over the years, of the historical materialism of Marx. This was an intellectual endeavour that he conducted, in particular, through the political philosophy lectures he gave at the University of Pavia. Traces of this work remain: for example, the transcript of a complete recording of all the lectures given in the academic year 1979-80, as well as some references in transcripts of conferences that were subsequently published (in particular the one on "The Course of History" which appeared in *The Federalist*<sup>8</sup>). It is possible to draw from this material several key points that demonstrate how this important theoretical reworking by Albertini sheds light on profound historical processes. I would therefore like to summarise these points and highlight the role they play in Albertini's broader reflections on federalism as a new political philosophy.

It must be underlined, first of all, that what we are dealing with here is an attempt to develop a scientific-type theory in the context of social sciences that are still poorly defined; for this reason, the model Albertini aims to work out cannot be expected either to provide an exhaustive description of social reality as a whole, or to predict human events; human

freedom is, after all, a factor at play, and one that, by definition, makes it impossible to reduce exploration of historical-social processes to a quest to establish deterministic rules. Accordingly, the objective is to try and pick out, in reality as a whole, the underlying deterministic tendencies (which are then added to other, more specific determinisms and interwoven with the factor of human freedom) that impress a general direction on the historical-social process; in this way, it becomes possible both to identify the mechanisms allowing evolution, and to evaluate the profound contradictions that, from time to time, emerge.

In his bid to develop a new theory of materialism, Albertini brings out the substance of Marx's fundamental insight and some of the formulations it allows (thereby moving away from the various indications provided by Marx himself, which were often contradictory and, what is more, became established partly on the basis of subsequent interpretations that were, to an extent, manipulative and dogmatic). It is this insight that makes it possible, for the purpose of investigating the historical process, to pick out from among the countless elements that characterise man, the one that determines, along very broad lines, his social organisation; in other words, that specifically human trait — his production of his means of subsistence — that allows him, as a species, to survive and evolve.

This is an approach that, as we have already said, cannot and must not expect to grasp every aspect of human reality. It is precisely Marx's changing theories in this regard, together with the version that went on to become established in twentieth-century political culture, which provide one explanation for the current rejection of the materialist view of history. Albertini, in examining and eliminating all the contradictions contained in Marx's still very rough indications, instead explains, first of all, that thought is broader than ideology, that is, self-mystification (which nevertheless constitutes a substantial and inevitable part of human intellectual production); furthermore, he shows that it is not possible, within social reality, to identify a foundation "structure" (the so-called material production of the means of production) that *determines*, and an overlying "superstructure" that *is determined* (the latter embracing politics, law, religion, culture, art, etc., that is to say, all intellectual activity); instead, Albertini says, both material production (that which usually corresponds to the concept of the "structure") and the different expressions of intellectual activity (the so-called superstructure) constitute social reality's many constituent parts, whose relations are not hierarchical, but interwoven and mutually interdependent.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, if we restrict our analysis only to that which can be explained by social sciences — that is to say, if we exclude both biology and all that belongs to the realm of reason —, we find that historical materialism is able to show us how *the social interdependence of individuals* is established: put another way, it explains how *the mode of production* (and the level of development this has reached) *determines human social relations, that is the composition of society and social roles*.<sup>10</sup> This “material” fact also determines the range of possibilities that exist with regard to the development of intellectual activity and the possible forms of political coexistence.

To avoid misunderstandings in relation to all that has been said above, misunderstandings to which current interpretations of historical materialism can easily give rise, it is useful to underline, once again, two fundamental points. First of all, the uniqueness of Albertini’s interpretation lies precisely in his demonstration that the term “material” must, in fact, always be taken to mean *all* human activity contributing to the production of the means of subsistence: therefore, not only purely technical advances, but also the whole body of knowledge, *in all sectors*, that provides the instruments, cultural, political, legal, etc. — these will differ according to the level of development we are referring to — necessary in order to organise production and society. Therefore, once again, there is no “structure” determining a “superstructure”; rather, what exists is an overall body of *interdependent* human activities, linked to each other in a complex system in which every part has a reciprocal relationship with every other part and with the whole. Second, another aspect *determined* by the level of development of the mode of production, in addition to the social interdependence of individuals (meant in a general sense), is the *degree of autonomy of each area of intellectual activity* (and thus of culture, religion, politics, art and so on): the level of development of the mode of production provides us with indications on the *material possibility that a certain type of cultural or social evolution, or the historical affirmation of certain values, could take place, or the certainty that it cannot take place*. All creative activity of the intellect is, indeed, *free*, in that it manifests itself through innovative, *undetermined acts*; but such expressions of the autonomy of reason, found in all historical eras, from the dawn of mankind, are *conditioned* by the level of development of the mode of production. Even the purest manifestations of human freedom require certain minimum conditions in order to evolve: for example, at the hunting and fishing stage in the evolution of the mode of production, religious sentiment (understood as a spiritual

need that has accompanied man from the dawn of his existence) cannot evolve beyond the deification of natural forces. Alternatively, one can consider the fact that no complex, abstract thought is possible without the development of writing; in turn, the birth of writing is linked to the evolution of the agricultural mode of production, because it is only with the appearance of structured societies, in which different social roles become established, that an intellectual class can take shape.<sup>11</sup> The degree of autonomy of intellectual manifestations, in a general sense, is thus related to the degree to which men have developed the modalities by which they produce their own means of subsistence.

In this framework, the position of politics needs to be clarified further, given that it is a manifestation of thought, but is certainly far less independent of the mode of production than other, freer intellectual expressions, precisely because it is an essential factor of the social organisation that is crucial to the maintenance of the mode of production. For example, we know that in societies that are, *because of the modalities of producing the means of subsistence, necessarily* founded on the divide between intellectual work and manual labour, the exercise of power must inevitably involve forms of coercion, however these may be disguised. And it goes without saying that the political plan to create political and social equality of all citizens becomes a real prospect, capable of guiding political action, only as from the point at which it becomes compatible with the survival of society — that is to say, as from the point at which the evolution of the mode of production renders man capable of dominating nature (i.e. from the Industrial Revolution onwards), and makes it possible to overcome the situation that obliges most individuals to look after the production of food. Finally, this objective may be effectively and fully realised only when the evolution of the mode of production makes it possible to eliminate the structural need for a section of the population to perform subordinate functions.

Another example concerns the extent of political participation, which corresponds to the growth of interdependence, both in breadth and in depth, that is linked to the evolution of the mode of production<sup>12</sup>: for example, the great empires of the ancient world, were incapable of being democratised; the absence of a political culture able to conceive of forms of political participation extending across the whole of the empire and involving all levels of society was, indeed, a reflection of the material impossibility (material in the general sense already explained) of achieving this. Indeed, it was not until the appearance of the profound transformations brought by the birth of the industrial mode of production that it

became possible to create the conditions allowing an extension of the orbit of democracy (and the birth of a political culture in keeping with this).

This, and only this, is the interpretative scope of historical materialism: to highlight the determinisms underlying the organisation of society that are linked to the evolution of the modalities by which man produces his own means of subsistence. And, as we have seen, these determinisms impact *directly* on the level of human interdependence and on social roles, and, *as a consequence*, on the degree of autonomy of intellectual activity and on the forms of social and political coexistence.

The identification of these determinisms on the basis of the theory of historical materialism may seem, at first sight, a rather unimportant achievement, given that they are notions widely adopted by historiography, whose decades-long use of them bears out their validity. In truth, Albertini's great achievement was that of being the only scholar to succeed in clearly theorising these notions, incorporating them in a philosophical perspective — developed starting from the writings of Kant — that allows them to be set within a coherent general framework. Generally speaking, social scientists consider historical materialism superseded, even when using some of its criteria; similarly, historians frequently use its categories despite considering the theory itself mistaken or useless. In this way, the theoretical importance of this model is severely undermined, and it is used in a way that it reduces it to nothing more than an instrument of historical analysis: hence, the interpretative capacity of historical materialism with regard to the fundamental developments of the social and political processes is lost, and with it the possibility of using it to understand the general trends characterising the historical process. Albertini, on the other hand, through his reworking of historical materialism (which lends coherence to Marx's theory) in addition to making a decisive contribution — still to be appreciated — to the development of the social sciences, releases all the potential inherent in this model; and he highlights this potential by applying the model in his theoretical reflections on federalism.

Indeed, historical materialism as used by Albertini enables us to see, first and foremost, the general course of history that justifies the federalist struggle. Through historical materialism, it becomes possible to understand the connection between the mode of industrial production and the remarkable acceleration of the development of human interdependence, both in depth and in breadth,<sup>13</sup> that made it possible, gradually, to involve the masses in political action — and thus to lay the foundations for the

first affirmations of liberalism, democracy, and socialism — and also drew attention to the need to increase the size of the democratic state. It also becomes possible to see that the evolution of the industrial mode of production (which began mid-way through the last century and has accelerated over the past twenty years) has strengthened this trend, highlighting the need to be able to envisage, on the one hand, the creation (in the face of a further rapid increase in global interdependence in breadth) of a global state community, and on the other, an end to social oppression through the gradual abolition of subordinate manual labour, made possible by technological progress. These are precisely the challenges that federalism considers itself equipped to rise to; certainly, without the awareness that its action touches the deepest historical processes, the MFE would not have been able to survive, recruiting new forces, for over sixty years.

Once one appreciates that the development of the modes of production has created the objective conditions in which the mankind's unification and the emancipation of the individual and of social justice are possible, one can abandon the analysis of historical determinisms and enter the field of politics, where the task is to find the formulas for realising these objectives. In this regard, there exists no determinism that can guarantee the success of the battle for the world federation, if not, in the last instance, that which is linked to the criterion of survival, which seems to prevail, at the level of the species (but not of the single communities), throughout the history of mankind. But the time frame is absolutely uncertain and, like the stages in the possible advance towards this objective, is linked largely to the determinisms of politics (as well as to unpredictable elements, namely "fortune" and the free expression of human will), that is, to the iron rules of power and the rules, still so ill-defined, governing the widespread formation of an adequate social awareness of the challenges confronting mankind. The fact remains that, for politics, the first and perhaps most important step is to manage to see the road that must be followed; for federalists this step is possible, thanks largely to the theory of historical materialism left them by Albertini.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this regard, it would be worth looking in more depth at the idea that nationalism may be seen as a further ideology contributing to the emancipation of mankind, an ideology with characteristics similar to those of liberalism, democracy and socialism. From this perspective, the ideal embodied by the fatherland could be seen as the value aspect, and the nation-

state (including its administrative and bureaucratic machinery) as the structure aspect; meanwhile, from the historical-social point of view, nationalism would coincide with the overcoming of the *ancien régime*. Bearing this idea out, it is certainly true that the concept of the nation and of the national framework has been a major driving force of progressive political battles, particularly in the nineteenth century, often going hand in hand with the universal democratic ideal (in the case of Mazzini for example). However, there is no getting round the fact that this idea, being based on a non-universal value embodied by a closed political community — the “nation” or “fatherland”, which, by definition sets itself in opposition (albeit not necessarily aggressive opposition) to other similar circumscribed communities, all sharing the same traits: the existence of borders and of a specific identity) — is inherently flawed. Furthermore, whereas each historical affirmation of the principles of liberalism, democracy or socialism may be seen not only as a necessary transition, but also as a prefiguring, however partial, of the universal realisation of these principles, the artificial founding of the state on the idea of a closed community (however much this may be seen as a necessary stage) continues to contradict the aim of creating a universal political community, which will ultimately unify mankind. And, indeed, in the context of the battle for the world federation, whereas the other ideologies continue to act as vehicles of progress, nationalism continues to be the adversary that must be overcome. It therefore seems more useful to see the idea of the nation and the nation-state as crucial instruments in the historical affirmation of democracy: the idea of the nation, indeed, first gave form to the concept of people, and in this sense constituted a fundamental stage in the affirmation of popular sovereignty (a stage so effective that it was taken as a model the world over and, even today, has still not been overcome); at the same time, however, it has reflected the political, social and material limits of the historical period in which it was born — the limits of the European state system and of the still insufficient interdependence at continental level that made the national framework adequate while rendering all thoughts (albeit flourishing) of supranational state communities utopian. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the fact that the middle class was the section of society that most strongly supported the idea of the nation in its infancy (especially in those countries where the nation-state was not yet built), thereby making the struggle for democratic liberalism coincide with the struggle for the nation.

<sup>2</sup> This is the seventh thesis of Kant’s *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*.

<sup>3</sup> Mario Albertini, “Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo”, 1973, now republished in Mario Albertini, *Tutti gli scritti*, vol. VI, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Some point out that, for federalism, there are also other values, in addition to peace (in particular, a new model of sustainable development and of the welfare state) whose affirmation is crucial, arguing that it is simplistic not to highlight these. In actual fact, they are confusing two separate issues: to talk of peace, referring to it as *the* founding value of federalism, is certainly not to exclude any of the other objectives crucial to the realisation of a universally just society. It continues to be essential, for the development of the federalists’ political line, to reflect on these various issues and to adopt positions on them; and to these issues must also be added the crucial question of property, which opens up extremely important areas of reflection. But it remains essential to clarify that when we talk of peace, specifically, as the value aspect of federalism, we are not referring simply to the end of the threat of war — and thus to just *one* of the objectives that must be pursued in order to secure the future of mankind (alongside the safeguarding of the planet and other similar objectives) —; rather, we are trying to underline the need to create the only institutional structure that can give men the instruments that will allow them to control their own destiny, and thus solve their own problems, political, environmental and social. Federalism stands out precisely because it shows that men’s lives are blighted by the fact that they lack the

instruments and political culture to govern global processes; and also because, in line with Kant, it points out that it is only by managing to govern themselves as a single people, realising the ideal of the general will through institutions able to embody the principle of universal democracy, that men will be able to put an end to the evils and catastrophes that afflict them. For this reason, the key point is peace, by which we mean the overcoming of the idea that it is “natural” for mankind to be split into different state communities (however “willing to cooperate” when pushed to do so by a common threat) and the realisation, universally, of the rule of law.

<sup>5</sup> Francesco Rossolillo, “Federalism and Human Emancipation”, *The Federalist*, 32, n. 2 (1990).

<sup>6</sup> Ulrich Beck, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne; Risk Society Revisited. Theory, Politics, Critiques and Research Programs*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> In this regard, see, in particular, Francesco Rossolillo, *Città, territorio, istituzioni nella società post-industriale*, 1983, now republished in Francesco Rossolillo, *Senso della storia e azione politica*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009, vol. I and Mario Albertini, “A Discourse for Young Federalists”, *The Federalist*, 50, n. 2 (2008).

<sup>8</sup> Mario Albertini, “The Course of History”, *The Federalist*, 45, n. 2 (2003).

<sup>9</sup> Alongside these points, Albertini also refutes the interpretation of the historical process as a class struggle and the reduction of the mode of production to an economic concept. For a more exhaustive explanation of these points, and in general for more on Albertini’s reworking of historical materialism, readers are invited to consult the essay “Mario Albertini’s Reflections on a Critical Reworking of Historical Materialism”, *The Federalist*, 50, n. 1 (2008), which also deals with the mechanism that triggers change in the historical process, a question (clearly fundamental) that is here only touched on in order to focus, instead, on identifying the determinisms underlying the course of history. Indeed, the question of why it is that man, as a species, does not seek merely to survive, but rather evolves and has, precisely, a *history*, is a crucial one for the construction of any social science. Historical materialism offers an answer in this regard, identifying, in the needs of production, the general cause of continuous change. The needs of production are non-biological needs that arise when biological needs have been met, precisely because man, artificially modifying his condition, also modifies his needs. In turn, these, (new *needs*), to be satisfied, demand innovative solutions in an ongoing, self-perpetuating cycle. This idea, which is only roughly outlined in Marx, makes it possible to identify a fundamental general law determining the evolution of the historical process.

<sup>10</sup> Mario Albertini, “The Course of History”, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>11</sup> Although these examples, which take us back to the earliest stages in mankind’s evolution, seem to emphasise the purely material element of production, in the first case, religious feeling actually emerges as a key element of the organisation of primitive society, without which man’s coexistence would not work. It is not, therefore, an expression of thought determined by the way in which men produce their own means of subsistence, but rather an intellectual activity deriving from a profound spiritual need that characterises man as such and that, being accomplished through forms compatible with the level of development reached by mankind, helps to increase the stability of the organisation on which man bases his (so-called hunting and fishing) mode of production. In the same way, a determining factor in the evolution of the agricultural mode of production is the (innovative) intellectual capacity to find forms of organisation that will allow a population to engage in the complex task of increasing the productivity of the land at its disposal, and subsequently to deal with the consequent growth of the population and the changes (economic, political and cultural etc.) that this brings.



<sup>12</sup> It is, in this regard, important to underline the distinction between the dimension of political participation and the dimension of the state: if, indeed, a complex state-type organisation (even pre-modern) depends on the presence of a certain degree of evolution of the agricultural mode of production, after that degree has been reached the dimension of the political community is much less influenced by the further evolution of the mode of production (as shown by the fact that since antiquity very extensive state communities, like large empires, have co-existed alongside small ones); obviously, the internal organisation of these communities is, instead, conditioned by the degree to which individuals' real living conditions have developed, a fact which brings us back to the question of the possibility of active participation in political life.

<sup>13</sup> See, in this regard, F. Rossolillo, "Il federalismo e le grandi ideologie", now in *Senso della storia e azione politica*, vol. I, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.

## Notes

---

### THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

According to Stiglitz “globalisation is the field in which there emerge some of our deepest social conflicts, including conflicts over fundamental values, and the most significant divergences between the roles of the governments and the markets. Whereas the economy has to concentrate on efficiency, the whole question of equality must be left in the hands of politics.”<sup>1</sup> To date, however, politics has not shown itself to be willing or able to fulfil this role at international level.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements reached in the 1990s have encouraged economic liberalism and *laissez-faire* economic policies, as shown by the progressive elimination of customs duties worldwide and by deregulation, a trend that has eliminated the rules that impeded the free market. China’s subsequent entry into the market economy, symbolically sanctioned by agreements reached (again within the ambit of the WTO) in December 2001, has fuelled increasingly aggressive economic competition between global corporations and between states. Over the first decade of the new century, the exponential growth of the developing economies — China’s emergence as the world’s leading commercial power, after being classified only ninth in 2001, has been a particularly important driving force of competition and of the process of free enterprise globally — has thrown into sharp relief the contradictions and limitations inherent in the phenomenon of globalisation without government.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the debate on the relationship between the state and the markets has become an important and particularly topical one. The effects of the crisis have been felt in the working and business worlds and the states of Europe’s Western economies, increasingly indebted, have proved unable, through recourse to fiscal and social policies, to reduce the excesses of capitalism, which has spiralled practically out of control at international level. It is

no secret that the *laissez-faire* approach derived support and impetus mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom. Instead, the social-state model in continental Europe, well established and more geared at protecting the weaker sections of society generally, sought to lessen social inequalities and to control the degenerative trends, potentially dangerous for social and political order, that turbulent economic development inevitably produces.

It is no coincidence that this model of the social state asserted itself in a period of great economic growth (the 1960s): the aim was to favour the birth of an inclusive society, a deepening of democracy in different European countries (including Italy and Germany), and a greater role for the trade unions, and there is no doubt that the economic “miracle” of those years proved decisive in generating the resources needed to bring about improvements in working conditions, social welfare and social security. Indeed, once the thrust of that period was over and rates of economic growth became more stable and moderate, the European states, in order to conserve this model in the long term, were forced gradually to increase their level of debt.

Thus, the European model of the social (or welfare) state entered a critical phase in which its foundations (the active presence of the state in the economy, hefty public spending and increasing taxation) seemed less secure and were thrown into question by the industrial, economic and commercial successes of other models (primarily the Asian one).

Does this mean that the time has now come to abandon the model of the social state created, over centuries, in continental Europe? In this regard, it is worth recalling that social policy is a concept that in some areas of Europe was debated, albeit in general terms, as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in more precise terms after the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the reforms introduced in Germany by Bismarck. But the social state in the modern sense of the welfare state dates back to the policies of Roosevelt’s New Deal, introduced in response to the economic crisis of 1929. Following the stock market crash and the collapse of the banks and of investments, but above all, because of the dramatic problem of mass unemployment, the American government substantially redefined the role of the state in the economy and, for the first time in history, sought to do this on a continental scale and within a highly structured democratic system. In particular, the Roosevelt administration increased public spending in order to achieve full employment (and in so doing reformed the nature and aims of the Federal Reserve), pursued a policy of territorial intervention through the building

of roads, bridges and canals and the revision of numerous town planning schemes, and made jobs more secure, introducing forms of insurance against unemployment; Roosevelt also introduced forms of social security and healthcare, and clarified the responsibility of private enterprise towards society as whole.

In Europe, state intervention within a democratic system was a policy not seen until the post-war period, which coincided with the pacification of the continent and the start of its economic recovery. The first social programmes aiming to protect families in difficulty (guaranteeing them a minimum income), to increase the level of education, and to combat unemployment were introduced in 1942 and 1944. Inspired by the work of Englishman William Henry Beveridge (the same Beveridge who, together with Spinelli, Orwell, Camus and others founded, in Paris in 1944, the International Committee for European Federation), these were programmes that would, over subsequent years, give rise to an out-and-out public healthcare and social security system. However, it was not until the economic recovery of the 1950s and 1960s, and thanks in part to the increased income the state derived from the booming economy, that there emerged and spread, in many European countries, support for and a determination to implement policies geared at improving working conditions; this was a trend fed also by an increasingly strong trade-union mentality among workers and by the growth of education. It resulted in the introduction of legislation to protect the weakest classes, together with a fairer system of redistributing of tax revenues, and in the creation and strengthening of public welfare and social security institutions.

The instruments used by the different states to balance the socio-economic forces in the field have, given their different economic and political histories, varied considerably. Thus, over the course of time, some countries have favoured greater equalisation of taxation or of welfare, while others have preferred to ramp up social insurance contributions.

At this point, it is worth considering briefly the Rhine “social market economy”, a model often cited as an example to follow and which has indeed proved successful, also in the recent past. Michel Albert described it exhaustively in his book *Capitalism Against Capitalism*. This model is based on the free market, especially with regard to prices and salaries, but the working of the market “cannot on its own regulate social life as a whole. It needs external balancing elements; it needs to be balanced by social policy elements that are decided *a priori* and guaranteed by the state. The German state defines itself as a social state”, in other words “as

the protector of public assistance and of free negotiations between employers and workers” that, in accordance with “the social-democratic current, has [through co-determination] laid the foundations of worker participation in the life of companies and of the institutions”.<sup>2</sup> However, as Michel Albert explains in his book, for this approach to succeed, a country’s monetary stability and the independence of its central bank must be guaranteed over time. Therefore, in Germany the investment banks have had to assume an increasingly prominent role, not only funding the activity of companies, but also managing their property. There are indeed only two cases in which the German state has, formally, the right to intervene in the economic and social sphere: a) to restore competition where there emerge instances of market domination; b) to guarantee the social order.

Actually, this model has, to a large extent, been reproduced in France, Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg, albeit with variations dictated by these states’ different realities. And its success is demonstrated by the fact that, within continental Europe, only the Scandinavian model, established in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands (where up to a third, or more, of the GDP goes on welfare spending), has proved able to guarantee a higher level of social protection, both in the ambit of support for employment and in that of welfare and security, the cost of this being covered mainly by tax revenue and, to an extent, by forms of obligatory social contributions. In its Anglo-Saxon version (Great Britain and Ireland) the welfare state has focused more on protecting the weakest and most marginalised members of society than on providing more general support, with aid and assistance being guaranteed, above all, to these categories. In this case, the level of state intervention has remained relatively limited and many services remain private. In this context, a much lower proportion of welfare expenditure is covered by tax revenue and social contributions.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Mediterranean model (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain) has gone to a different extreme, concentrating mainly on the protection of workers, who have guaranteed social insurance and pension entitlements linked to their national insurance contributions.

All these policies took root gradually in Europe in the wake of the Second World War; then, in the 1970s, they were suddenly stepped up as a reaction to the first major monetary and oil crises. As a result, public debt in the European states began to grow, without provision being made for adequate guarantees of repayment.

From the mid-1990s onwards, the debt crisis of the Western economies deepened as a result of the growing globalisation and liberalisation

of the markets, trends encouraged, in the USA in particular, by permissive banking and financial systems whose lack of regulations meant that very few restrictions were placed on the movement of capital. In the face of a huge increase in economic growth, albeit not evenly distributed, the conditions were created for a volatile economy, based more on speculation and on capital flows than on the real economy. Indeed, most people now agree that liberalisation, deregulation and wild privatisation, whose seeds were sown at the close of the last century, are among the main causes of the states' increasing weakness, shown above all in the fields of capital control and respect for collective bargaining, and in the three-way relationship between the state, enterprises and banks. Of course this weakening of the role of the state is not a uniform or a global phenomenon; nor is it restricted to a single area (Europe) of advanced economic and monetary integration. Indeed, a marked lack of homogeneity has emerged (and been noted by public opinion in the different countries), such as the spread in the interest rates paid on government bonds: the difference between two eurozone countries, Germany and Greece, is emblematic in this regard, and has also become an indicator of the solidity of the European economic and monetary union. It is also a case with obvious practical consequences: the fact that in February 2009 Greece was paying its creditors four percentage points more than Germany was paying explains why, despite the advantages in terms of yield of investing in Greece, Germany, which offered (and still offers) greater guarantees of repayment and stability, was continuing to attract more purchasers of its bonds.

\*\*\*

The 2007-2008 financial and economic crisis has had different effects in different parts of the world: some countries are recording improvements in their economic conditions, while others are regressing. The latter include, for the first time in at least two centuries, the countries of the Western world. Indeed, unable either to emerge from the crisis or to deflect its consequences onto other parts of the world (as they were able to do in the past), they currently seem to be the ones that are struggling the most. To tackle this situation, and in an effort to save businesses and banks in difficulty, the United States, the homeland of economic liberalism, has been obliged to have recourse to the kind of direct state interventions that it has always criticised and opposed (further swelling its public debt in the process).

In many European countries, too, the injection of aid into the banking system and into the economy in general has had the effect of further increasing the public debt. As a result, these countries are now finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the levels of welfare spending of the past, given that they are now recording low, zero or even negative economic growth. Consequently, all the countries have been striving to do more, both internally and externally (on the international financial markets), to support their respective production, economic and social systems.

But if we consider the nature and composition of the states' public debts, it becomes clear that this whole phenomenon raises serious question marks over the sustainability of these policies over time. After all, domestic debt is subject to the scrutiny of the citizens and requires their trust and support, while the ability to incur foreign debt depends on the credibility of the institutions of the indebted countries, i.e., on their real intention, or ability, to repay their debts somehow – this brings us to the meaning of the expression “risky country” —, a fact now reflected in the growing interest rates on capital raised on the international markets (and thus in the cost of each country's debt).

Most of the European countries thus remain caught between the need to promote economic and production models that will allow them to compete at world level — to avoid economic decline — and the need to protect their respective societies — to avoid growing social disorder internally. But the fact is that these countries, in their desperate attempt to meet the first of these needs, no longer seem able, in the current crisis, to procure the funds required to make the investments they must make if they are to be able, for example, to guarantee the upcoming generations an adequate public healthcare system and an acceptable level of education, pensions and welfare services. And the whole problem is, of course, exacerbated by the aging of the population, which will make the future management of the social security and healthcare system even more difficult.

When one considers the opposing positions in the ambit of national debate on these issues, it is clear to see the level of confusion that abounds. Many strenuously voice the opinion that the welfare state should be dismantled altogether, arguing that it has become a burden on the national economy, does not favour growth and prevents the country's companies from competing effectively on the global markets, i.e. with the active support of public institutions. Others, on the other hand, believe that since the crisis and its effects are destined to be long-lasting, and will affect the

weakest sections of the population most of all, there is a strong argument for strengthening the welfare state, rather than weakening it. But with what resources?<sup>4</sup>

\*\*\*

The European countries are faced with a problem that they cannot resolve using the political and institutional instruments currently at their disposal. In today's international economic framework, markets are won and retained through the production either of goods at ever-lower prices or of goods with a high technological content. In the first case, the Europeans simply cannot compete with the low wages paid by manufacturers in China, India and the new developing countries. What is more, even China has begun to relocate its production of some goods to African countries where the manufacturing costs can be reduced still further. In the second case, only a few of the European countries, Germany for example, have managed to remain competitive, by innovating, introducing a salary capping policy and improving production capacity.

The current crisis is also highlighting a problem that no European country seems equipped to tackle and resolve successfully: that of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. Indeed, today's society, where short-term work contracts are becoming the norm, offers few prospects of stable employment.<sup>5</sup>

In this regard, the Europeans should reflect upon the fact that, as long ago as 1993, Delors, in the white paper *Growth, Competitiveness, and Occupation*, referred, on the subject of jobs, to the duty to create them in order to guarantee "the future of our children, who must be able to find hope and motivation in the prospect of participating in economic and social activity and of being involved in the society in which they live, and the future of our social protection systems, which are threatened in the short term by inadequate growth and in the long term by the deterioration in the ratio of the people in jobs to those not in employment."<sup>6</sup> The truth is that over the past two decades, not only has this problem never been seriously addressed, it has actually worsened. Indeed, as Niall Ferguson explains "...today's generations behave with scant regard for their descendants". Indeed, they tend to "ignore the problem of future indebtedness, believing that there will be no price to pay for public services funded by borrowing." In this way they are burdening the next generation with "bills" far greater than recourse to tax smoothing can justify. Because the fact is that each generation's stock of debt is nothing other



than the cumulative sum of the financial transfers that the taxpayers of the past have allowed themselves and their continued borrowing from the taxpayer of the future.<sup>7</sup>

In short, is it still possible, today, to expect Europe's national economic systems, whose key elements are the state, businesses and families, to continue to operate in the interests of the wellbeing of their respective societies?

At this point it is worth recalling that the sustainability (economic and social) of these systems is based on their capacity to produce goods (material and non-material) through the work of the citizens that live within them, and identify with them. It goes without saying that wherever prospects and opportunities for work decline, consumption levels will also dip and businesses will be thrown into crisis, etc. It is obvious that in such a setting the state will receive less revenue (both internally and from the outside), lose legitimacy and credibility and inevitably end up being unable to guarantee its citizens and businesses adequate services.

So what are the European states doing in a bid to boost opportunities for work and investment at a time in which they are also finding themselves having to cut costs in order to reduce the national debt and "collect money" to fund the services essential to the smooth running of the administrative machinery, transport services and so on?

Preoccupied by the need to balance their finances through reduction of the national debt, and having to strive to remain competitive in a global market characterised by severe imbalances, all the states are actually doing is attempting to rid themselves of the cost of protecting the weaker sections of society (or those with less social or economic bargaining power) and of maintaining a series of public services once considered essential in order to promote socio-economic development but now seen as a burden.

In this context, businesses, too, particularly the large corporations, are increasingly finding themselves caught in the crossfire of global competition and of the confrontation, at world level, between the new global powers. As long as the United States was still able to provide stable government of the international free market economy, they too were able to benefit from the liberalisation of the international and European markets, which allowed the strongest, best prepared and most dynamic players to increase their production and break into new markets. But as soon as America's power was called into question, this whole framework of reference began to falter.

In Europe the creation of the single currency temporarily mitigated

the effects of the void of government that was being created in the world, and in the West in particular. After all, the single currency, by eliminating the problem of fluctuations of the European currencies, made it possible for the national economies to gain stability and allowed businesses to make long-term plans. But the existence of a currency without a state was, and remains, a paradox against which both citizens and businesses, even large corporations, remain unprotected, above all in today's global era in which, as Robert Reich points out, if there no longer exist "national champions" of industry in the large continental states, what hope of survival can the small states possibly offer?<sup>8</sup>

But the Europeans, in truth, have persistently ignored this reality, continuing to see the national economic framework as a system that must guarantee them, first and foremost, their own survival, irrespective of the fact that, from a production as well as a commercial point of view, the national system is now just part of a network of interconnected systems. We could cite numerous examples in this regard. In Italy, for example, is Fiat a national enterprise? Are its successes and failures Italian successes and failures? It is no secret that this company now manufactures around 70 per cent of its products abroad, or that the Agnelli family is no longer its sole stakeholder. And yet, anachronistically, its future and that of its employees continues to be treated as an exclusively Italian issue.<sup>9</sup>

Conversely, the contradictions that are present in Europe, which condition European debate, clearly derive, above all, from the lack of a European industrial policy in the automotive sector, as well as in other sectors, and also from the lack of credible dealings between European trade-union representatives and a European, as opposed to national, democratic power system. As long as things stand this way, European companies will go on lacking the instruments they need to compete on equal terms in the international arena and trade unions in Europe will be forced, increasingly, to choose the lesser of two evils: either to look on, powerlessly, as the ranks of the unemployed increase, or to renounce the levels of social and economic protection won in the past — two scenarios that, in view of the aggressive development policy undertaken by some of the developing countries, are clearly fast approaching. Federico Rampini, writing in *la Repubblica*,<sup>10</sup> highlights the significance of "what is now happening in the automotive industry [in China]. The Beijing authorities are about to introduce a new law that will oblige foreign carmakers to divulge their "green" technologies (i.e. details of their electric and hybrid motors) as a condition for retaining their access to the Chinese market. This new law is part of a ten-year plan drawn up by the

Chinese industry ministry that aims to see China securing “world leadership” of the field of new-generation zero-emission cars. The government will be able to oblige foreign manufacturers to accept that the local party in any joint venture must hold an at least 51 per cent share of the company capital, thereby ensuring that Chinese industry is included in all the technological innovations developed abroad. From an environmental point of view, this is a positive development, as it provides confirmation of China’s commitment to developing a green economy: in the past five years alone the Beijing government has invested 1.5 billion dollars in this sector. But this “blackmailing” of foreign carmakers is also an indication that China wants to free itself of all forms of dependence on the West. And it has, at its disposal, the instruments of coercion it needs: by 2020 the Chinese car market will amount to 40 million registrations per year, which is twice the level America was recording even before the financial and economic crisis (sales in the USA have now dropped to 12 million/year). Those refusing to accept the diktat to transfer their technological innovations to their Chinese partners will find themselves excluded from the world’s hugest market.”

Clearly, if Europe were to equip itself with a true economic and industrial policy of its own, it would become feasible to change the basis of production relations between Europe and China and to create the conditions for a new development policy.

With the partial exception of Germany, which can still count on exploiting the possibility of expanding into the markets of central and eastern Europe, the European countries, taken singly, seem to be incapable of looking to the future. In most cases, the short-term option most within their reach seems to be, increasingly, that of building a future on debt. However, as Robert Reich recalls, “a correct understanding of the national economy as an area of the global economy” should be based on “a fundamental distinction between investment and consumption, between the amount that is spent to create future wealth and the amount that is spent to meet current needs and desires. Contrary to what is believed by many in government and by the public, this logic actually suggests that there is nothing terribly wrong with nations incurring foreign debts, providing the loans received are invested in factories, schools, roads and other means of boosting future production. Debts become a problem when the money is squandered on consumption.”<sup>11</sup> This, however, is exactly what the Europeans are doing. And this is why it is legitimate to fear that the welfare state, in other words the state that, through its presence in the economy, has previously favoured the maintenance of a

more balanced society, is destined for crisis. And a welfare state in crisis will seriously strain the “social contract”, i.e. the pact of social solidarity, on which it is, itself, based.

In actual fact this pact’s chances of survival are now being openly questioned within the European nation-states. But the problem today is no longer whether this pact can be revived at national level, but rather whether it can be revived at European level, where the EU institutions are not only inadequate and incapable of rising to the challenges confronting European society, but also, in the eyes of most people, incapable of being reformed. Because while it is true that European economic integration has advanced a long way, to the point that monetary union is now a reality at least for a group of countries, it is equally true that there is still no European state framework as the setting for a European social-economic system. In short, there is no European federation.

\*\*\*

The possibility of saving the welfare state model in the era of globalisation thus depends on whether or not there exist prospects for creating a European federal framework, starting with the eurozone or some of its key countries. Because failure to create this framework would have two consequences: first, it would move Europe further away from the conditions that are necessary in order to maintain and strengthen the level of solidarity between the different European regions; second, it would deprive the world of a model of reference for the promotion of fairer, more sustainable development at international level, and this is an outcome that would have dramatic consequences, social and environmental. The need to avoid this dangerous scenario is, in itself, more than enough reason, moral as well as political, for striving to relaunch the role of politics in Europe and the project to build a European federal state.

*Anna Costa*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> J.E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work*, New York, Norton & Company, 2006. The passage here cited is a translation from the Italian version of this work, *La globalizzazione che funziona*, Turin, Einaudi, 2006, p. XII.

<sup>2</sup> M. Albert, *Capitalism against Capitalism*, Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. The phrases here cited are translations from the Italian version of this work, *Capitalismo contro capitalismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> As remarked by Niall Ferguson: “Between 1960 and 1992 transfers and subsidies rose

from 8 per cent of the GDP of industrial countries to 21 per cent in 1992. [...] As we have seen, a high proportion of this rising cost was financed by borrowing”, in *The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World, 1700-2000*. New York, Basic Books, 2001; Italian version, *Soldi e potere*, Milan, Ponte alle grazie, 2001, p. 244. In 1991, in the countries of continental Europe, taxes and transfers of various kinds reduced to a maximum of 5 per cent the proportion of families living in “deep poverty” (*op. cit.*, p. 242.); countries like Great Britain and the USA, on the other hand, record higher rates of poverty.

<sup>4</sup> P. Le Coeur, “Le modèle social freine-t-il la reprise économique en France?”, *Le Monde*, 3 September 2010. This article compares the socio-economic policies of Germany and France, highlighting the difficulties the French are having getting economic recovery off the ground, their efforts being hindered, in part, “by a social system more protective than those of all the other EU countries.” At the same time, the article underlines how Germany, in the recent past, had already made a series of adjustments to the social state. “Through the Hartz laws, between 2003 and 2005, and subsequently through the Agenda 2000, the Germans reduced the duration of temporary layoff pay, social benefits and health insurance expenditure.” And as recalled by Sylvain Broyer, who is quoted in the same article in *Le Monde*, “the Germans have reviewed taxation, increased VAT and reformed pensions.” In this regard, it should be remarked that Germany, having started out within the European Union from a position of strength, has maintained this position over time thanks in part to its capacity to exploit the opportunities offered by the process of integration, and that in this setting the changes it has made to its social legislation have allowed it, among other things, to support its companies’ export activities.

<sup>5</sup> According to ISTAT data published on August 31, 2010, the percentage of young people out of work in Europe is 19.6 per cent, and 27 per cent in Italy.

<sup>6</sup> From the introduction to the *White paper on growth, competitiveness, and occupation*, Commission of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Niall Fergusson, *The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World, 1700-2000*. *op. cit.* Italian version: *Soldi e potere*, *op. cit.* p. 245.

<sup>8</sup> In 1991, Robert Reich had already drawn attention to the non-convergence of interests between the state and companies, which are often organised in global networks. He had then begun to ask himself, as a US citizen, whether there still existed a national economy and, if there did, in what ways it still met society’s growth and development needs. In so doing, he had highlighted the fact that the very concepts of national enterprise and the national product had largely been superseded: “Nations are becoming regions of a global economy; their citizens are laborers in a global market. National corporations are turning into global webs whose high-volume standardized activities are undertaken wherever labor is cheapest worldwide, and whose most profitable activities are done wherever skilled and talented people can best conceptualize new problems and solutions. Under such circumstances, economic sacrifice and restraint exercised within a nation’s borders is less likely to come full circle than it was in a more closed economy.

The question is whether the habits of citizenship are sufficiently strong to withstand the centrifugal forces of the new global economy. Is there enough of simple loyalty to place — of civic obligation unadorned by enlightened self-interest — to elicit sacrifice nonetheless? We are, after all, citizens as well as economic actors; we may work in markets, but we live in societies. How tight is the social and political bond when the economic bond unravels? The question is, of course, relevant to all nations subject to global economic forces, which are reducing the interdependence of their own citizens and simultaneously separating them into global winners and losers. In some societies, the pull of the global economy notwithstanding, national allegiances are sufficiently potent to motivate the winners to continue helping the losers.” R.B. Reich, *The Work of Nations*, New York, Vintage Books, 1992.

Italian version: *L'economia delle nazioni*, Milan, Il Sole 24 Ore Libri, 2003, p. 371.

<sup>9</sup>As shown by different articles recently appearing in the press on the question of Fiat and its policy to spin off its automotive operations and establish new relations with the trade unions, the latter (with the exception of FIOM) have been seen to be willing to negotiate the standard employment contract in order to keep jobs, with management threatening further relocations of production should its conditions not be accepted. The Pomigliano case is emblematic in this sense. The trade-union victories of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s risk being wiped out without this producing any strategic advantages for the Italian economy. As E. Scalfari has asked (“La vera storia del caso Marchionne”, *la Repubblica*, 25 July 2010), “Are we, then, rapidly moving towards the cancellation of all the union, socio-economic and market victories won between the 1960s and the start of this century?”

<sup>10</sup>F. Rampini, “L’Asia lancia la guerra delle monete, parte la sfida economica all’Occidente”, *la Repubblica*, 20 September 2010.

<sup>11</sup>R.B. Reich, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-21.

# Thirty years ago

## UNITING EUROPE TO UNITE THE WORLD\*

MARIO ALBERTINI

### I. *A New Era.*

1. A new age has dawned and new thought must take shape. The course of history that was driven by the formation of the global market and sustained by the scientific, political, economic and social revolutions has now reached its climax with the end of the hegemony of the European system of states, the rise of the world system of states, the re-awakening of all the peoples of the earth, the growing participation of religious spirit in modern life, and the enormous development of technological capability (the latter still uncontrolled by the collective will). For this reason, it is now necessary, and indeed possible, providing we direct our thought and will towards this supreme task — to plan, at world level, the solution to some of the problems fundamental to the survival and future of mankind.

2. No one denies this necessity. But the time has come to realise that the problems shared by mankind, now a community of destiny with its fate in its own hands, cannot be solved solely through the recourse to the institutions and criteria of knowledge and political action of the past. Those instruments were needed in order to understand and build the world we know — a world that is now behind us, even though, containing embryonic forms of universal freedom and equality, it remains the terrain on which we must advance as we strive to build a new one.

3. The first barrier that has to fall is the one that still separates domestic politics from international politics. International politics should no longer be seen as a field of action in which it is solely a question of

---

\* These are the views presented by M. Albertini at the X Congress of the MFE and unanimously approved by the same on 24 February 1980. They were published in issue 1-2 of *Il Federalista* the same year.

pursuing independence, in accordance with the idea that social emancipation is a matter for domestic politics, while security is an issue for international politics; and also on the basis of the mistaken conviction that nations that are independent are also equal. National independence is a necessary historical phase, its purpose being to place the states in the hands of the peoples; once acquired, however, it reflects, rather than corrects, the inequalities that exist between nations, which can be overcome only by allowing relations between states to be managed democratically. We therefore have to realise that the inequalities between nations are far greater, and far more inhumane, than the class inequalities that still persist within the most developed countries. And we therefore have to admit, as well, that the world as a whole has now become the theatre in which the conflict of values is played out, and also the framework in which the fundamental contradictions of our times emerge and can be overcome — providing, that is, international politics becomes, increasingly, the arena in which the progressive forces in politics and society are directly mobilised.

4. The first fact to recognise is this: at the current stage in the historical process, all men are, at last, free, and thus want to be equal; in the same way, all peoples are free and want to become equal. This desire for equality is the new revolutionary force that must be exploited in order to give rise, at all levels — globally but also at the level of each country and each local community — to a collective will, as this is the only way in which the freedom of all individuals can become universal freedom and equality (i.e. the only way in which mankind can control its own destiny). This is a remote objective, and we are indeed still taking the first steps. But it is only by setting out, right now, towards it that we will acquire the capacity to control the factors of the crisis that are manifesting themselves all about us, and to transform, gradually, the freedom of all individuals into the freedom of the whole of mankind.

5. The first strategic concept to grasp concerns the fact that world government already exists, and that it is thus necessary to fight, with all the forces already able to enter the field, to ensure that it is gradually entrusted to a growing number of peoples and men, and ultimately, to all men. World government is the same as the global balance of power, which is a key factor in establishing the rules — written and, above all, unwritten — that control the global market. Therefore, changing world government means changing the global balance of power, in order to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the dominance of the major powers; and also in order to guarantee, through the world federation, democratic



government of the world and the replacement of relations of force between nations with equality between nations, legally sanctioned and protected by law.

## II. *The First Political Objectives.*

1. The crisis of bipolarism corresponds to the crisis of the form of global government that characterised the first phase in the life of the world system of states. The crisis of political power at national level, manifested most severely in the states with the greatest difficulties, is but one of the consequences of the general crisis of global government which, still in the hands of the two declining superpowers, no longer ensures that the global market and the international monetary system are controlled in a progressive and positive manner; it is for this reason that the major powers are forced to fall back, more and more, on trials of strength, psychological warfare and military means. It must thus be stressed that the military obsession, and the idea that the global balance of power basically comes down to the balance of military power, are enormously harmful and ruinous, as the Fascist period demonstrated.

2. The task of re-establishing progressive and positive global control falls to politics. Changes in the balance of power are possible only in the presence of increasing social liberation and political success: even wars, inasmuch as they can be deemed successes, are the successes of certain political strategies. Basically it is a question of managing, carefully, the transition (in itself inevitable) from the bipolar world to a multipolar world whose protagonists must be not just the states, but also the new international entities such as the group of non-aligned countries, the evolving European Community, and China of course. It is thus up to these new leading players in the political process to take the initiative; and it must be made perfectly clear (particularly to Western Europe, which, engaging in an honest and open exchange with the United States, should be endeavouring to work out the time-frame and modalities of the transition from the situation of *US leadership* to one of *equal partnership*), that failure to take this initiative (with all the consequences this would naturally have), and blind and cowardly alignment with the positions of the leading power, can do nothing but perpetuate and worsen the crisis of global government, to the point of leading us to the brink of catastrophe.

3. The transition from the bipolar world to a multipolar one may be rendered peaceful and orderly only through the restoration of *détente*. This would guarantee, in all countries the world over, the highest possible

degree of security with the lowest possible level of armament, and thus favour the success, everywhere, of those political forces that have, as their objectives, peace and the civil and social progress of their peoples. But we have to remember that détente is a method, not a policy. A policy manifests itself only where there is the will and capacity to change the relations of force. Therefore, to control the transition towards a multipolar world, it is necessary to try and set international relations of force, to a degree at least, in the multipolar rather than the bipolar context.

4. In this regard, there are, as far as Western Europe's situation and possibilities are concerned, two key problems. The first concerns the EMS, within whose framework the Community must create the European monetary fund. If this fund works, it will allow us to pay for oil in ECUs, and could thus allow the hegemonic *dollar-to-rest of the world* relationship (which is an obstacle to the advent of a new economic order) to be replaced with a multipolar *dollar-ECU-other currencies* relationship, which, instead, would be balanced and progressive. The other problem concerns the Palestinians, and the increasingly urgent need to create a Palestinian state. Unless the Palestinian problem is resolved, it will be quite impossible to channel the revival of the Arab world and of Islam in positive directions, useful as much to the Arabs and Muslims themselves as to the rest of the world. As long as there continues to be no Palestinian state, Israeli democracy, rather than serving as a positive example, will carry negative connotations that will actually damage the democratic model; moreover, extremist views will become too influential in the Arab and Muslim world, preventing its economic and civil development and making it impossible to put an end to the direct or indirect interference of the major powers.

### *III. The Role of the MFE.*

1. As things currently stand, the historical and social process, as it unfolds, automatically reproduces liberal, democratic and socialist tendencies (in their various historical and sometimes even religious expressions), in other words the culture of the separation of domestic from international politics; by so doing it prevents direct democratic mobilisation of political and social forces at international level. It should be remarked, however, that this culture, despite, for historical reasons, having coincided with the exclusive concept of nation typical of the traditional nation-state, nevertheless contains the germ of federalism, and thus the possibility of overcoming this limit. In any case, until such a time

as the evolution of society itself spontaneously generates, alongside the liberal, democratic and socialist ideas, also the federalist concept of the democratic government of mankind and all its communities, the task of spreading and developing federalist thought will remain primarily that of the MFE; and this task may be accomplished — in particular vis-à-vis the new generations, who will be the ones having to manage a more advanced phase in the evolution of the multipolar order — only if we focus once again on the organisational problems relating to the recruitment, enrolment and training (theoretical and practical) of militants.

2. The transition from a situation in which organised federalism is only the fruit of determination, pure and simple — and, for this reason, requires the constant effort of each individual militant in order to be kept alive — to one in which it will have the character of a socially recognised idea, will require a complete democratic transformation of the European Community. If it can achieve the democratic government (within a constitutional legal framework) of a society of states that are independent and equal, thereby overcoming, on an institutional level, the distinction between domestic and international politics, Europe will become not only a model, but also a source of support and a solid ally for all those forces wanting to tackle, together, the problems of peace, collaboration and international justice, also through the creation of large regional federations understood as preconditions for the transformation of the United Nations into a world federation.

3. Federalism is not linked to class liberation and for this reason does not constitute an alternative ideology to liberalism, democracy and socialism. Historically, these ideologies, having given expression to, and coordinated, the liberation of the middle, lower-middle and working classes, have traditionally developed antagonistic and reciprocally exclusive identities, in this way placing limits on the realisation of the very values of freedom and equality that they uphold — which are complementary, not alternative, values. It follows that federalism, to become more widespread, has no need to reduce the presence of liberalism, democracy and socialism. On the contrary, its development depends on its capacity to contribute to an increasingly complete affirmation of the values of freedom and equality, which it may do through its pursuit of the value of peace, which, from the moral, institutional and historical standpoint, only federalism is able to cater for. These, basically, are the reasons why organised federalism does not use any of the weapons of power — the vote, representation of sectorial interests, violence —, with the exception of the indirect one of culture. And this is precisely why the

federalists have the capacity to modify the power situation — and become a political force of initiative (even if not of execution) — merely by turning their sections, in every city and community, into cultural workshops: centres for the generation of discussion and ideas; in other words, by intervening at grassroots level in the social settings where political inclinations are formed.

