Reclaim the Manifesto of VENTOTENE

What future for the EU?

European United Left • Nordic Green Left
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
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Published by GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament

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Publishing information: Published by GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament
Order and contact: GUE/NGL Communications Unit, European Parliament, PHS 05B075, Rue Wiertz 43, B-1047 Brussels
E-mail: guengl.press@europarl.europa.eu / Tel.: +32-(0)228-32299.

Editing and Proofreading by Christine Achtermann Jones
Typesetting and Layout by VSA: Verlag Hamburg GmbH

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Reclaim the Manifesto of Ventotene!

At celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome last year, the praises of European integration were sung loudly.

Considering the deep cracks in the foundation of the European edifice, we saw little reason to celebrate.

These cracks have been a result of the current EU policy direction in which competition prevails over solidarity, austerity over investment and isolation over integration – and in which democracy is being replaced by 'governance'.

The increasing influence of reactionary forces which openly fuel resentment, discord and hate, and challenge an open-minded perspective for Europe, calls for resistance.

The idea of European integration emerged from anti-fascist movements. Seventy-five years ago, the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto criticised the autarkic economy trying to escape from political regulation and democratic participation, and pre-empted the political battle against the totalitarian side of neoliberalism.

As a starting point for a joint debate, we propose to reclaim the Ventotene Manifesto, which in our opinion represents one of the most important contributions to European integration.

EU leaders take this manifesto for granted and use it for their agenda. They concealed that Spinelli and his fellow inmates envisioned a socialist integration that would guarantee human freedom and prevent future wars between states in Europe.

Given the current development of the EU, we see a critical reappropriation of the Manifesto of Ventotene, in a post-Fordist world, as necessary.

Much has changed since the Manifesto was published. Growing inequality between the different world regions together with climate change and globalisation in all its forms represent new challenges today.

New questions arise which left and progressive forces must face. Do we need new forms of resistance, new utopias, a new culture of transnational cooperation? How can we combine local action with a global framework? What are the relevant political subjects needed for the necessary change on the local, regional, national European and global level?

We admire the Manifesto of Ventotene for its clear analysis and identification of the necessary actors for change, together with its linguistic power to promote a peaceful and socialist future.

Seventy-seven years after the Ventotene Manifesto, people are being imprisoned again on islands in the Mediterranean. It is our job to end this inhumane policy. It is time for a new common, leftist vision of a solidary and socialist Europe.

Last year we called for this historic document to be used as the basis for a lively and self-reflexive debate.

Together with Spinelli's daughter Barbara, we have asked left-wing intellectuals from several EU member states to reassess the Manifesto of Ventotene.

Their visions, thoughts and ideas, are published in this e-book. It is as part of our contribution to a general debate.

Our enormous gratitude goes of course to all the authors who joined us for this project. Without them we could not have initiated this debate.

Gabi Zimmer, Barbara Spinelli, Helmut Scholz, Marisa Matias, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Martina Michels, Josu Juaristi, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Thomas Händel, Cornelia Ernst, Stelios Kouloglou, Merja Kyllönen, Curzio Maltese.

Thoughts on the conditions for the discussion on a promising future for Europe

By Michalis Spourdalakis

Although it is not a completely unexpected development, the 'present of Europe' seems increasingly contradictory. Indeed, recently, the contradictions and the relevant accompanying reactions have seriously challenged the 'future of Europe'. This finding is commonplace not only for those who, against their stated internationalism, suffered from chronic and acute euro-scepticism, but also for those starting from a completely different logic: the progress of society can only be based on solidarity that goes beyond national borders.

The latter was the main reason for the renewed radical left to support European integration. The only prospect for our suffering continent, particularly after the experience of war, is the vision of a pacifist Europe which plans and pursues its prosperity through its integration processes and institutions. Taking into account this strategic goal, the recent negative developments (the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, the rise of nationalism and the extreme right, the frequency of terrorist phenomena, the standardisation of the financial gap between North and South, the apparent rise of an irrational and polysemic euro-scepticism, etc.) have raised absolutely valid questions for the positive prospect of the EU. For this reason, the initiative 'Progressive Caucus', of all the progressive powers of the Parliament, i.e. of all those who worry about the exceptionally negative dynamics of the current circumstances, is more than welcome; it is necessary.

Nevertheless, the interventions of the opinion-formers (politicians, journalists, special researchers, academics) seem to focus almost always on particular phenomena, contradictions and malaise related to the above developments.[1] Neither the imbalance between the competencies of the Union, its often irrational bureaucracy, the shortcomings of the leadership, the financial competition presented as the usual interpretation to the phenomena of racism and nationalism nor finally the calls to deal with the 'democratic deficit' can deal holistically with the obvious substantial or maybe even complete collapse of the European project. On the contrary, the seriousness, the depth and the scope of the challenges that the EU faces cannot be dealt with just with scattered ideas, no matter how good and inventive those are, since they

[1] This observation refers not only to those who make mainstream interventions but also to those who would be expected to have a more in-depth approach. For example: Solty Ingar, 'After 'Brexit': A Social-Democratic Re-Founding of Europe? Critical remarks on the new post-'Brexit' strategy paper by Sigmar Gabriel and Martin Schulz, The Bullet, No 1277, 30 June 2016

are usually based on the established (usually technocratic) framework of the Union and the political and social powers that seem to lead in the EU.

This is exactly why I believe that, in order to be successful, the discussion which opens with the initiative of the 'Progressive Caucus' must be based on a framework of conditions which will be able to deal with the issue of the future of 'Europe' with 'realistic radicalism', without ignoring the 'realistic' problem of the current circumstances. The framework of this discussion must comprise certain assumptions. These assumptions, although often obvious, do not seem to be taken into account, and are largely absent from the framework of the relative discussions. Hence, their effectiveness is limited since it seems that they fail to result in a comprehensive proposal which will make use of the proposals that are already on the agenda, thus limiting the successful outcome of the proposals which may result from it, and from other related processes and initiatives. I will briefly mention below the most important, in my opinion, although introductory, assumptions of this project.

1. 'The EU must change'.

As mentioned, this opinion is commonplace. However, it must be ensured that the change pursued, in addition to ensuring the democratic direction of these changes in terms of regulation, should also move, if possible, outside the established limits. In other words, consent with the statement 'Europe must change' as a process and as a content should not be limited to any (radical or limited) reforms or arrangements of the established networks, institutions and practices. On the contrary, it must completely challenge the 'European perspective', leaving open the possibility to re-found the European idea of solidarity, peace and prosperity on a completely different basis. Therefore, despite the rational reservations that one may raise regarding said 're-foundation', the discussion must also include its regulatory values, otherwise the project will not be successful.[2]

2. The EU must not be identified with 'Europe'.

The frequent identification of the Union with Europe has multiple consequences and limits an in-depth discussion. A distinction is not required only for the obvious reasons, i.e. that the EU is an institutionally established supranational organisation, while Europe, in addition to defining a geographical area, exceeds the EU limits. The term 'Europe', despite the historical extremities and the contradictions recorded in the historical course of the Enlightenment, includes, at least associatively, a framework of regulatory and aesthetic values that will not delimit the relevant discussion in this regard. On the contrary, the EU, despite the initial declarations, particularly

[2] Indicatively see Golemis Charis, 'Europe is in danger, the left must react', (in Greek), Epochi, 21 February 2017.

during the last thirty years approximately, has been identified with a system of market values which undermines, if not cancels, a progressive, left and socialist version of the Enlightenment.

3. Europe is not a Gaulish village.

In addition to avoiding the well-known Eurocentrism, an essential condition for relevant discussion is the acknowledgement of the framework that establishes what we have learnt to describe as 'globalisation', which is nothing more than all the processes aiming at capitalistic integration on a global scale. It is not possible for the relevant process to ignore the facts created by globalisation.[3]

The latter is particularly important since, in regulatory terms, these facts are in the opposite direction from the one obviously pursued by progressive forces. Said facts are a) the realisation that since the 1960s, and particularly after the fall of the Wall (1989), the planet is undergoing a general homogenisation, both in terms of culture and social organisation, where the element of politics is just one dimension; b) the huge deregulations, with state intervention being limited to the economy, thus transforming the sovereignty of the nation-state; c) the transformation of the relationship between time and space; d) the transformation of labour and labour relations, resulting in new phenomena of inequality (poor employees, shrinking of the middle class, etc.) and a modification of the constitutional framework for social subjects and related social alliances; and, finally, e) the daily realisation that the entirety of the processes that we call 'globalisation' produces and increasingly 'fuels' multi-dimensional crises.

The realism that may be underlying the above realisations cannot lead to them being accepted nor, in particular, to the passive processing of initiatives by the dominant political and financial elites. Consequently, the relevant discussion for a prominent and progressive future for the EU cannot lack a special reference to the coordination of a pan-European battle against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and CETA.[4] In this regard, the important political and organisational experience of the global and European social fora, an innovative experience of political mobilisation, is valuable and must be utilised.

4. Democracy is not an ethical or procedural issue.

The frequent voices on the notorious 'democratic deficit' or for institutions' informal and/or arbitrary modus operandi cannot exhaust the relevant discussions on the issue of democracy. While, of course, it should not be ignored, the demand for flawless modus operandi of the democratic process must not delimit the necessary discussion

[3] Balibar E. 'More than ever: For a different Europe! Positions of August 2015', in Baier W. and others (ed.) The Europe enigma, Athens, Nisos Publications, 2016.

[4] See European Parliamentary Group GUE/NGL, CETA: TTIP in Canadian disguise, Institute N. Poulantzas, 2017 & Rossman Peter, 'Unpacking CETA', The Bullet, No 1311, 5 October 2016.

on democracy. This discussion must be long-term and must include the issue of the quality of the Union's institutions and policies. In other terms, the discussion must not be limited to the obvious 'democratic deficit' but examine whether, for example, the Single European Act of 1986, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the foundation of EMU, which established the neoliberal doctrine, in fact contributed to a structurally undemocratic Union. Consequently, the historical, political and organisational development of the EU should be fully re-examined, since it seems that, during the current crisis, it leads to the logic that 'there is no alternative' – the notorious TINA – which legitimises the so-called 'economic governance' of the 'existing European Integration'. Policies that favour 'post-democratic' practices and institutions, delimiting the democratic acquis not only at EU level, but also at Member States level.

Given that, and taking into account that such developments in the last few years seem to fuel the populism of a nationalist extreme right which somehow seems to be taking centre stage in many Member States, the answers to the problem cannot be limited to a mere more rational rearrangement of the Union's representative institutions.[5] On the contrary, the latter, which is of course part of the answer, must meet the acquis of the multi-level, multi-dimensional and supranational movements which have shown, in practice, their scepticism on the 'existing European Integration' over the last two decades and especially during the last few years of the crisis. Indeed, during this period, institutions and new political mobilisation technologies have appeared and those must meet and enrich the existing ones. Despite its controversies, the so-called 'democracy from the bottom', which has risen during the last few years against austerity, has proved that democracy is not just a typical process but a productive force. The conclusions resulting from this important aspect of the discussion are the following: a) The existing institutions of the EU or those of the Member States should not be considered as static and given. b) The democratic renewal of the EU must clearly move away from the restricting policies of austerity, since they are accompanied both by the democratic acquis and by the liberal acquis. c) In addition to new institutions, a system of procedures for the recruitment of political staff should also be proposed, however, a system of authentic cosmopolitan composition, rid of the usual 'euro-lustful' provincialism and subject to direct, as much as possible, democratic controls of accountability.

5. Populism cannot be considered by definition an enemy of democracy.

Following the previous point, and given the negative connotation connected to the extensive use of the word 'populism', it must be noted that such negative use aims at limiting the social acquis and must not be continued. From an academic and re-

[5] Baier W. 'The twofold Disenchantment' in W. Baier and others (ed.), The Left, the People, Populism Past and Present, London, Merlin Press, 2017.

search point of view, 'populism' cannot be an analytical concept and, according to the reservations that the critical/left tradition may have on the relevant rhetoric on 'left populism', populist expressions, proposals and claims express the significant deep feelings and views of the working classes. These are views and claims that almost always question the established power of the dominant elites. The latter is indeed mentioned in the Oxford dictionary, which defines populism as 'A political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups'.[6]

6. National feelings are not identified with nationalism.

Quite often the discussions about the EU, particularly after the dynamic rise of the extreme-right, nationalist euro-scepticism, lead to the frivolous rejection of each individual's expression of national and patriotic feelings emerging at Member State level. The discussion on a progressive and democratic prospect for the idea of European integration can only initiate from the realisation that national identification is a primary sentiment. This is a sentiment of 'spontaneous passion', which is more familiar to the average citizen, has a significant historical duration and has been associated with powerful inertia. On the contrary, the frivolous and denouncing stance overlooks, according to Stefan Zweig, one of the old heralds of the 'European idea' (1934), that it is a 'the slow-ripened fruit of a more elevated way of thinking'.[7] We must not overlook the fact that the institutions, networks and initiatives at European level, despite their positive role, touch only a small number of European citizens, and indeed those citizens who have already been convinced of the European idea and the vision of European integration.

As a result, the proposals of the relevant discussions must exceed initiatives of symbolic and ideological content, which usually initiate from, and result in, bureaucratic arrangements. On the contrary, they must aim at organising a fighting effort to prove the 'European vision' on a daily basis. This should be a vision that creates enthusiasm as it will prove, in practice, that it contributes in a continuously improving and democratic social system, which continuously and systematically alleviates social and regional inequalities and dissolves the threat of warfare, not only in our 'little peninsula of Asia' (Nietzsche), but also in the wider area.

A relevant dimension of this point is combating the prejudice and biases between different nations. Such biases significantly impede the understanding of a concept of homeland which does not pass through adversity, as that is often expressed with polarising hate. However, the biases and the hate between European populations, which

[6] Conway J. F., 'Populism in the 21st Century: Class Struggle Returns to Haunt Capitalist Democracies', The Bullet, No 1440, 28 June 2017 & Saxer Marc, 'Ten Theses for the Fight Against Right-wing Populism', Social Europe, 17 January 2017.

[7] Zweig Stefan, Call to the Europeans, Athens, Melani Publications, 2017.

have historically contributed to bloody wars and which have been brought back into the limelight because of the recent crises, are not a natural phenomenon. They are constructions of the dominant swarm that forms the common opinion. The dominant media, institutional intellectuals and opinion-formers in general, always serving short-term or strategic politicking, build and grade the reputations of nations, nationalities and social groups. Nevertheless, while the respective actions against people and businesses give victims the opportunity to refute them by appealing to the competent courts, the undermining of the reputation of a whole nation, which causes discrimination and hate, remains uncontrolled and unpunished. As a result, an important condition for the discussion on the future of European integration, if one wants to remove a significant impediment to the promotion of European integration, should result in some kind of detoxification from such toxic ideas; otherwise, the whole project will be stillborn and definitely at the mercy of the dominant speech which builds and reproduces biases and ethnic hate. An illustrative example of the latter is the construction of an extremely degrading image of crisis-stricken Greece in the last few years.

These are only some of the conditions required in order for the discussion, that this important initiative opens, to succeed. Conditions aiming at related decisions that disrupt and go beyond the current limits of this discussion, so that the relevant proposals are not reduced to a wish-list and that they move towards what Goethe preferred: 'action'.

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The future of Europe?

By Etienne Balibar

60 years after its 'founding' treaty, the European Union is far from achieving the stability, legitimacy, and joint development that its leaders championed as recently as a few years ago. On the eve of the Brexit negotiations, which rang out like an alarm bell, pointing to the unpopularity of the 'European project', it seems that the EU has entered an irreversible crisis in which its existence is being questioned.

Without a doubt, today's widespread 'catastrophism' must be taken into consideration. However, there exists an accumulation of obstacles and counter-performances, which have been far from coincidental.

Let us write a non-exhaustive list: the persistent fragility of the Euro and the multiplication of debts; the treatment inflicted on Greece, which highlights the fact that political and financial powers do not know how (and probably do not want) to find a solution to this issue; the ongoing refugee tragedy, which the shameful and short-term agreement with Turkey merely shifted from one border to another; the deepening of austerity that has accelerated deindustrialisation, presided over race-to-the-bottom competition between employees of different nationalities, and sold off the resources of the welfare state; its ungovernability, and crises within parliamentary institutions which, in country after country, discredit politics in its traditional forms. Last but not least, we witness the rise of international challenges including tensions between NATO and the Russian empire, the contagiousness of war in the Middle East and the anti-European stance of the American administration...

We understand that, even on the left, there is a sort of *Schadenfreude* infiltrating those who, on the one hand, never 'believed' in the European construction, by ideology or logical reasoning, in which they only see an imperialist machine. On the other hand, we understand that those people – including myself – for whom European citizenship is both an ideal and a means of confronting the challenges of the world today, feel as though they are summoned to justify what is preventing them from handing over their arms and giving up.

Before sketching out the analysis of the problem, a short comment: the Europe of today has very little to do with what (under a different name) the Treaties of Rome solemnly founded 60 years ago. Its geography, its history, and its political horizon were overwhelmed by the end of the Cold War and the resulting de-legitimisation of the socialist idea – in all its forms.

The initial objective of a *process of integration rooted in an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe* was replaced with, de facto, a *multi-speed* integration

system, or, in some cases, neo-colonialist practices in certain countries. For its part, the environment with which it communicates – with its capital flows, populations, 'dissymmetrical' information, which weighs on all its internal evolutions – is a world without laws, but not without masters of global finance, and displacement to the East of hubs of richness and accumulation.

All of these transformations are linked, even if their articulation is complex. They all gave rise to the Europe of Maastricht, which has enshrined in its gateway the sanctity of 'free and fair competition', to which all projects and ways of life must submit. It is the 'real life' of Europe, whose resources must be evaluated, and whose functioning – for its citizens and for its international context – must be rethought. At best, evoking the Rome Treaty could remind us that there was once a great political project, and that there could be another for our century.

What must be discussed between Europeans, in the days and years to come, given that the tensions and the pathologies will get worse in the interim?

First, nationalism, which, as we have observed, incarnates a revenge on the "federal" concept, struck at its heart by illegitimacy and unpopularity. Behind the nationalism, there are, of course, the national groups themselves, as symbolic entities and systems of collective solidarity. States were supported by the unification of Europe in the time of 'national and social' policies. Today, it is used to undermine labour relations and their social security systems. Nationalism has thus become mainly reactive. Let us not forget, however, what encouraged this trend: the way in which governments, mostly concerned with preserving their monopoly of the representation of their people, took advantage of the turning point in 1989 to block all evolution towards shared sovereignty. There has never really been federalism in Europe, mainly because the republican idea of the 'division of powers' has never reached the community level. The misery of the European Parliament is the clearest example.

Secondly, the relationship between globalisation and European construction must be 'strategically' discussed. For some, Europe is an instrument of capitalist globalisation, that is to say, total commodification of goods and services with its devastating social effects. For others, it is – at least virtually – the means to resist the new Leviathan by the balance that it can find between local protections and global regulations. The disagreement on the Euro and its articulation to common fiscal/economic policies is at the heart of this debate. I believe it aptly demonstrates that there is no middle ground between the neoliberal and the socialist orientation, and that a redefinition of the latter is thus in order. It is most likely that this conflict will pan out in Germany, but not in an isolated fashion, or one that is independent of our joint intervention.

Finally, we must get to the bottom of 'populism'. It is the reverse side of the problem of European *demos*, or the symbolic title that encompasses the problem of the development of democratic practices. Populism is not nationalism, even if it communicates

with the concept by way of the defence of 'sovereignty' of the nation/people, both on the right and the left sides of the political spectrum. It is not fascism either – even if the xenophobic undercurrents on display in almost all European countries (and particularly in France) appropriate the same 'antisystem' language – although not the same institutional objectives. All those that the university and media establishment consider experts or spokespersons seem to be coalesced to reinforce these very amalgams. On the contrary, we must unravel these methodically, to then imagine and constitute the alliance between the demand of the people's sovereignty and the overtaking of exclusive identities.

In one word, to conclude: I think we can concede *everything* to those, on the left in particular, who ascribe a failure and an obstacle in the current European construction to an improvement in the fate of the immense majority. Everything *except* one thing: the collapse of European institutions and the abandonment of a potential federation in Europe *would not* represent a *positive condition* for our future combats. This is why we must persevere, but at the price of a radical political transformation, which engenders new power relations in Europe and is the work of all its citizens.

Take care of European society and commit to building agents of change

By Luciana Castellina

If we are to build a better European Union than the one that was born 60 years ago, the most important thing we can do is to free it from the unbearable rhetoric that has accompanied it, preventing any constructive criticism, which is immediately branded as 'anti-European sentiment' and therefore a nostalgic attachment to a world of little nations responsible for all wars.

The first real imbroglio that took place to the detriment of the European project was believing that the project launched in 1957 was spawned by the Ventotene Manifesto, the declaration drafted by a respected group of Italian anti-fascists on the island where they were imprisoned by Mussolini. This text had a significant influence on the drafting of the Italian Constitution of 1948, but no influence at all on the many European Treaties. Indeed, at the Community's official baptism ceremony, which took place at the Teatro Adriano in Rome on 23 March 1957, Altiero Spinelli's federalists threw leaflets from the gallery down onto the stalls where the authorities were sitting containing the message that they did not recognise the 'monster' that was emerging. And it was the Italian Constitution – which is fairly unique in the west in having imposed strict restrictions on the right to own property and declaring war illegal if it is not to defend against invaders – which posed an obstacle to Italy's entry into the initial embryonic Europe. One of the witnesses to the negotiations at the time, Professor Paolo Elia, a respected Christian Democrat leader, said that the German minister Erhard in particular would have liked to exclude our country, precisely because of this fundamental charter. He didn't get his way; otherwise it would have been impossible to ensure the survival of the myth that the 'monster' was inspired by the Ventotene Manifesto.

Recently, we unfortunately had to witness the umpteenth farce, when last August – during peak holiday season and therefore blocking thousands of tourists for two days – Hollande, Merkel and Renzi wanted to hold their solemn summit in Ventotene. This wasn't so that the location could inspire them to engage in critical reflection, but rather so that they could repeat a policy line at odds with the one desired by the anti-fascists imprisoned on the island.

A bit of history would be helpful, to give impetus to a movement that aims to change Europe. We can begin with the dissemination of the Ventotene Manifesto. It could be useful to re-read this text in order to dilute the toxic effects of pro-European

rhetoric and to document how different the European Union that has materialised is from the concept it contains.

Nobody remembers that the first institutional act in favour of European unity was not issued on our continent, but by the American parliament (11 March 1947, by the Senate, 23 March by the Congress) put forward by John Foster Dulles, the powerful head of US diplomacy (and brother of Allen, head of the CIA). It is true that this vote was accompanied by the simultaneous launch of the Marshall Plan, an option which turned out in reality to be forward-looking and managed to beat those who, in America, opposed it and who would have wanted to see Europe weak out of fear of competition. Instead, Washington chose to aspire to a Europe that was strong enough to make a good trading partner and, despite the political obligations that accompanied the plan (one of the reasons why it could not be accepted by countries in the east), that was good for all. Yet it is also, or rather above all, true that this American vote was also one of the first acts in the cold war as the project helped to build a western bastion which, rather than uniting Europe, would break it in two. It also meant that the public, still smarting from the war, would have to swallow German rearmament. This was one of the main reasons that drove the left – not only Italian communists and socialists but also a large part of social democracy – to oppose the project for a long time.

In short, Altiero Spinelli was not the father of the EU and throughout his life he was committed to a different model. We need only read his critical remarks on the preparation of the first federalist movement congress in The Hague in 1948. He refused to participate in this congress if the only high level figure present was to be Churchill, the inventor of the cold war, a move that would brand this initiative with the same stamp. Spinelli's supporters reiterated an alternative of staying out of the blocs, a ‘third way’ for Europe.

There has been no reflection on what was being was built in Europe and how it was being done, even in recent years. Not even in 2005, when the citizens of two founding Member States, France and the Netherlands, were asked to decide on the new Lisbon Treaty in a referendum and did not approve it. In this case also, the peoples of the two countries concerned were accused of resurgent nationalism. Undoubtedly this was partly the case, but it is not at all true to say that the rejection was based only or even fundamentally on this.

And so, a committee was set up to carry out a reflection process. Unfortunately it didn't reflect. Instead, years later in the Portuguese capital a Treaty was launched, which was almost a carbon copy of the awful treaty born 16 years earlier in Maastricht.

It is due to this ‘illegitimate birth’ – which was never endorsed by the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto – that Europe has never become popular. Indeed, in 1955 when the first blueprint was conceived, almost nobody noticed: the location of this conception was none other than Messina, not to demonstrate a sacrosanct desire to open up to the Mediterranean, but instead for a more trivial reason. There were local

elections looming, which were of great interest to our Gaetano Martino, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the dreadful Scelba government. (The astonishment in the north at the peculiar location was expressed with particular irony by a Belgian correspondent: 'Why not move the Council of ministers to Alaska or Tierra del Fuego then?' As for the interest generated by the event, just consider the remark from Paul Spaak – who was tasked with preparing Europe's real 'baptism' – two years later in Rome: 'public opinion towards us was not hostile, it was indifferent").

The rest of the story is well known. From one treaty to another, right up to Lisbon, the DNA of the embryo hasn't changed. The indifference is also just the same: the Maastricht Treaty, which is by far the most significant– because it unleashed the legal horror of constitutionalising a specific policy choice, liberal policy, thus exempting it from parliamentary decision – was ratified in Italy after a parliamentary debate lasting half a day. The only opposing votes came from the members of the Communist Refoundation Party (which didn't really make much effort to continue their battle to oppose the treaty afterwards). This was despite the fact that they were faced with adopting competitiveness as the Union's overriding principle, thus making any sort of market regulation illegal, and introducing a substantial limit on the welfare state.

The EU project thus proceeded step-by-step to deliberately destroy any obstacle to full liberalisation. What's worse is that it produced a silent but complete acquiescence among a large part of the left, both those in government in their respective Member States and a good number of the opposition. They only made a noise to denounce any criticism or counter-proposal as a disgraceful offence against the 'holy European fathers'.

Indifference was so widespread that there was no search – in almost no country and virtually none of the political groups – for a way to drive forward proposals that, if accepted, could have made the EU less ugly. Just think of those brought to the table by Delors himself, e.g. including long-term and youth unemployment in the convergence criteria of the Stability Pact as one of the indicators that 'best revealed the difficulties that a country may be experiencing'; or Vredeling's proposal for a directive, in which he called for the establishment of works councils in companies with more than 1 000 employees located in two or more countries, to allow workers facing closures or relocations to benefit from information provided by management boards who were often far-away, and no longer direct counterparties to company claims. (This would have been helpful to Fiat!). There was also the suggestion by the French economist Fitoussi: calculate the public deficit minus public investments in development.

Let's not forget how the foolish enlargement of the EU to include some 28 countries was also swallowed, a process in which any suggestion of full political union – which was obviously impossible given such a huge diversity of structures – was buried. Rather than seeking new forms of cooperation with the eastern states, they were incorporated pure and simple. This project was dictated above all by the attractiveness of these

markets and by their readiness to align unconditionally with the rules of liberalism. By also, immediately, arranging their entry to the Union to coincide with the parallel enlargement of NATO (as today it would like to do with Ukraine), the Union became the cornerstone of western identity, translated into a string of missile bases.

Even here the left preferred to believe and promote the belief that only selfishness could stop all peoples on earth from having their slice of the splendid European cake. Thus, they aroused hopeless appetites in countries and regions ready to abandon their original identities to be able to join the 'exclusive club'. (The breakup of Yugoslavia began in this way, without any negotiation as provided for by the Treaty on European Security and only by expanding the people's right to self-determination – exactly what is considered illegal today with regard to Crimea).

Is it still possible to salvage the spirit of Ventotene, and is the slogan 'another Europe is possible'' that we all continue to proclaim still meaningful? I believe so; in fact I think it's essential that we try. But rather than also engaging in discussion over the institutional architecture in order to determine what changes should be brought to treaties and regulations – many are already doing this – I would prefer to talk here about us and our left, who although never (yet) in government, are not exempt from blame.

First of all, for not being seriously committed to building a European social and political entity, able to change – at EU level – the current balance of power, form alliances, establish hegemony and bunkers, or to become a key player in political battles, at least as far as possible at national level where democracy exists.

This 'entity' – and I call it 'entity' and not 'people' or demos in order to avoid the risk of cultural (or worse 'Schmidian") misunderstandings – doesn't exist: the story of Europe is the story of its nations, our monuments were erected to celebrate victories which across borders remind us of disasters. The idea that a shared historical culture exists is also hot air: Christianity generated endless religious wars and the enlightenment led to further splits. With regard to the famous legacy of Greek-Judeo-Christian civilisation (separation of religion and politics, respect for the individual), this is now the heritage of the whole Western world, it is not a specific characteristic of our continent. In addition, we speak 26 different languages and each people is rightly protective of their own.

In particular, 'intermediary bodies' are lacking at European level – trade unions, parties, media and associations – which in the individual nations ensure greater levels of democracy, by acting as channels of communication between civil society and the institutions. These bodies allow the public to make their voices heard and thereby influence executive power. It was this sacrosanct reasoning that drove the German Constitutional Court to declare the admission of Federal Germany to the European Union born with the Maastricht Treaty inadmissible: this was because – as written in Judge Grimm's judgement – the basic law of the country prevents it from joining

a non-democratic supranational organisation. A manoeuvre was found to overcome this substantial objection, but the Court of Karlsruhe renewed its judgement again in relation to the Lisbon Treaty.

These are important observations: we all know that European trade unions exist almost only on paper, operating at a beautiful building in Brussels, where they promote interesting studies, but don't take any real joint trade union action. (Just look at basic income – also known as inclusion income/minimum income/other names –, which is a rallying cry in all European countries, yet I am not aware of anything that has been done to formulate a joint proposal or to fight for this together at EU level). With regard to the political parties, I remember when Willy Brandt said that the meeting of the European socialists was the best place to go to read the newspaper. Since then not much has changed: there is hardly even any information on what European member organisations are doing in their respective countries. Not to mention the media: there is no real European TV and only a few Member States are involved in the tiny Euronews channel. Each country has its own broadcaster abroad and there is no standard supplement to be included in like-minded newspapers. As a consequence, European public opinion does not exist. There is only public opinion in individual Member States and it's easy to play them off against one another, meaning that EU law-makers may not meet anyone's needs.

Under these conditions it is difficult for Europeans to feel that they are part of a common good, which forms the basis for democratic participation. Nor does it make any sense to call for solidarity between Member States and ask that the treaties be changed to abolish the horrible 'no bail out' clause, which lays down the rule that each country must tend to its own affairs and cannot be called upon to help another country struggling with economic problems. We will never manage to change the terrible competition rules (the opposite of solidarity) that underpin the treaties unless we first build a community (even if Schäuble does retire).

We must also correct (this has also been done very little) the concept of democracy that Brussels has tried to endorse over the years – with some theoretical help – namely: the notion that there is no people in the European Union, just citizens. Although, in the Nice Charter, the Union lays down many individual rights (even more in many cases than are provided at national level) it does not, however, include the key right in any democracy: the collective right. This means the power to take part in the deliberations on general decisions.

The complexity to create a European political subject, in light of the deep differences characterising the nations that are part of the EU, is enhanced today by the intense immigration coming from other continents which leads to further and much deeper ethnic, cultural and religious heterogeneities. The origin of the racist wave, representing the backdrop to this phenomenon, is rooted undoubtedly in the sense of insecurity caused by the economic crisis and by the inequalities produced by the

neoliberal policies that have been adopted after the crisis. It is not surprising that the widest expressions of refusal against migrants are coming from the East-European Countries - countries that are still experiencing the trauma deriving from a radical change of system which has exposed their populations to the harshest form of capitalism.

Much has been said about the immediate measures that must be adopted in order to tackle the migratory flow and many proposals have been made by those opposing the horrific policy adopted by the EU in this field. Little consideration has been given instead to the necessary changes to be brought about when it will be definitely established that these migrations represent, for the most part, an irreversible process (there can be no freedom of movement of capital and goods without freedom of movement of persons). After all, an unexpected mobility characterises also the European populations nowadays: more and more - generally highly qualified - young people leave their country of birth to find a job in another country (In the south of Italy they overcome the number of immigrants).

In light of the above, it is necessary to rethink the concept of citizenship by conceiving a notion of 'multiple citizenship' that preserves the persons' own roots while introducing a European dimension, which is tied to the European territory where the person is rightfully living but decoupled from a single nation.

Much more needs to be done for enabling people to consider themselves as citizens, hence holders of this common good called Europe - perceived as a community of goals, based on its own specific model, and not as a mere geographic/bureaucratic space. To this regard, it is necessary, first of all, to start calling the immigrants as 'new Europeans' and no longer as 'third-country nationals', and to consolidate the idea that Europe is a community.

The term 'common' is also important, because, in this era of globalisation when everyone trades with everyone else, the idea of a common market – which might have seemed like a good idea in the 1950s – is almost ridiculous today. So, either we answer a reasonable question – why Europe? – or nobody will take action. Quite the opposite, the illusion of the 'little homelands' resurfaces.

I also believe that one of the reasons why interest in the EU has further declined is the fact that Europe has lost its uniqueness and we have become just any old piece of the global market. I am referring to our post-war national constitutions and welfare, based on the non-sanctity of private property and not demonising the public. I also have in mind the characteristic that Karl Marx ascribed to Europe in the Grundrisse:

the discreet distance kept by the society from the commodification of all aspects of life, guaranteed by the persistence of pre-capitalistic entities - such as the rural world, the Church and the aristocracy - and of their values, which were still active during the development of the capitalism. Those historical entities kept characterising

the new society that was evolving, still producing reactionary effects but also avoiding that everything be reduced to a mere marketplace.

In order to prove the accuracy of this Marxian observation, it would be sufficient to think about gastronomy. It is not without reason that we, as Committee for Culture and Education of the European Parliament, decided to use it as a reference for the definition of a common European identity. During the first big demonstration against globalization, held at the WTO Summit in Seattle in 1999, the notorious symbol of the protest was the Rochefort, which was grabbed by José Bové as a flag. It was symbolizing the idea that Europe was proud of its thousands of varieties of cheese even if the market forces were pushing for a homologation: an assembly line for a single anonymous kind of dairy).

If this model and its values are dismantled, Europe also loses its meaning.

That is why the action we must take to save Europe is entirely political and cultural, rather than economic. Of course motivating our own activists to fight to build a different Europe is not easy, nor is the entity that this battle may cultivate. The events of recent years in particular make it seem like we should give up the project and that everyone should look for a way to save themselves. But we should all be aware that alone, every one of our little countries would drown in the ocean unless it convinced its inhabitants to return to a pastoral economy. Although there is still hope of recovering some form of democracy in our era, this certainly won't be done at global level, – global democratic institutions are difficult to imagine – but rather only by breaking it down into macro-regions. Despite everything, Europe is perhaps the easiest one of these to build even with all its faults, given that, as Etienne Balibar notes, it is the richest in social and individual rights, with its embedded history of struggles and revolutions.

Gramsci critically noted that there was a defect common to both the social-democratic tradition and the communist worker's movement: statism. That is, an obsessive focus on the control of central power, whether through parliamentary elections or the storming of the Winter Palace, while at the same time under-valuing society's achievement. It's still the same. This observation applies particularly to Europe, where the left has been more concerned about Brussels and has taken very little interest in European society. In my view, it is essential that we take care of European society and commit to building agents of change at this level.

The challenge of the Ventotene Manifesto today

A few dogmatic remarks

By Frieder Otto Wolf

The Ventotene Manifesto has passed into history – to the point that it is now quoted by the European Commission and other agencies of an on-going passive revolution in Europe.[8] And yet, by re-reading it, we could become aware that it has been a document of a deep historical crisis, sketching out main lines for a radical, truly alternative solution to it, which were pertinent enough, but not given any chance by the powers that have prevailed after 1945/46.

I tend to think, that the present historical crisis is indeed to be compared to the great crisis of the 'capitalist world system' unfolding to the point of breaking out into war and revolution between 1914 to 1946 – and that the left wing forces in Europe would be well advised to develop a comparable strategic orientation in order to cope with this present great crisis.

A contemporary radical manifesto would, in order to have a chance of being effective, have to address this present historical crisis – simultaneously with a view of an adequately deep understanding of this great and complex crisis, in which a crisis of capital accumulation is at once over-determined by a crisis of realisation of financial capital and by structural crises of gender domination, of post-colonial dependency, and of human ecology on all of its levels. And this by addressing, as a very first step, the symptomatic crises in which the on-going great crisis is presently finding its most immediate expressions: the so-called financial (and debt) crisis, the climate crisis, the refugee crisis, the crisis of wage labour (attacked by precarity, exclusion and poverty) and the crisis of the world order as such that finds expression in multiple wars and in situations of unfettered violence.

As the EU is a major agency in the present crisis of a world system defined by the current overdetermination of on-going crises – and as it has not excelled as a factor for overcoming them, so far – it is worth fighting for, because none of the nation states it has begun to transform into member states has the weight (and the power) to make a difference on the global scale – which the EU undoubtedly possesses. The

[8] I had occasion to oppose a recent attempt at hi-jacking it for a neo-liberal policy programme for the EU, cf. 'Keine Verfassung für Europa – Neoliberale Festschreibung per Verfassungsoktroi Zur Kritik des von der «Spinelli-Gruppe» 2013 vorgelegten Entwurfs eines Grundgesetzes für die EU' <https://www.rosalux.de/publikation/id/8755/>, which is accompanied by a revised translation of the original manifesto

EU will have to fully meet its historical responsibilities – as a global power capable of resisting the on-going militarisation of foreign relations and of building new relations of co-operation and trust.

Defining and struggling for an alternative strategical perspective for the EU – within Europe, as well as on a global scale – is an urgent need for all left wing forces today.

Such an alternative strategical perspective will have to be defined in a broad transnational European debate between all emancipatory, left wing forces – to be conducted as a debate on political perspectives for Europe, on all levels and within all spaces of politics. It will be of decisive importance for the successful development of such a debate that it will take up the concerns and experiences of the multitudes of people (‚citizens' as well as ‚denizens') and help them to develop common European perspectives.

In the present state of this urgently needed debate it seems, however, already possible to define some elementary orientations:

- The struggle cannot be one for national or European privileges, it has to be conducted with a view to common and equal results for an inclusively defined ‚all';
- the struggle to be constructed will have to combine on-going struggles against existing structures of (modern and premodern) domination, in a way capable of avoiding the creation or reproduction of all hierarchies between them;
- the political unity to be achieved between this plurality of on-going struggles will have to be based on mutual respect and inclusion, instead of hierarchization or instrumentalisation;
- political organisations will only be capable of playing a major role in these struggles in so far they succeed in finding an defining common ground between social movements concentrating on their specific concerns;
- any real initiative for a European politics from below will have to go beyond the level of EU politics as such, making European political issues relevant on the ‚national', the ‚regional', as well as on the municipal levels – and thereby mobilising European multitudes for participating in EU politics, directly and indirectly, at least by changing the underlying relations of forces.

In order to realise already first steps towards an alternative European policy complex leading to a sustainable development, the EU should define and address intermediate aims on the model of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN.

In order to open the much needed spaces for such a European debate from below, a number of exemplary initiatives could be taken on the level of the EU:

- by defining European minimum standards of social inclusion – with regard to income, as well as to status – immediately applicable within all member states;
- by defining European framework programmes for overcoming unemployment in Europe, beginning with youth unemployment;
- by defining European programmes of support to accelerating measures for addressing the climate crisis;

- by defining a sufficiently high capability of intervention in the financial markets in order to defend their stable development, while weeding out exuberant and flimsy financial instruments;
- by defining a common European capability of investment – as well as on a global scale, in programmes and projects of sustainable development co-operation, as within Europe, for example: in co-ordinated European policies to reduce and, finally, to overcome the economic and cultural polarisation that has taken place in Europe in the last decades, between social classes, gender groups, nationalities and member states.

In order to achieve this goal, in first steps, as well as in major strategic break-throughs, it will be necessary to build new types of alliances and solidarities – between progressive member states, political parties, trade unions, and social movement organisations, as well as between experts and people mobilised for specific issues and broader mobilisations for democratic participation. Political organisations and initiatives will be able to prove their present relevancy and efficaciousness by participating in the spreading and promoting of such processes of awareness-creation and mobilisation. The parties of the present left will be measured in their historical impact by their capacity of actively promoting such processes with regard to European politics, on the European, as well as on the national, regional or municipal level.

The common debate on European strategies – between all kinds of interested and relevant agencies – will be the necessary medium for such a debate, to be constructed with great effort and insistence – quite irrespective of whether or not this will produce a new European manifesto.

Euro crisis or ecological reform

By Rainer Land

The Ventotene Manifesto promotes a European Federation within which, 'each State will [nevertheless] retain the autonomy it needs for a plastic articulation and development of political life according to the particular characteristics of the various peoples.' (Spinelli 1941: 8). At centre stage is an end to war and a blueprint for peace, but to achieve that, economic conditions are also set forth: Participation of the worker and of the majority of the population and guaranteeing the conditions necessary for this, such as schools, housing, food and clothing, education and democracy, are central requirements. The new federation should not be determined by economic autarky, 'the backbone of totalitarian regimes', but rather by economic cooperation.

From a contemporary perspective, some of the visions and proposals are very modern, but some questions go unanswered. Did the authors have a federation with *an integrated European economy* in mind, or is the economic meaning of federation a *system of cooperating but independent national economies with predominantly national powers of regulation*? This is a key question in the debate on solving the euro crisis. Increased integration through a common budget, a dominant European fiscal policy, an EU economic government – or reform of the EU as it stands, through a system that gives nation states greater possibilities to shape and determine their own development, such as by returning to national currencies with fixed but adjustable exchange rates?

* * *

Seen from a contemporary perspective, the development of the EU in the post-war era is very successful. Difficulties became evident during the worldwide economic crisis of 2007, but they ultimately date back to the introduction of the euro in 1999, which was supposed to be the key project for a closer integration.

1. It is a mistake to definitively ascribe the successful development of the EU to the principle of free trade and the single market. The basis of the successful post-war development was the emergence of a new system of economic development which I shall call *participatory capitalism* (cf. Busch Land 2013). The starting point was the New Deal of the 1930s, which the Roosevelt administration enacted in an attempt to overcome the economic crisis of 1929 and the subsequent dire recession in the USA, which seemed to have no end in sight. The backbone of this new system was the *coupling of wages and mass income to productivity* and, somewhat later, the expansion of the State's *investment activity with credit financed investments*. At

first, the wartime economy, the support of Great Britain, the Soviet Union and other members of the anti-Hitler coalition, and the USA's subsequent entry into WWII, led to expansive economic development in the USA. This enabled unemployment to be overcome and for incomes, consumer spending and investment spurred by that consumer spending to rise again. But this boom precipitated by the wartime economy was only possible because the labour and social policies of the New Deal – including in particular, an improvement in the bargaining positions of workers and trade unions, social security, and the introduction of a minimum wage – led to growing wages and growing mass consumption sparking a new economic momentum. The EU's current economic and social policy, which focuses on increased flexibility, wage restraint, austerity and savings from cuts to social services, is diametrically opposed to the New Deal's recipe for success.

After the war ended, it became apparent that the boom which began in the USA in 1938 was not merely an effect of the wartime economy. The decline in war expenditure initially led to a sizeable but brief drop in growth – but not to another recession. In fact, the economic momentum resumed in 1948 and continued into the 1960s and 1970s, because it persisted with wages that increased in line with productivity. Notably, however, this momentum was not limited to the USA: All European industrialised capitalist countries and Japan, as well as (somewhat later) other far Eastern countries, showed a similar momentum.

It can be seen that economic momentum based on growing incomes was the premise for European unity and for the stability of the nascent European Union.

2. Two economic and historical watersheds can now be established. The first is in the 1970s. With the oil crises, the end of the Bretton Woods monetary system and the beginnings of a trend towards deregulation and the dismantling of the welfare state, the system of participatory capitalism starts to erode. Increases in wages lag behind increases in productivity, the expansion of the social system comes to an end and then we see the onset of the dismantling of the welfare state. The ecological problems of Fordist mass production are becoming apparent.

The second watershed was brought on by Reaganomics and Thatcherism. From there on in, the EU's development was focused on an overwhelmingly neoliberal economic model, one which was reliant on financial markets and deregulated labour markets and which led to secular economic stagnation. In Germany, Agenda 2010 was a decisive turnaround in economic policy.

'Two extreme but complementary systems of growth' (Hein 2016:139) evolved from financially dominated capitalism, which only work in systemic interdependence and which are trapped in a double-bind (Land 2017a: 4f). This 'double-bind capitalism', consisting of an alliance between *debt-financed consumer boom regimes* and *mercantilist export surplus regimes*, arose from the rivalling opinions of the 1970s and early 1980s. This regime particularly influenced the Treaty of Maastricht and the

euro system. The greatest error is undoubtedly the uncoupling of wage increases from productivity, the absence of coordinated regulation over wage increases and the lack of a monetary and financial policy oriented towards full employment and the participation of the majority of the population.

It is not just a matter of mistakes in the formulation of the Treaty of Maastricht, however. At the end of the day, it is about how our current institutionalised capital investment systems have competition for financialised returns on investment at their core; ruling out a *cooperative* development of the EU. Profits which can only be made from others' losses. Surpluses which are conditional upon the deficits of others follow a completely different paradigm than the successful development of the 1950s to 1960s. European integration cannot be successfully built upon export surpluses on the one hand and debt-financed consumption on the other (fig. 2).

The consequences of this developmental trajectory became apparent during the global economic crisis of 2007-2009, itself followed by a long depression which may be approaching its end in 2017; the euro crisis is a part of this crisis.

3. Various proposals have been made as to how to overcome the euro crisis. It is, however, readily apparent that 'business as usual' cannot be the solution. All serious economists take it as read that a regime with growing export surpluses on the one hand and deficits and debts on the other will not work in the long run. (For a detailed analysis of the problems associated with export surpluses and deficits, see Priewe 6.9.2017 and various articles in Makroskop, e.g. from Flassbeck, Ehnts, Grunert, Vontobel, Steinhardt).[9] Within the EU, there are considerable disparities and an erosion of ties, which in the worst-case, could lead to the breakup of the EU, or to the dissolution of the monetary union. This would be bearable if it were to end in a mutual and orderly manner and if it would lead to the introduction of a system of fixed but adjustable exchange rates, which currently seems unlikely.[10] Everyone agrees that a disorderly breakup of the monetary union would leave a severe economic crisis in its wake.

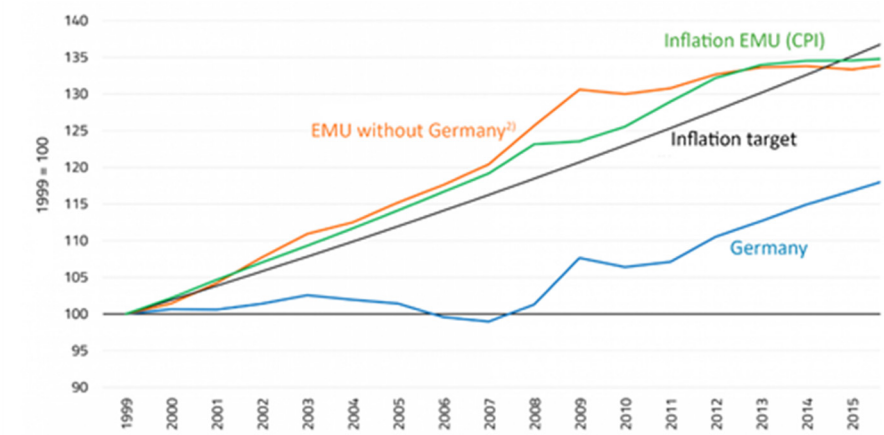
A range of conditions for a solution to the euro crisis can be given:

a) A *monetary union with multiple independent national economies* can only work if the same inflation rates are kept in the various countries. This requires a coordination of wage increases. This concept has been demonstrated and justified time and time again, by Heiner Flassbeck and by others – from my perspective, it is entirely correct. However, since differences in labour unit costs have risen to over 20 per cent in the course of the last 20 years (Fig. 1), coordinating future wage increases would not be

[9] Cf. articles in English with the keywords 'export surpluses' and 'euro crisis' (etc.) or in German with 'Exportüberschüsse' or 'Eurokrise' on makroskop.eu/, https://makronom.de/.

[10] See also Busch 2016 (etc.) and the subsequent debate in Makroskop: makroskop.eu/2016/11/die-linke-und-der-euro-oder-wie-man-dem-nationalismus-die-haende-spielt/ as well as the articles listed there.

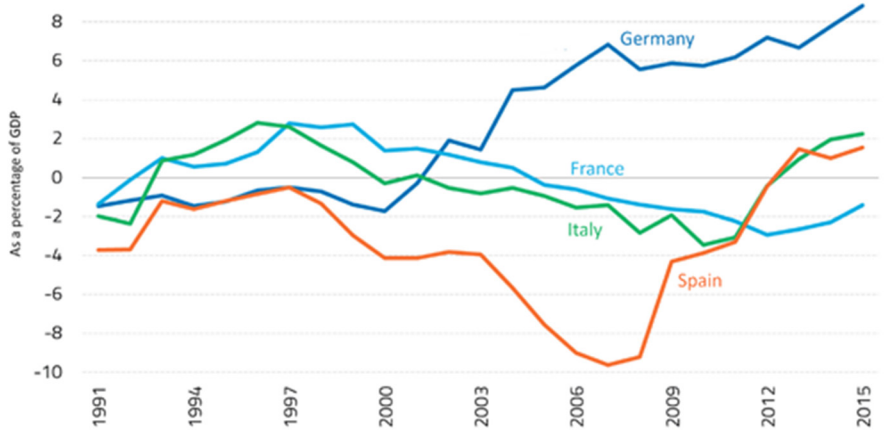
Fig. 1: Unit labour costs. Germany in comparison to the EMU and the ECB's inflation target. A monetary union works when all countries push labour unit costs towards the level of the target inflation rate.



1) Gross income from employment per employee in relation to the gross domestic product per employee. Index 1999 = 100.
2) Growth rates of unit labor costs of member countries weighted by GDP.
EMU = European Monetary Union. ECB = European Central Bank. Source: AMECO.

Source: Heiner Flassbeck: Geldpolitik, Löhne und die Deflation. 5.7.2017. makroskop.eu/app/uploads/2017 06/20170704_HF_Abb03.png

Fig. 2: Current account balances. Germany in comparison to France, Spain and Italy. The current account balances are inversely related to the difference in unit labour costs.



1) As a percentage of GDP
Source: AMECO

Source: Taken from: Heiner Flassbeck, Friederike Spieker, Paul Steinhard: Das Schuldenproblem und die europäische Krise. Makroskop Dossier 2017. p. 16. Source: makroskop.eu/dossier/das-schuldenproblem-und-die-europaeische-krise

enough. Rather, it would be necessary for Germany to catch up with other countries' labour unit costs with disproportionately high wage increases to allow the balances of trade within the EU to even out.

A strategy of creating a trade surplus across the EU compared with the world economy will not work. The USA is the only country in a position to absorb growing deficits, owing to the special role of the US dollar. It is not inconceivable that resistance to growing foreign trade deficits will rise in the USA as well. Other countries cannot absorb similar deficits – quite aside from the fact that such a system does not generate any meaningful economic development. Merkel's motto is 'everyone should become more competitive', i.e. 'everyone should have a trade surplus' – but there simply aren't enough financially strong debtors in the world to support an EU-wide mercantilist strategy. And Germany is not prepared to gift the money to poorer neighbours, to say nothing of African countries in crisis, which might buy German surpluses with that money.

b) The second, and in my opinion, indispensable condition would be an ECB monetary policy which would, on the one hand, restrict and monitor speculative growth of financial investments, thus preventing the associated risk of a collapse of the financial and credit system and of the system of monetary transactions, whilst still ensuring investments are financed through credit creation. How is it possible to have a monetary policy which is both restrictive and expansive? The answer is credit control. A differentiation of lending in regard to the objectives of the real economy is the minimum requirement of a sensible system for controlling credit creation. Unfortunately, unless there is a shift away from the ideology of the efficient financial market, this is unlikely.

c) A third requirement of a currency union would be coordinated fiscal policy. Up until now, this area has mainly consisted of restrictions: the deficit ratio and the debt ratio. There are policy areas which are funded jointly, such as the agricultural budget, structural policy, education, culture, research and the environment. However, except for the agricultural budget, the sum of the national budgets for each of these areas is higher than the EU budget for the same area. This means that the leverage of the Member States is many times greater than that of the EU. For an economic and monetary union consisting of *cooperating, independent national economies*, this is not a problem. However, this coordinated fiscal policy would have to contain commitments, not just limitations: such as a commitment to an aligned economic policy of all Member States; oriented towards full employment, balanced trade in the medium term, the dismantling of regional disparities, and investment. Unless we leave behind austerity, the debt brake and the EDP, a genuine coordinated financial policy is impossible.

* * *

These conditions – coordinated wage policy, uniform inflation rates, common monetary policy and coordinated fiscal policy – are the requirements for a functioning economic union as *a system of cooperating yet independent national economies*. In order to arrive at a unified economy, considerably more comprehensive conditions and coordinating measures would be required:

- a labour market with a unified law on collective bargaining, moderate regional wage differences (in my estimation under 20 %), and the same or very similar labour laws, protections, etc.;
- a comprehensive and essentially unified social welfare system (pensions, health insurance, unemployment insurance);
- a unified tax regime: taxation must be largely unified, allowing for limited regional differences (e.g. as with German business tax and municipal levies);
- essentially unified environmental legislation and comparable regulations for the economic exploitation of natural resources.

In essence, these conditions ensure that regional differences cannot be exploited for additional profit, and businesses must focus their competition on innovations in products and processes, rather than on minimising wages, taxes and environmental commitments.

A European economy would only be imaginable if productivity levels were close to one another, and above all, if there were a tendency towards rapid convergence. I would therefore argue as follows. Provided that differences in productivity are more than 20 to 30 per cent, there can be no successful integration into a unified economy.

If you consider the EU as it is today, with 28 Member States, it becomes clear that the conditions for integration into a unified economy cannot be created in the foreseeable future, nor should they be pursued. The price would be the destabilisation of the EU as a system of cooperating national economies. And this destabilisation has been in full swing since the introduction of the euro. We should instead be asking whether the monetary union as it currently exists does not overstretch the Member States' ability to cooperate. We should acknowledge that a monetary union cannot work without coordinated wage increases, and we should bear in mind the conflicts of interest between employees, employers, nation states and regions, all of which pose an obstacle to coordinating the development of productivity and wages, as well as to a common tariff and wage policy (cf. the suggestions in Höpner 2017).

However, in a system of cooperating national economies, it is important that all national economies should make *progress from their current position*. That is no longer the case, which erodes the bond that citizens have with the EU. In fact, it is the neoliberal orientation of industry lobbies and of large segments of the political world that frustrates a functioning cooperation: it is intent on exploiting existing rules and differences in wages, taxation, working conditions, access to natural resources and so on, for the profit of monopolies and the rentier economy (cf. Elsenhans 2017).

The political establishment is unwilling and/or unable to counter them. Under such conditions, not only is further integration out of the question, but also the existing cooperation between national economies is undermined, the EU is drifting apart, the people are not participating and resentment towards the EU is on the rise.

* * *

In my opinion, under the prevailing conditions, increased integration towards a unified EU economy and a United States of Europe is not what should be on the agenda, but instead, two simpler, yet very challenging tasks:

First, we must stop the various countries from managing their economies at the expense of others: wage dumping, such as with Germany's wage restraint; undercutting of tax regulations on a national level for businesses and financial markets; competition for lower costs in terms of occupational health, environmental costs, infrastructure costs, etc. The EU institutions have plenty to do in this respect. Business competition within the EU must turn towards better, environmentally friendly products and processes, towards cost savings made by reducing the use of environmental resources, and not towards minimising wages, taxes and environmental commitments.

It is not enough just to stabilise the EU, however. A *positive structural mission* is needed: something which the EU can achieve, can create for its citizens, something which brings together the majority of citizens and social movements, something which could rebuild the common consensus which has been lost – comparable with the social consensus of the post-war era.

I believe that *ecologically reforming industrial society* will be the decisive challenge of the coming decades and could deliver the EU the conditions for closer integration if it consciously meets this human endeavour with whole-hearted commitment, and without incessant backtracking or hedging.

According to our established knowledge on climate change, environmental damage and ecology, humanity is under existential threat from its own industrial development. If over the course of the next two or three generations we do not succeed in stopping climate change and creating an industrial economy that is compatible with the environment, the existential conditions for global society will be destroyed. However, for that to happen, the trend has to be reversed in the next ten years, and reform must start, or must be accelerated right away. The results of the last 20 years are far too feeble, indeed, in crucial areas there has been a lot of noise made, but little real improvement, no turning of the tide.

A prerequisite for ecological reform would be consistent management of all relevant environmental resources, along with a research and investment programme to develop new, environmentally friendly products and processes (see Land 2017b). This would also stabilise and improve employment, income and the social position of populations

of the EU and across the world – of course, not by expanding environmentally harmful mass consumption, but by developing new, environmentally friendly consumer goods and patterns of consumption which offer more scope for participation and possibilities for individual development. The vision of a better world which guarantees the survival of generations yet to come; this would be the central participation project around which the people now living in the EU could unite.

To this end, there would finally have to be total, public clarity regarding the magnitude of the threat we ourselves have caused. We can no longer comfort ourselves with the idea that it won't be so bad, or that politicians will fix it. Politics, science and the media need to unreservedly make the facts known about the coming ecological collapse.

If we succeed in dismantling economic disparities, the question of intensifying economic integration into a unified European economy, and a *United States of Europe* could return to the agenda later on.

A reconstruction of our energy systems, material flows, industry, agriculture, transport systems, consumption and urban structures, is physically, technologically and economically, possible. However, if we consider the current social structure, the reproduction conditions of the different classes, groups and nations and their resulting interests, and the balance of economic and political power, then such an institutional reconstruction seems unlikely. It fails because the current socioeconomic conditions for many social groups to exist, particularly shareholders and financial market stakeholders, would be fundamentally called into question – although at the same time, it could open up new, sustainable existential conditions for work and the capital investment. At present, the EU is a dominant neoliberal project. The future will depend on whether social movements manage to abandon a questionable present with no future in favour of a new perspective.

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Six Theses on a New Socialism for a New Europe

By Klaus Dörre

The proposal for a critical reappropriation of the historic Ventotene Manifesto strikes a chord with debates around the renewal of left-wing politics. Indeed, it does so in two distinct ways. On the one hand, it emphasises that a 'movement for a free and united Europe' (Manifesto, p. 8) represented the key vested interest of a socialist-communist Left eager to draw the necessary lessons from the triumph of fascism and totalitarianism. On the other hand, the reference to the Manifesto underscores the fact that its authors, exiled to the island of Ventotene, had envisaged post-war Europe as a socialist order. Both objectives, in turn, simultaneously illustrate how distant such visions currently are. At present, it remains utterly unclear as to what the severely weakened European Left demands from and seeks to do with or within Europe. Confronted with a European Union (EU) geared towards radical free-market policies and the embedded Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the European Left currently exhibits the most diverse programmatic orientations, ranging from the total rejection of the EMU and a gradual removal of the Euro regime to pleas for neo-Keynesianist inspired policies and even visions of a deepening of European integration. This unevenness points to another, more radical distinction. Indeed, while a rudimentary and simultaneously deeply bureaucratic European state certainly exists, a socialist movement in a position to exert any kind of noteworthy influence upon the former's internal balance of forces does not. Currently, what will become of Europe and the Eurozone is being decided by others. Apart from *visions for a better Europe*, the European Left therefore requires a *basic concept for a new socialism* as well.

Economic Stagnation

The notion that EU member states are in deep crisis appears self-evident. The major worldwide turmoil of 2007–9 initiated a period of upheaval manifesting as an economic-ecological double or 'pincer-grip' crisis. Despite undeniable continuities, the phase of intensified globalisation which established itself as the second-most successful growth project in the history of industrial capitalism up until the early 21st century has come to an end. The global financial crisis signalled the transition to a period of stagnation. Even though the early industrialised countries have for the most part returned to a growth trajectory, an actual solution to the consequences of the crisis remains nowhere in sight. EU member states took until 2016 to merely return to pre-crisis levels of economic output, while these average figures obscure highly

unequal developments: Germany remains the engine of European growth despite its comparatively flat growth curve, but its perpetual export surpluses are a major contributor to the economic imbalances within the Eurozone. The crisis-ridden countries along Europe's southern periphery will take at least another decade to even come close to compensating for the crisis – even under conditions of continual growth. The picture is even more gloomy in view to income and employment. Low growth rates have a similar effect as zero growth, causing an increase in unemployment, poverty, precarity, as well as income and wealth inequality.

The Crisis of the 'Carrying On as we Always Have'

Yet that is just one side of the coin. The other becomes apparent when the ecological dimension of the crisis is taken into account. Accelerated extraction of raw materials and pollutant emissions inherent to economic growth endanger the self-reproduction of biophysical systems. The main polluters are the countries in the global North. One quarter of the world's population, mainly from the OECD countries, currently consumes about three quarters of its resources and produces three quarters of waste and emissions. The last time climate-damaging emissions declined significantly was in 2009. The real cause of this was not growing resource efficiency or an accelerated transition to renewable energies but the global slump in industrial production. The 2010 economic recovery brought carbon emissions back to the record levels of 2008 (31.5 million tons of CO_2 emissions) and even surpassed them.

This shows: given the current state of affairs, the most important means of overcoming economic crises for almost two centuries – namely, the generation of economic growth – increasingly morphs into ecological destruction and socially destructive growth. If poorer countries and populations are to have any chance of developing, this will require a profound transformation in those economies and populations of the Global North with high resource consumption and pollutant emissions – essentially leaving only two options: 'one is to make growth sustainable; the other is to make degrowth stable'.

The European Empire

Due to the Eurozone's flawed construction and the extreme imbalances caused by the German export model, this constellation affects European integration in a unique way. Originally intended as a response to globalisation's deregulating tendencies and a safeguard against German hegemony, both the EU and EMU have become 'deregulation machines'. The EU with its high levels of integration and (at best) embryonic civil society represents a hybrid of empire and transnational state. It promotes a de-democratising constitutionalism which has firmly established market orthodoxy within European institutions, meaning that institutional heterogeneity manifests itself as a variation of – rather than protection from – the impacts of the crisis. By

dismantling collective security systems, collective bargaining agreements, protection from unfair dismissal and co-determination, European policies have for a long time weakened precisely those welfare-state institutions which have proven particularly robust during the crisis (at least for certain groups of wage earners). At the same time, the institutions' austerity diktat counteracts the European Central Bank's (ECB) policy of low interest rates. The cheap money cannot reach productive cycles and stimulate urgently needed infrastructure investments because demand – including productive state consumption – is affected by the imposed austerity and redistributive mechanisms have ceased to function. This is why the Eurozone's economy can actually grow without simultaneously driving up wages and inflation. The proliferation of precarious employment relations and the weakening of trade unions' organisational power act as a lead weight attached to wages, constantly depressing wage shares. The European post-growth capitalisms regularly run the risk of destroying precisely those stabilising redistributive mechanisms which are indispensable for defusing the *capital surplus absorption problem (David Harvey). F*rom the perspective of investors with a long-term orientation, *the uncertainty this produces is utterly toxic. That is why* the Eurozone's return to the supposedly normal state of rapid growth is highly unlikely. The decisive reason is all too often overlooked even by critical economists. As a result of the weakening of trade unions and the decline of Social Democratic, socialist and Eurocommunist parties, the political economy of the labour force was pushed onto the defensive to such an extent that it still lacks the necessary assertiveness to push for even system-stabilising redistributive measures to this day.

Distributional Conflicts and Democratic-Ecological Class Politics

Take, for instance, climate justice. The wealthiest 10 percent of the world's population are responsible for about half of all climate-damaging carbon emissions. Conversely, the poorer half of the world's population, who suffer the most from the effects of climate change, account for only one tenth of worldwide emissions of climate-damaging greenhouse gases. In this sense, climate change and social justice are inextricably linked to one another. They separate rich and poor even within nation states. A similar picture emerges with regard to resource consumption. The ecological footprint of someone from the wealthiest one percent of the world's population is about 175 times greater than that of someone from the poorest 10 percent. Limiting climate change and leaving extensive resource consumption behind will thus only be possible if accompanied by material redistribution – not only from the richer to the poorer countries, but also from the privileged elites to the most vulnerable class segments (particularly within the affluent countries).

For these reasons, democratic redistribution is the order of the day. The path to ecological and social sustainability inevitably includes the fight against luxury consumption, wealth concentration and income inequality, also and especially in the capitalist

centres. While the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto envisaged a movement which would transcend the class-political horizon of the socialist labour movement in favour of a more comprehensive hegemonic bloc, today's challenge is to make democratic class struggle possible again to begin with. Recent recommendations issued by the conservative Club of Rome point precisely in this direction. In order to react to the negative utopias of a stagnant predatory capitalism, the authors of the report argue for slow growth linked to proposals for the redistribution not just of wealth and income, but also of paid and unpaid work. Their proposed 13 immediate reforms include the promotion of trade union organisation so as to reduce exploitation – alongside an increase in unemployment benefits, a guaranteed basic income for groups in need, a redefinition of paid work including care work, greater tax justice, restrictions on foreign trade, and an increase in green economic stimulus packages. Given that the authors expect resistance from powerful corporations, political elites and advocates of a radical free-market doctrine, they argue for a greater degree of democracy, to be realised through a transnational movement for ecological sustainability and social justice. Such recommendations represent starting points for the European Left.

Refounding Europe

None of the major issues – inequality, ecological threats, challenges posed by digitalisation, forced migration movements or the risk potential inherent in deregulated financial markets – can be solved at the national level alone. In my view, we must thus acknowledge that democratic-ecological redistribution and class politics need Europe. That said, a Europe which imposes austerity upon the countries at the southern periphery and destroys the foundations of entire societies must be fiercely opposed. A European order based on solidarity has no need for a European Court which, in violation of its assigned task, unduly abolishes the social rights of wage earners with the stroke of a pen. A class politics criticising institutionalised free-market radicalism is therefore not in the least bit anti-European. The European Union will only survive as an economically integrated zone if it becomes a social and ecological Union. In order to do so, it requires democratic projects, from both above and below. Such projects may include, for instance: a European minimum wage linked to wage levels in member states; a European unemployment insurance to which all groups in society must contribute; dual European citizenship which designates all Europeans both citizens of the EU and of the country they reside in, respectively; and the formation of European parties and election of a European Parliament which then selects a democratically legitimised government.

Currently, all this is obviously still a long way off – not least because any European regulation today would likely harmonise social and ecological standards at the lowest conceivable level. One response to such attempts could be a non-regression clause, which would allow European standards to be introduced in a flexible manner

while prohibiting degradation in individual nation states. The weakened European trade unions could already begin setting the course by organising mutual aid for one another, indeed beginning today. A European strike fund for cross-border support of labour conflicts in transnational companies would represent a bold step in this direction. The strengthening of democratic institutions at a European level necessarily entails the determined resistance against the curtailment of the separation of powers and democratic basic rights as is currently the case in Hungary and Poland. Democratic-ecological class politics will either be European and transnational – or they will not be at all.

The Neo-Socialist Option

To sum up: the affluent societies of the Global North are currently undergoing a profound social transformation which will, by definition, entail an abandonment of the growth patterns dominant over the past decades. Should it prove impossible within the framework of the capitalist market-economy to leave the familiar growth paths behind, then systemic ruptures are possible or even likely. There is some indication that democracy may no longer be the most adequate form for contemporary post-growth capitalism to develop in. For this and other reasons, is it necessary to not only deal with the symptoms, but to actually cure an ailment and rectify systemic faults. I consider *five core projects* to be central in this regard:

Utterly vital are, *firstly*, sustainable modes of social regulation capable of rendering ecological and social destruction visible and counteracting the externalisation of its consequences. We require a different concept of growth and a global debate about forms of production, products and ways of living, including the material rupture with superfluous consumerism and an understanding of the ethical imperative of moderation as evidence of life quality.

Another element in this context ought to be the promotion of a resource-saving and low-pollutant production of durable goods. A new concept of growth that would highlight the benefits of unpaid and informal activities may contribute to a collective understanding of the right to a good life. Even today, an everyday critique of the '*Always more but never enough!*', which is familiar to people of all social layers and from the most diverse walks of life, draws on such visions of a good life. The right to a good life, however, will only change society if its implementation challenges the power centres of post-growth capitalism.

A politics of substantive equality and equity between all people through *democratic sharing and redistribution* represents the *second core project*. Substantive equality is applicable, because ecological sustainability cannot be achieved without social sustainability. Projects of radical democratic re-distribution are urgently needed – from the North to the South, from the European centre to the European crisis countries, from top to bottom, from the strongest to the weakest. Progressive taxation, particularly

an inheritance tax, would turn the right to own property into a temporary right. This logic, which proceeds from the assumption that property owners also carry a social responsibility, would make various policies of gradually implementing redistributive measures conceivable: a tax on fossil fuel profits, a progressive income tax, transparent tax administration, capital levies on all owners of significant financial wealth, a unified European tax policy and the use of the funds gathered this way to pay for global investments in climate protection, fighting hunger and absolute poverty, and opening up access to basic goods such as primary education in the poorest countries of the global South. The task at hand in the capitalist centres is not only material redistribution, but also the allocation of working time, leisure time as well as time to participate in democratic procedures. This is impossible without the shortening and fair distribution of gainful working hours, without short-term full-time employment for all – a project which represents a formidable starting point for alliances between trade unions, feminist care initiatives and degrowth movements.

There can be no return to classical social democratic policies of redistribution under the conditions of an economic-ecological double crisis. As a *third core project*, we therefore require radical democratisation of the economy (and workplace): 'Overcoming capitalism from within capitalism – that is what is already happening in many places and which we intend to strengthen [...]. Our vision is and will continue to be that of a social and ecological economic democracy [...]. Essentially, it is about expanding the question of ownership. Apart from the retroactive tax-based redistribution of social wealth, we require a fair distribution of economic decision-making power. Turning those affected into co-determining participants moreover prevents the emergence of unjustified and harmful inequalities.' (Socialist Party of Switzerland, December 2016).

This implies – *fourthly* – that we cannot avoid posing the question of ownership, albeit in a new way. Both capitalist private ownership of the means of production as well as socialist state ownership have proven inadequate to cope with the major challenges facing contemporary society. That is why we require new forms of collective ownership that turn employees into co-owners particularly in society's key sectors (energy and water management, transportation, financial sector, agriculture). In the longer term, large corporations ought to be transformed into employee-owned companies subject to a democratically legitimated collective will and institutionalised inside as well as outside of private corporations. It ought to include consumer organisations, NGOs, and environmentalist associations so as to avoid any corporatist bloc formation. Apart from that, forms of collective self-ownership – such as energy co-operatives, self-help networks and institutions, non-profit organisations and incipient stages of a solidarity economy – also require strengthening.

Each of the projects mentioned here must take into account, *fifthly*, that an agenda of democratic transformation today can only succeed on a global scale. Ecological

threats, economic crises, forced migration movements and wars demand a new 'global domestic policy' (Ulrich Beck). Achieving this will only be possible if differing interests and conflicts between different states and world regions are mutually acknowledged and dealt with in a cooperative manner. We must create – beginning in our respective national societies – a mode of *global cooperation*, without which the old (sociologist's) dream of a 'betterment of society' cannot be realised in a global order.

Is all of this realistic? Of course not – at least not for the time being. And yet, did the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto not draft the document precisely at a time when most of Europe was under the grip of fascism? I believe we should adopt a similarly bold approach**.** We desire a different Europe, a better Europe. We can only achieve this goal if an actual antagonist once again emerges – one that is capable of seriously challenging capitalist elites.

Overhauling the project of European integration

Three quarters of a century after the manifesto of Ventotene

By Elmar Altvater

I.

The European process of economic, social and political integration is not following the mechanics of a clockwork. It is driven – and hampered – by political powers and their interests, by parties and individual politicians by their visions and utopias. Sometimes they are limited in scope, linked to national traditions, outdated ideas or inspired by fantastic expectations about the future of the continent. The most effective impulses to integrate national economies and nation states to a superior European entity always were especially strong after catastrophes, revolutions and wars, such as the world wars of the last century or after political earthquakes of historical dimensions, such as the end of fascist dictatorships in Southern European countries in the middle of the 1970s or the collapse of actually existing socialism and the velvet revolutions after 1989, or as a result of structural all-encompassing economic crises such as the financial crisis since 2008. These events triggered debates on the trajectory of European integration, of new efforts to unite the torn continent and in general on the future of the European Union.

At the first glance this is a peculiar and extraordinary reaction to the challenges of economic crises or political catastrophes which in other regions of the world is unthinkable. Nobody expects from the Americas, Asia or Africa a comparable endeavour of political integration of several nation states. In other parts of the world political alliances, free trade associations or bilateral treaties are the methods of international cooperation. In contrast to the European example political integration is flat, not deep. Political Problems are delivered to national agencies or institutions in order to negotiate solutions. In Europe however it is different. The reason for the European uniqueness and its peculiarity can be found in history. The continent is favoured by the geographical position as part of the Eurasian land mass and of being situated on the margin of the African continent and the Middle East where the species of mankind as well as their culture and civilisations have its origin. The Eastern Mediterranean, the fertile triangle including Mesopotamia, are the cradle of human civilizations. The tragedy is that the cradle is being destroyed by Western powers, including member states of the EU. Therefore thinking about the future of the EU requires thinking about what is happening now in the Middle East.

Moreover, one also can argue that in the European case progress of political and economic integration is an act of desperation over the disastrous consequences of conflicts between peoples in the divided and belligerent European world. Ultranationalism, racism, feeling of superiority and simply imperialist attempts were widespread attitudes in European societies, and they still are. They were dominant in the political behaviour of the political class.

The feeling of desperation after the Second World War and the terror of fascism and Nazism have been replaced by positive expectations of a better life in a new democratic and peaceful order of a united Europe. This perspective is a guideline in the early statements on the future of Europe in the post-war period, and even before in the pre-World War II era. There are many documents to confirm this statement.

II.

A telling example is the manifesto of Ventotene from 1941, written by the Italian antifascists Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni on the Thyrrenean island of Ventotene where the fascist Italian government already in1926 had established a prison ('Confino') for people in resistance against the regime. The three detainees on Vetotene elaborated in those dire times a manifesto on the future of the European continent after the war, entitled 'For a free and united Europe'. Their political background were the experiences of the economic and political mistakes committed in pre-war times. They also had to consider the fascist 'solutions' of the great crisis between the two world wars: uncontrolled violence, measures of brutal terror against all parts of the population, an economic disaster following the decision for a policy of autarchy and a totalitarian dictatorship. Most shocking was the world war waged by the fascist powers, lead by Nazi-Germany, with a death toll of more than 40 million.

In the Ventotene-manifesto the authors in the first place analysed causes of the crime and the disaster committed. They asked what went wrong in the world after the First World War, particularly in Europe which became a slaughterhouse in those times. They raised the question in order to avoid mistakes in the European order to be established after the victory over National Socialism and Fascism.

A central issue of their critique was the turn to autarchic solutions in economic strategies as an answer to the Great Economic Crisis after 1929. It nurtured nationalistic and aggressive, non-cooperative solutions to the manifestations of the crisis instead of a common and cooperative endeavour to overcome it peacefully.

They still had the policies of British imperialism in the 19th century in mind: When commodities cannot cross the borders due to autarchic measures of isolation, then the army must do the job. In the European case the consequence was quite clear, and minutely analyzed by Friedrich Pollock of the Frankfurt School: Germany, also Italy, and as another example from another continent also Japan, were industrialized countries without a colonial „hinterland" where they could tap the needed raw materials,

agrarian foodstuff and energy sources. Their policy of autarchy therefore morphed into extremely aggressive and militaristic political measures. A political project of autarchy can be good for existing economic monopolies, i.e. for big firms. They can exploit the politically created situation and make profit out of it. Following the logics of autarchy the military as an integral part of the political project must conquer the concerned territories. Economic autarchy inevitably transforms peoples into armies, write the authors of the 'manifesto of Ventotene'. Military leaders seize the power from politically legitimised persons. All these changes in society and politics lead into a war. Political and economic autarchy and a peaceful international order in an industrialised capitalist world are simply not compatible.

This was a strong reason to plea in the manifesto for the establishment of a union of 'United States of Europe' as the cornerstone of the European order after the war. It should be democratic. The economy also should be open, ruled by free markets, which end up in the future as a common European market.

This is what also the neoliberals after the war proposed. Furthermore the authors of the Ventotene manifesto stress the necessity of the 'European Revolution' which must exhibit socialist characteristics. This is the positive dimension of European integration: Big and basic industries should be nationalised whereas small and medium-sized firms should remain private ones. Otherwise, they fear, a 'caste of bureaucrats' can seize power. Not only freedom but also equality remains a crucial political goal. Solidarity among people was a central value in face of the experience with the wild capitalist system of unregulated competition together with corporatist structures, very often imposed and enforced by the Catholic Church and – in Italy – by the Vatican. European integration should aim at a democratised, more equal system together with some socialist elements.

All privileges or inherited fortunes, the manifesto claimed, should be limited and regulated, if not abolished. Redistribution of wealth and income, the manifesto demanded, was an important political task as well as the creation of free trade unions, of an equal system of education or the accomplishment of the separation between the state and the church. The political system should be open, pluralistic and autonomous vis-à-vis the church. The latter was an issue especially important in a country like Italy, where the authors of the Ventotene manifesto came from.

III.

Using a distinction introduced by the Dutch economist and Nobel laureate Jan Tinbergen in the 1950s, the manifesto showed a path of positive European integration instead of a path pointing at negative integration. The notion 'positive' and 'negative' does not indicate an evaluation, instead it is a descriptive qualification of the chosen pattern of integration: establishing – positively – new structures and institutions of a common system, or – negatively – dismantling rules and borders which separate existing spaces from each other so that a new, a greater space can come up after the

removal (negative integration) of barriers. The ruling elites in Western Europe in the decades after the war have chosen the path of negative integration. Of course, the distinction is an ideal-typical one. However, it allows to clearly indicate the chosen pattern of integration.

The buzzwords since then are: liberalisation of markets, privatisation of public goods and services, deregulation of politics. By the same token these are the central concepts of the neoliberal agenda which ideologically conflated with the political project of negative integration. So the European integration project and neoliberal preponderance in the views of the world mutually reinforced each other. It became the dominant ideology for years not only in Europe, and not only in the EU.

Without any doubt, the project of negative integration was successful although it was enforced by tricky measures which FA von Hayek at the end of the war proposed in his famous book on 'the road to serfdom': lock the agenda of negative integration in a system of international treaties so that no government can deviate from the neoliberal path and leave the pattern of negative integration. That is the way to effectively block any attempt to realise a socialist alternative.

IV.

However, the price of successful negative integration is high. The triangle of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation resulted first in a metastases-like growth of financial markets. That was beyond the horizon of the authors of the Ventotene manifesto when they asked for free markets. The expansion of financial transactions surpasses by far the growth of the real economy in the EU. Financial instabilities arise which aggravate to disastrous financial crises. This happened 2008 as a consequence of wild financial speculation on real estate markets in the USA, which spilled over the Atlantic Ocean into the European financial system. In the course of this crisis many small debtors went bankrupt, many banks failed. This happened in masses and caused misery even in the middle classes. It was a tragedy for many peoples who only after years could recover.

Sovereign debtors, however, have been 'rescued' in order to avoid the feared chain reaction of a possible collapse of the globalised banking system. Single financial institutions are 'too big' and too intertwined globally as to be allowed to get bankrupt. Therefore public debtors have been endowed with new credit, called 'rescue package', in order to enable them to secure the liquidity of the private banking system. The public debt increases when private wealth and the institutions administering it are rescued. This constellation guarantees a long term debt service from the public debtor to the private wealth owners. The price of the solution of the crisis is the redistribution of income and wealth from the lower classes to the rich. Economic and social inequality soar and consequently also political inequality. The foundation of democracy and of social peace is jeopardized.

One has to admit that European negative integration resulted in an internationally competitive market place. That can be assessed as a success story, and this story is a main part of the European narrative three quarters of a century after the manifesto of Ventotene and 60 years after the treaty of Rome, especially in face of the many crises of the integration project, in face of the Brexit-crisis, the refugee-crisis or the debt and currency crisis which particularly severely hits Greece. The requirements of negative integration, i. e. obedience to the rules of liberalised financial markets, are weighted higher than the elements of positive integration, i.e .most prominently European solidarity, including solidarity with debtor nations, with Greece. Solidarity as a crucial value of positive integration has been sacrificed for the rescue of the financial system. The possible achievements of positive integration as intended in the manifesto of Ventotene have been sacrificed on the altar of financial stability for the lentil dish of winning a little more time in the game of speculation.

The potentialities of negative integration seem to be exhausted. Further market liberalisation and political deregulation bring no additional gain for the population concerned. Instead, deregulation and liberalisation or privatisation are understood as attacks on living conditions and achievements which in many cases have been the outcome of hard social and political struggles. Many of these struggles are enshrined in the historical memory of peoples and are reactivated in situations of acute conflict. This is the reason why the negative integration project has to be superseded by initiatives of positive integration, of structural reforms of societal relations in the European Union and on international markets.

V.

The manifesto of Ventotene was an early attempt of modelling a project of positive integration in Europe. The integration path selected since the 1950s was that of negative integration. The Euro-crisis is a memento of negative market integration; it led the EU into a cul-de-sac. The European currency system deserves a fundamental overhaul, firstly comprising a combination of monetary policy and national as well as European fiscal policies, secondly a cancellation of intolerable debt combined with rules of a reduction of deficits as well as of surpluses in the current account. These are immediate and urgent requirements. However, there are some others of similar importance because not only the crisis of money, finance and of the European currency must be resolved. Also, the crisis of labour has to be resolved and the crisis of the nature of planet Earth. Not only unemployment bothers European citizen, but new forms of informal and precarious work including work in the IT-universe. These requirements go far beyond the scope of negative integration, they cannot be left to the market. Positive political regulations are required, especially when we take the situation of the international labour markets and their performance into account. Migration in the European Union is a crucial issue, particularly since the end of the

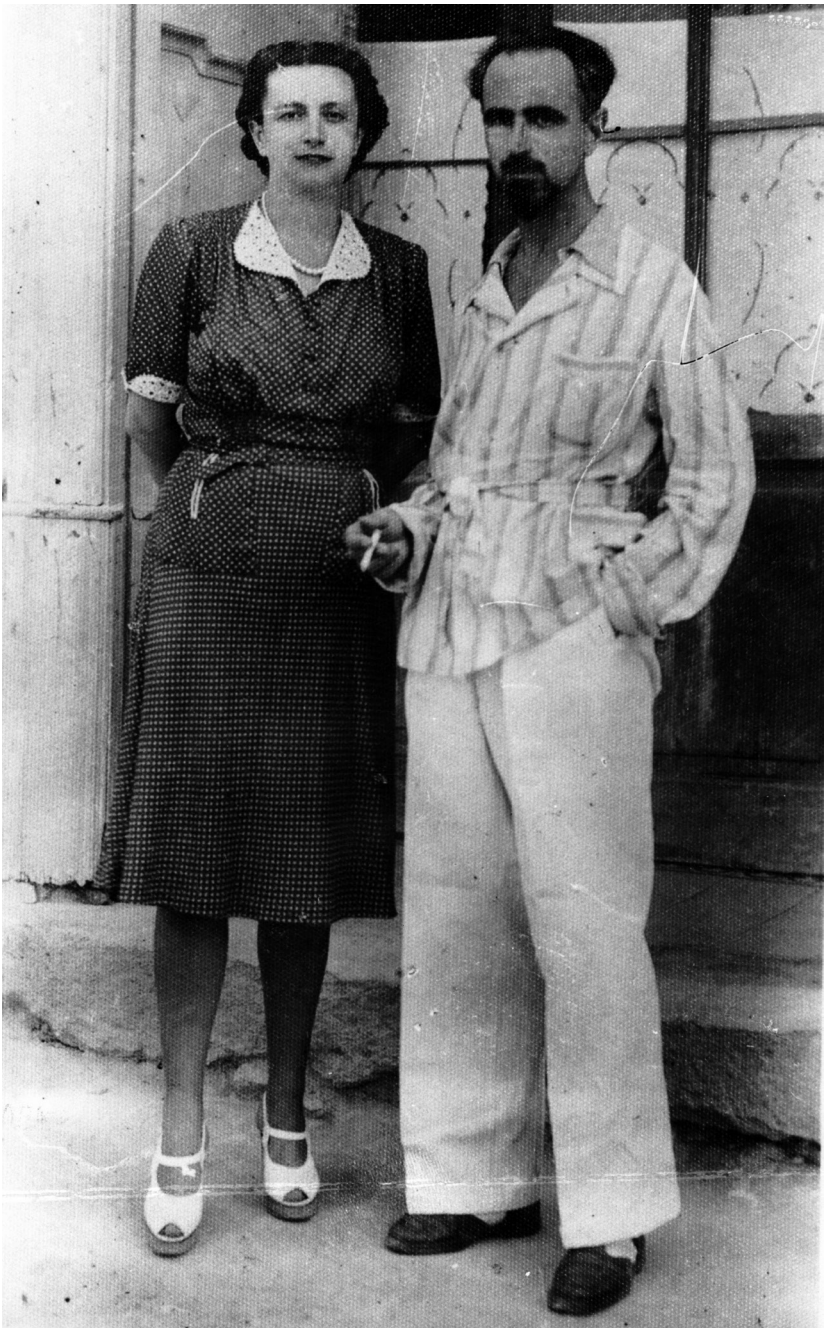
‘iron curtain’. People come, not as refugees and ‘freedom fighters’ from the Eastern dictatorship to the Western ‘free world’ but as job seekers and compete with European workers on the labour market.

Moreover more and more people from the neighbouring crisis ridden, war-torn and ecologically devastated regions in Africa and Asia are looking for asylum in EU-Europe.

To find solutions to these problems obviously is a task which goes much beyond the perspective of neoliberal, negative, market-controlled integration. The manifesto of Ventotene nearly 80 years ago plead for positive integration of the continent. Today it should, it must be modernised. It comprises many proposals for a democratic, social Europe with a broad public sector. It also pleads for European solidarity. It also could be used as a testimony for a common European army. The idea of the authors of the manifesto is understandable in times when European nations waged war against each other. Today a European army could be used as an instrument of imperialist and aggressive policies against other countries in the world. Therefore the meeting of Italian prime minister Renzi, French president Hollande and German chancellor Merkel on an aircraft carrier anchored on the shores of the Ventotene island to prepare the 2016-EU-summit of Bratislava and to set a sign against Brexit also sent a message of the EU commanding a well equipped armed force. The future of Europe, however, is not the military, but an efficient, well regulated diversified economy, a sound natural environment on planet Earth, decent work for all who need it, peace, justice and last but not least spaces for democratic deliberation.

Three pioneers of federalism. From left: Ernesto Rossi, Altiero Spinelli und Luigi Einaudi near Rome, 1948

Ada Rossi (wife) and Ernesto Rossi in Ventotene



Approaching Globalisation from the Left

By Bertrand Badie

Globalisation and the global triumph of ultra-liberalism are too often bracketed together. This crude, over-hasty generalisation supposedly clinches the argument that the only way to move with the times is to accept that there is no alternative to frenzied international capitalism in thrall to the twin gods of deregulation and competition. That view simply ignores the fact that globalisation in itself precedes its economic expression; that it stems from a drastic transformation of human living conditions; that it encompasses a variety of situations; and that, in the final analysis, it will be what people make of it: intrinsically, it is neither of the Right nor of the Left and does not, a priori, conform to any dogma; it is what policy-makers have made it and it will continue to be shaped by policy-makers ... What is more, it is part of a new era in history in which technological change, the transformation of communications and the intensification of all forms of exchange are creating new contexts in which any cause can be furthered, whether good or bad. There is no reason why we have to regard the bad path we are currently embarked on as an inevitability to which we are doomed to respond only by rehearsing the same objections over and over again. Great new opportunities are also being opened up for left-wing humanism and for any universalist project or ambition centred on solidarity. These options clearly entail hazards and risks and we have to find ways of containing them.

How should globalisation be defined? Before rushing into an over-narrow definition based solely on preconceptions, let us try to identify its main characteristics. Firstly, globalisation must be recognised as being inclusive. For the first time in its history, humanity has been unified in its entirety, a fact that lends full force – at last – to the concept of universality. Bear in mind that in the 19th century the international system covered only Europe, as the rest of the world either belonged to the realm of the unknown or else had been legally enslaved. This restricted view of humanity persisted until the era of decolonisation and could even have been said to have been set in stone by the Cold War. Today, the fact that distances have been shortened and mobility and trading have become the norm is helping to bring a single world closer with every passing day, albeit a world marked by social contrasts and cultural differences wider and deeper than have ever been seen before. For there has never been a social system as inegalitarian as the one engendered by globalisation: between Malawi, with its miserable per capita income of USD 200 a year, and Norway, where the corresponding figure is as much as USD 100 000, the contrast is huge and intolerable.

One familiar approach is to cut across the differences by applying the models of the strongest and treating economic weaknesses and social tensions as mere growing pains. We are all well aware of the results of this naive 'developmentalism' and the cost of this enforced standardisation. Another approach would be to see socio-economic disparities as the key international issue of our times, one whose continued existence leads to conflicts and collective failures on the part of the strong and the weak. It would also imply that cultural diversity in the world should be regarded as a historic fact and that the basis on which to build a new world order should be a clearer vision of what otherness means. Lastly, it would imply a need to reassess the concept of inclusion and redefine the term 'international actor', in recognition of the fact that governance is clearly not possible without involving all countries on an equal footing. Approaching globalisation from the left means breaking with blinkered oligarchical thinking, closed-shop diplomacy and the old powers' pretensions to be the principal, not to say sole, regulators and suppliers of 'cure-alls' imposed on others as if they were incompetent adults or children.

Globalisation also means interdependence. When there is one world and it engages in trade, one automatic result – desirable or otherwise – is interdependence that undermines the traditional concept of sovereignty dating back to the Renaissance. This change might have been seen as offering a decisive bonus to the strongest, opening the way to 'dependentism' that some have been too quick to regard as inevitable. To dispel that idea, it should be enough to point to the startling progress made by the emerging economies, the increase in energy dependence, affecting even those in the strongest position, and, above all, the growing dependence of the strong on the weak, a reversal of the long-established principles of 'power politics'. Interdependence implies that the failures and fragility of the weakest exacerbate uncertainties, as the 'weakest link' model also posits. In regional groupings, the weakest members jeopardise, or indeed determine, collective performance. Approaching globalisation from the left thus means recognising that the zero-sum game is a dead end and that choosing solidarity is a better option, if only in terms of effectiveness, than going it alone, including for the strongest. It also means accepting that if the solidarist option is chosen, local people, and social stakeholders in particular, must be involved much more closely in regulatory decisions. It is no surprise that solidarism took shape, in France for example, when globalisation was in its infancy. The solidarist project first found practical expression in the establishment of the League of Nations and, linked to that body, the International Labour Organisation. It gained fresh impetus much later through the work of the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and, in particular, the framing of ideas about human security. These ideas have been scandalously disregarded by Western diplomats, who continue to ignore them in their foreign policies - we would do well to revive them. The watchwords of anyone approaching globalisation from the left must be regulation, solidarity and redistribution, and this in

turn makes resolute global governance backed by active multilateralism essential: let us leave 'flexibility' to those who place their trust in the infallibility of market forces, both domestically and internationally ...

All these factors should prompt us to give real thought to the basis for a new concept of sovereignty. It is beyond dispute that globalisation has undermined established ideas in this area. It is illusory to think that sovereignty can be re-established on the basis of the old Westphalian model; developing a new concept of sovereignty on the basis of globalisation, however, is both possible and even essential. One reason is that globalisation gives the 'local' new and greater importance due to the level at which the transformation of social structures can be addressed effectively and appropriate forms of regulation devised. No matter how far it has spread, globalisation has done nothing to advance the idea that stronger outsiders can solve everyone's problems - quite the reverse in fact. The need for a new concept of sovereignty is thus making itself felt, in the form of local and national forums for collective decision-making, blue-sky thinking and management tailored to specific circumstances. This new sovereignty must be based on the assertion of the rights of local actors and on the protection and consolidation of their identity, and on recognition of the need to involve them fully in global governance, but it must also incorporate the new ideas central to globalisation, those of openness, solidarity and interdependence.

As the basis for direct trade and communication, globalisation is also giving non-State actors a powerful new voice. Global governance arrangements can no longer simply ignore these individuals and bodies, whilst the seven billion people who make up the human race are now becoming, as consumers, internet users, television watchers or travellers, potential or even real international actors. In addition to ensuring that these 'unsung heroes' are taken seriously, globalisation is also bringing to the fore a wide array of transnational actors, some of them firm supporters of the current world order, others resolute opponents of it: NGOs, international media groups (CNN, Al Jazeera, etc.), multinationals, but also associations and networks of all kinds, trade union confederations, even churches and networks of preachers. One response to this new phenomenon is simply to ignore it, to regard it as irrelevant or to suppress it. Another is to acknowledge these disparate elements of an international society, admittedly still very disorganised and sometimes of uncertain status, even to the extent of involving them in global governance, and to develop a new body of law which lays down ethical rules which can be enforced against the strongest, in particular multinationals, and which confer new rights on the weakest, in particular NGOs.

Lastly, globalisation is characterised by a high degree of mobility. Trade means mobility of goods and thus calls for the kind of rigorous regulation which only multilateralism can provide; but it also means mobility of persons: in the future, migration will be a part of everyday life. It makes sense, therefore, to help and support those who are forced to migrate, rather than simply seeking to bring the law to bear on

them, a policy which is unlikely to succeed and merely serves to line the pockets of organised crime groups. Contrary to what many people believe, migration, if it is consensual and properly regulated, represents an opportunity for everyone and can be part of a system in which everybody wins. Human mobility of this kind takes many forms, from migration in search of a new job or better living conditions to shorter stays embarked upon in order to complete training. One obvious corollary, therefore, should be global migration governance, to the benefit of migrants, their home societies and the host societies. Another would be the provision of a range of training opportunities within our societies, an approach made much more difficult by protectionist or even xenophobic policies. This mobility also calls for greater openness to foreign cultural models, since otherwise there is every chance that globalisation will give rise to dangerous tensions between communities.

The future lies in global governance, with the rule of the strongest giving way to the rule of law, competitiveness giving way to solidarity and the political and the military giving way to the human. This is what we mean by progressive globalisation, and fostering it is the duty of the left which must offer a credible alternative to neo-liberalism by being more than just a protest movement.

Europe and the European Social Movement

By Gustave Massiah

We are living in a time of great upheavals and great uncertainty, a time of marked contradictions defining the limits of what is possible, one that proves that the future is not predetermined. Three points should be made before discussing Europe.

Understanding Europe does not boil down to looking back at its past. The starting point has to be the challenges facing the world and the role that Europe might be able to play.

Europe does not just mean the European Union. What it has to contend with, above and beyond decisions concerning institutional structures, is that the meaning of politics, at local, national and global level, is being redefined; and it also has to consider the role of the major regions in the organisation of the world.

Our central concern is to build a European social movement. The emphasis on the viewpoint of social and citizens' movements fits in with the approach of the alter-globalisation movement.

Contradictions and challenges

The financial upheavals of 2008 show that neo-liberalism has run out of steam and that financial capital is in a fragile state. Exit strategies, debt and austerity plans have exacerbated inequalities and mistrust of politics. Increasing awareness of the threats to our environment, borne out by global warming, biodiversity loss and global pollution, is confirming the realisation that capitalism and productivism have their limitations.

Since 2011, the emergence of near-rebel 'occupy' movements has reflected the peoples' response to rule by the oligarchy. From 2013 onwards, neo-liberal arrogance started to regain the upper hand. The dominant policies of austerity and structural adjustment have been reaffirmed. The impact of destabilisation, wars, violent repression and the exploitation of terrorism to stoke public unease is making itself felt everywhere. Reactionary ideological movements and far-right populists are becoming increasingly active. Racism and extreme nationalism are fuelling protests against foreigners and migrants. These take specific forms, including libertarian neo-conservatism in the United States, the far Right and national socialism of various kinds in Europe, armed jihadist extremism, dictatorships and oil kingdoms, and extreme Hinduism. But in the medium term, there is still everything to play for.

The situation does not boil down to the rise of right-wing attitudes; another salient feature is the continuing antagonisms. The structural crisis encompasses contradictions in five major categories: economic and social contradictions, involving social

inequalities and discrimination; environmental contradictions, involving the destruction of ecosystems, biodiversity loss, climate change and threats to the global ecosystem; geopolitical contradictions, involving decentralised wars and the trend towards a multipolar world; ideological contradictions, with the challenge to democracy and upsurges of xenophobia and racism; political contradictions, involving corruption stemming from the fusion of politics and finance, adding to distrust of politics and suppressing political autonomy.

European peoples and European integration in all its forms have to contend with challenges and social, environmental, democratic, ideological and geopolitical antagonisms.

Global upheavals

The response to the insurgencies of 2011 ushered in an era of counter-revolutions. It serves as a reminder that revolutionary periods are usually short and often followed by much longer violent counter-revolutions. Counter-revolutions, however, do not cancel out revolutions, and the new continues to progress and emerges in new forms.

From the late 1970s onwards, the Right and the far Right fought to gain cultural domination, against fundamental rights – particularly equality – and solidarity, to impose securitarian ideologies, and, especially after 1989, to discredit progressive projects. They have mounted assaults on work by spreading insecurity; they have undermined state-provided social services through commodification and privatisation and through widespread corruption of politicians; and they have sought to financialise the digital sector. The growing power of right-wing and far-right movements has met with some resistance. Peoples have not yielded, and clashes are becoming increasingly violent.

Because antagonisms and social tensions are heightening, confrontation is taking extreme forms. The situation is also due to the anxieties caused by the advent of a new world. There are several upheavals taking place, along with unfinished revolutions whose outcome is uncertain. There is nothing to say that these will not be crushed, derailed or appropriated. Nevertheless, they are turning the world upside down; they are also symbols of hope and already leaving their mark on the future as well as the present. These are long-term revolutions whose effects will span several generations. Think of women's rights, the rights of peoples, green ideas, digital technology, or the global population.

A strategy for the transforming Left

Strategic thinking is invariably built on the link between a pressing need and a developing alternative project. The pressing need, in this instance, is resistance to the dominant neo-liberal ideology. If people are to resist, there has to be an alternative project.

That alternative project is beginning to emerge. The blueprint for social, environmental, and democratic transition puts forward new ideas and posits new ways of producing and consuming. The aim is to base the organisation of societies and the world on access to rights for all. This change is being fought for as of now, since creativity is born out of resistance and finds expression in specific emancipation practices which, from local to global level, point to what the alternatives could be.

The transition proposal is not opposed to the idea of revolution, but it is at odds with one version of revolution, the 'moment of truth'; it views revolution as a long-term discontinuous process. It stresses that new forms of social relations are already emerging in today's world, just as capitalist social relations emerged, in an inconsistent and piecemeal way, in the feudal world.

Capitalist globalisation has responded to expectations of change with regressive modernisation, neo-liberalism. The Left cannot respond simply by saying 'let's not change anything, for change will be worse', even if that is very likely to be true. Nor can it respond with 'the only way is to ...', as it has to be credible if a people's alliance is to be formed. Instead of regressive modernity we need progressive modernisation. In 2009, the proposal for a 'Green New Deal' came to nothing and consequently opened the way to more radical responses.

When they can speak out, societies are more open and tolerant than the far Right and its media mouthpieces would have us believe. This resistance is not made manifest and does not translate into support for a progressive project, and that fact suggests that there is no credible alternative project on offer. It is not so much that the 'Right' is winning as that the 'Left' is failing.

Relevance of major geocultural and geopolitical areas

In the crisis, the financial bourgeoisie is continuing to hold sway, and financialisation remains the dominant thinking. However, globalisation is changing, and its contradictions are growing. It is causing circumstances to vary depending on the specific part of the world in which they happen, bringing about a kind of continental drift.

This trend has two implications for Europe in particular. It is altering the forms which politics takes by changing the relationship between the levels at which action is taken, from local to global. It is altering the geopolitical context by opening up the possibility of multipolar geopolitics.

Strategy requires that the links between levels of action be redefined. In the hierarchy of political action, the way in which the rungs are connected matters as much as their placing. This point is related to the new definition of politics. From the point of view of social and citizens' movements, the following scheme might be considered appropriate: local level: neighbourhood democracy, local alternatives, public services, regions; national level: public policies, the State and (many aspects of) citizenship;

major regions: cultural aspects and geopolitics; global level: international law, migration, climate and cultural domination.

Local and national situations take precedence over the regional and global levels. The State is an issue that arises directly at national level. States are in thrall to financial capital, but they have accepted that situation and even created it. How can states be freed from the yoke of financial capital when they are themselves stakeholders in the system? Would the process be easier if it is carried out at national level, within each state, rather than at international level or at the level of the major regions. This question is posed by the failures of Europe and Latin America. This is a question prompted by the fact that financial capitalism and neo-liberalism are increasingly being rejected by nations and peoples.

Each case is different, as can be seen in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe. These different characteristics do not provide a sufficient basis to establish multipolarity in place of the bipolar world of the two cold war superpowers or the domination exercised by the United States. The failure of the emerging powers to establish BRICS or the G20 shows that the emergence of a multipolar world hinges on geopolitical developments and advances in international law and the international institutional system.

Has Europe made innovations in that direction and is it a model for the major geopolitical areas? Initially, and for some time afterwards, Europe did offer cause for hope. The emphasis on Europe as a peace project, the importance attached to international law, the European Convention on Human Rights, an initially progressive social policy and freedom of movement and establishment were steps in the right direction. Since 1980, however, the dominance of neo-liberalism has cancelled out the progress made and ushered in a regressive period. The emphasis on rights has been supplanted by free trade based on social, fiscal and environmental dumping and deterritorialisation. Europe has chosen to make the United States and Japan its main allies in a policy of recolonisation born out of the debt crisis and structural adjustment programmes. It has embarked on a race to the bottom in regards to rights and brought about a massive upsurge in inequalities and discrimination. It has been involved in destabilisation and wars. Fortress Europe has set up scandalous migration policies in which it has come to arrangements with xenophobic, racist and ‘securitarian’ ideologies.

Europe ought to be open and show solidarity. That is what the world needs, and what Europeans need as well. Such a Europe is possible. The change from the Europe of today to another Europe cannot be a seamless process: there has to be a break. How should this necessary break be approached? The first task should be to draw up a new project and determine the scope of the alliances required.

Unity of European social movements and the challenges facing them

For several years we have had to address ourselves to the need to build a European social movement and the difficulties of doing so. For a time, the European social forums provided the momentum required. Progress has been halted, however, not just because of the way in which the forums are organised, but also because of developments in the situation of and in Europe.

One question to ask is what is standing in the way of the unity of a European social movement which is geared towards social justice and seeks to combat inequalities, defend freedoms and rights, preserve the global ecosystem and the environment and promote Europe's contribution to a more just world and to world peace.

The European crisis is part of the global crisis. Globalisation takes different forms in different parts of the world, and the same applies within Europe. In regional terms, Europe breaks down into northern Europe, southern Europe, eastern Europe and the United Kingdom. Not forgetting Russia, which does not see its future in a European context. The bourgeoisie is responding in different ways in different European countries, resulting in a degree of rivalry. Social movements in Europe have to assess the strategy employed by the bourgeoisie in each case in order to determine their own respective strategies. Convergence within the European social movement does not come about spontaneously and hence is more difficult to achieve.

In northern European countries, first and foremost Germany, the strategy is to maintain their economic position within globalisation by strengthening their industry. In southern Europe, the strategy of reindustrialisation is more problematical. It has rentier capitalism, in which relations with the protecting State are complex. France lies somewhere inbetween those two extremes. The deterioration there is due to the bitter confrontation with the employers, who are refusing to make any concessions on wages. The bourgeoisie in eastern European countries is banking on a 'low-cost' industrialisation strategy to attract multinationals. They are contributing to Europe's neo-liberal orientation and supporting free trade with its three kinds of dumping (social, environmental and fiscal). In the United Kingdom the strategy is still Atlanticist. Since the financial crisis, the problem has been to manage the reduction in the financial scale of the economy and the influence of the City.

The variety of situations makes it more difficult for social and citizens' movements in Europe to work out a common strategic position. These movements face three main challenges: insecurity and precariousness, alliances and xenophobia and the European identity.

The first challenge relates to the essential but very difficult alliance which would enable workers in insecure employment to join forces with other workers. Unity between social strata requires us to address the issue of insecurity.

The second challenge relates to alliances between workers with a stable job, educated people in insecure employment and unemployed graduates, and racialised

victims of discrimination in working-class districts. The question of alliances also concerns people with qualifications. The management and revitalisation of capitalisation rest on the alliance between skilled professionals and shareholders. An alternative project calls for social, ideological and cultural convergence between the working classes and qualified persons.

The main challenge is the rise of racist, xenophobic and securitarian ideologies. In Europe this is translating into a war, the war on migrants. These ideologies proliferate where there is fear and social, environmental and civic insecurity. They are driven by the symbolic dimension of the European crisis and by the disillusionment that is an extension of the geopolitical shift which is occurring at global level. This matter harks back to the question of European identity. How can people envisage their identity when they know that they will no longer be at the centre of the world? How can anyone imagine a world without the centre?

The challenge is to devise an alternative European project to break free of the mainstream European project and its dead ends and give political and cultural expression to the unity of the European social movement.

Europe, rights and democracy

By Jean-Pierre Dubois

Viewed from a longer-term historical perspective, Europe as a political concept has been informed from the outset by a profound but productive contradiction. The sense of being European arose out of the discovery, conquest, and enslavement of almost every other part of the world. Colonial enterprise derived its 'legitimacy' from a theoretical construct of 'civilising superiority', but was challenged from the start in the name of universalism, which in practice departed radically from the ethical ideas underpinning it. The criticism was voiced first by Christian theologians (for example Las Casas, Vitoria, and Suarez, who believed that all 'creatures' were equally free) and later by the philosophers of the Enlightenment (Montesquieu, Voltaire and others, who believed in the cosmopolitical primacy of 'humankind'). The same contradiction was the driver in the struggles waged by colonised peoples, whose leaders used 'European universalism' – from which they themselves had in many cases been weaned – as a weapon against the colonisers. ('What do I think of Western civilisation? I think it would be a very good idea', as Gandhi put it; and one might also cite Frantz Fanon).

This ambivalence, which continues to this day to colour Europe's vision of its place in the world, stems at bottom from a conjunction of circumstances that occurred under the banner of liberalism, in which an accumulation of trading-, financial-, and later industrial power that engulfed the world for three centuries developed alongside the emancipation of the individual, the defining factor which made the 'modern' European cultures stand out in time and space. The concept of 'free enterprise', indeed, did not relate originally or primarily to commerce. It was applied to freedom of inquiry and free thought (Spinoza) and eventually to the preservation of rights, that being the prime object of all 'political associations' (Article II of the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen), since society, according to European political liberalism, was deemed to be a 'social contract' among 'pre-existing' individuals who could freely use their reason, with which they were endowed equally, in order to pursue their fundamental interests.

The French Revolution which was seen as the 'dawn' by the foremost liberal philosophers of the time was thus understood as the response, in the form of a historical rationale developed by the vanguard of humanity – Europeans – to the long quest for freedom which runs through the course of human history. By affirming from the outset, just as the United States had already done in its 1776 Declaration of Independence, that liberty and equality, far from being opposites, were in fact indivisible, the French Revolution opened the way, whether knowingly or not, for new democratic aspirations

which went beyond the oligarchic liberalism of a Montesquieu or a Benjamin Constant. Having sensed the wind of change coming from the United States, de Tocqueville urged Europe likewise to move towards the democratisation of liberalism, thus giving rise to the concept of 'liberal democracy'.

Even at the time when de Tocqueville was writing and politically active, however, the marriage of liberty and equality, central to all battles for democracy now and in the past, laid bare that at the heart of Europe – which was then the world – liberalism was riven by a stark dichotomy between the principles of freedom and the practices of domination and alienation. From 1848 on the 'social question', that is to say, the link between emancipation and equality not just in the civil and political sense, but also the social sense, was championed for decades by the European labour movement, although there was a price to be paid in the form of class conflict and bloody repression (from June 1848 and the Paris Commune in 1871 to the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919). The balance of power brought about by these unremitting struggles began to give rise in the late 19th century to a 'European social model' (safety net, mass education, advent of labour law, 'public health', etc.) that set 'European modernity' apart from all others, North America included.

Social democracy, though imperfect, thus became the reference point for the European conception of progress in the 20th century. When the aftermath of the Second World War prompted thoughts of institution-building 'above' nation-state level, one intention behind the plan was undoubtedly to learn from the tragic failure to gauge the level of popular support for nationalist movements and prevent further wars between Europeans by forging closer links between nations without depriving them of their legitimacy or disregarding their diversity or the strength of national sentiment (rooted in the historical link between the 'nationalities movement' and democratic aspirations opposed to the 'Holy Alliance' that emerged after 1815). The aim was also to establish a formal basis for agreement on a model for society, a political project to endow 'Europe' with a new self-image whereby the shared 'civilising mission' of the 'imperial/superior nations' that had carved up the world was to give way to a progressive model, a 'social compromise among advanced countries'.

It is that social compromise, bolstered by social democratisation tools, which is now being methodically dismantled by the neo-liberal 'conservative revolution' in order to reverse social progress and do away with all democratic control of the economic and social order by rejecting what Friedrich von Hayek termed 'constructivism' as long ago as in 1944. The neo-liberal counter-revolution has all but destroyed the scope for effective political action and brought forth 'post-democratic governance' (whereby the accountability and oversight traditionally brought to bear on rulers have been rendered inoperative), combined with governance of a politically 'post-liberal' kind (in which social control takes less visibly brutal forms, making it possible to keep up the appearances of liberalism).

Over the last half-century it has not only undermined the European social compromise, but also uncoupled the European Union from the progressive dynamic that it was meant to support and turned it into a means of 'governance' over which citizens can exercise no real control.

The resulting social and cultural shifts have led to a spectacular change of attitude towards European integration (disenchantment followed by massive rejection) among the public at large, opening the way to cultural isolationism, obsession with sovereignty, or indeed xenophobia, all superficially attractive, but in fact a dead end. A deadly dilemma therefore arises between democratic disempowerment of the European 'governance machine' and retrogressive nationalist 'restoration' fantasies (of which Brexit is merely the most graphic illustration).

In order to break out of this vicious circle, the relationship between rights, democracy, and 'Europe' (as a political idea) has to be considered in the light of two irreversible changes which pose major challenges.

Firstly, in Europe, as in all the 'old' democracies, individualisation (of living conditions, work, information, and relations between generations), driven to a great extent by the communication revolutions (uninterrupted globalised access to permanently available forms of direct interaction between individuals) has 'demonetised' the earlier forms of collective exercise of citizenship that used to mitigate the disempowering effects of the representative mandate and thus devalued the traditional means of political intermediation (parliaments, political parties, print media, etc.); and 'the new world struggles to be born', although the implications of its emergence should be neither under- nor over-emphasised.

Furthermore, just as ancient cities and the medieval pocket-size republics had to be scaled up in the late 18th century into nation-states, today the globalisation of key issues is creating a need for a new 'territorial jump' in the locus of effective political action. This can be achieved only by means of a 'plausible' democratic vision of citizen participation (plausible in terms of the way in which spheres of practical solidarity are envisaged) in the exercise of real power, and the expansion of the frames of reference involves a daunting venture into the abstract which can easily rob us of the will to act. And that obstacle can be overcome only by establishing concentric circles of solidarity, so that the 'subjective' sphere can be broadened to match the dimensions of the 'objective' sphere (the 'globalised' reality of the present-day world).

Building European citizenship and democracy that would amount to more than just words (committing only 'those who listen') is the only way to escape the dilemma of having to navigate between 'post-democratic governance' and reactionary illusions (in the literal sense of that adjective). But it is then necessary to learn lessons from the positive and negative developments in European history, some of which remain burning questions. 'Thinking Europe' cannot foster democratic renewal if Europe is set up in opposition to 'obsolete nations' (denying their legitimacy and diversity) or

assumed to be holding out against the rest of the world (the 'fortress' protecting us from 'undesirables', the 'world's woes', and the 'uncivilised').

To achieve this aim it is essential that we avoid overly simple binary distinctions and think of complexity in dialectical terms. To begin with, there is no such thing as 'a European people', but there are interests which objectively (and to an increasing extent) are common to European peoples and citizens, and awareness of those shared interests should be widened to form the basis of a democratic social contract. Rather than a top-down approach, starting from institutions, treaties and intergovernmental coalitions, this must be done bottom-up, proceeding from what should be transnational (and not 'a-national') alliances built within 'civil societies' (between producers and consumers, among rights and equality activists, etc.) and giving 'objective' solidarity subjective substance so as to develop areas (democratic safeguards, guarantees of freedoms, solidarity and combating discrimination, protecting and advancing social rights, environmental battles) in which to exert political pressure on institutions, which can be transformed only by means of such processes.

Since the only way to tackle these issues is by addressing them simultaneously at many territorial levels (from the local level up to that of the European Union as a whole), the first concern should be to open up a citizens' debate that should be both national (proceeding from the history of individual countries, their distinguishing features, and the variable priorities deriving from them) and transnational (at a level corresponding to the European citizenship to be 'brought about') and should concern the territorial distribution of political legitimacy (so that a division of powers among territorial levels to be founded on citizens' consent). Only in that way will democratic dynamics be underpinned by a shared vision of common ground and differences and brought to bear on solidarity and demands at territorial levels which vary according to the diverse policy fields.

It is only when such a framework for citizens' action has been established that a balance of powers might be achieved which could serve to restore democratic ownership of real powers and translate that shift into institutional changes, thus making it possible to counteract social competition among regions, frame European social solidarity policies, defend freedoms in the face of the 'surveillance society' and 'doctrinaire securitarianism', fight discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and so forth.

None of these challenges can be properly tackled by a purely representative system (disempowerment of the peoples, exacerbated at Union level, now rankles even more deeply than it used to) or by resorting to the plebiscite-style procedures of 'illiberal democracy' (*sic*) and the manipulative simplification of deciding everything by referendum. The effects of growing individualisation and interactivity need to be taken into account, in order not to completely reject the need for intermediation, but to restore legitimate forms of political intermediation and hence build a 'deliberative democracy' which puts representation (to which there is no complete alternative)

under constant citizen surveillance by introducing procedures which enable citizens to become involved upstream of decision-making and through ongoing forms of control (repeal referendums, recalls, etc.), in which the input of active civic minorities (activists and whistle-blowers) highlights, and gives effect to, equal access for all to the final decision.

This essential task is admittedly not easy, but nor is it impossible: in the first place, individualisation is not an obstacle here, as it increases self-reliance and citizens' demands (transparency and rejection of solutions imposed 'from above'); in addition, new communication tools make it possible to engage in forms of interactive, open deliberation on a scale that would have been inconceivable a few decades ago; lastly, the idea of commons, and of commons ruled in common, is a topic coming to the fore in all European societies about environmental issues, ways of organising the production, distribution and consumption of goods, and even about the thinking of interpersonal relations. When it comes to finally realising the core interests of European citizenship, all these developments will give impetus to the move from the objective to the subjective level, reversing a now decidedly unfavourable balance of political powers, and replacing a Europe which is 'imposed' with a European social contract 'constituted' democratically.

Mediocre Europe

By Dimitris Christopoulos

Historical baggage of the once protagonist.

Until the previous century, at the end of World War I, international affairs were a somewhat one-act European play. Europe was almost the only protagonist in world politics, whereas the rest of the world played a very small part usually as the target of European policies. The rest was seen as a European periphery. Europe always figured at the centre of the world maps. And there it stands still...

The end of World War I, the extroversion of the US, as marked by President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points and the League of Nations, the collapse of the European empires under the principle of nationalities and the political division brought about by the establishment of the USSR, signalled the end of European predominance. Europe remains at the centre of the world maps, but divided it stands.

Soon, the liberal optimism of the interwar Peace Treaties (1919-1923) gave way to frustration before the rise of the European Far Right. In addition, the Stalinist consolidation of the Third International became the beacon for the emerging European Communist parties. Finally, it was now clear that the neighbour across the Atlantic was not willing to let Europe suffer a historic suffocation. World War II, the Cold War and the subsequent decolonisation marked the definitive end of European hegemony in world affairs. Europe, once the protagonist, was reduced to a background character.

It would have to wait for the end of the Cold War, and the amazing year of 1989 to take a breath of optimism; annus mirabilis indeed! However, more ani miserabili were to follow: the war in Yugoslavia, military interventions south of Vienna and north of Athens, new instabilities that European leadership were unable to manage on their own because of their historic faults and preferences. At a time when European integration seems to fail in terms of political unification, it puts emphasis on the economic, monetary and financial field. 1992, the year when the Bosnian civil war begins, is also the year when the EU signs the Maastricht Treaty only a few kilometres north of the war zone.

All this, however, does not take place in a historical vacuum. The collapse of 'real' socialism brings the elites of Western Europe of the time before a significant historic dilemma: how will the continent be reunited? In theory, the answer was simple: 'through economic – political liberalism and the rule of law'. In practice, however, things were not as easy. Although what followed bore the 'stamp of authenticity' of the principles and values of the European construction, the process of accession and re-adjustment of the socio-economic formations of Central and Eastern Europe distinctly featured, from the beginning, the mark of acceptance of social disintegration.

Individual rights are OK as long as they are only about non-interference with an individual's space. Plausible prescriptions aro OK as long as State authority limits its role to the one of the ideal night watchman. Social rights, however, do cost. The watchman has to pay, has to deliver. In the context of a globalised economy, the competitiveness of European economies results in dramatic reductions in social protection. The most fertile ground for such reductions has been Central and Eastern Europe, the 'new' countries where the social acquis was already synonymous with Communist totalitarianism. In the name of this wind of reform, social deregulation is persistently put to the test. Some countries break under the pressure and fall off track, consolidating their 'crisis' as normality. Others, nonetheless, respond to the cure thanks to iron discipline.

This was the situation until the great crisis of 2008 which, in Europe, first struck the ever-undisciplined 'students' of the South. In the mid-70s, they had managed to move to democracy and strengthen their welfare state. However, that state was a superfluous, consumerist one, ineffective and costly, which, along with the private sector, pursued a careless existence which sent deficit and debt soaring. Said existence abruptly gave way to 'fiscal adjustment' and memorandum-dictated austerity, as was the case in Greece and Portugal, or austerity in general, with or without memoranda, as was the case elsewhere.

Which brings us to where we are. The fate of the common European project illustrates this itinerary: from policies of integration and expansion to the contemporary policies of exclusion and introversion.

Mediocre Greece: crisis as an "L".

If we continue in this course, in a few years, the European South will have changed dramatically in the direction dictated by the notorious 'adjustment'. My homeland, Greece, which has become synonymous with 'crisis', should it manage to stand on its feet again, will be a combination of a Balkan country, like Serbia or Bulgaria, with a bit of Estonia (a good 'student'), and maybe some Mediterranean breeze to ensure a nice and cheap vacation for its thirty million tourists every year. This is the result of ten years of 'fiscal adjustment' and bail-out. The country is not the same any more.

Greece, in particular, has a special significance because of its history and geographic location, which possibly ensures that it will not be reduced to a miserable state of a dismantled society and a vile democracy. Of course, although we cannot be proud of the quality of the Greek democracy, as even ministerial circulars are drawn up by the notorious 'institutions' of the former troika, we do need to keep up appearances; besides, the country has unpredictable neighbours and, despite its countless problems and ideological obsessions, such as the Macedonian dispute, it manages to remain a stable country in a geopolitically unstable environment. This is not to be disregarded.

So this is the good scenario. I should probably say 'moderately good', or maybe just 'mediocre', but this is how things are. The government of Al. Tsipras had different expectations, but, with no awareness of the power correlations, expectations remain expectations. As a result, this government also works tenaciously for the notorious 'adjustment'. As opposed to the Right, it enjoys broader social consensus, which explains its resilience in comparison with its predecessors. Furthermore, the accumulated fatigue of the Greeks has now reduced them to the state of a passive patient, which has nothing to do with the image of the period 2011-2013 reflecting violent outbursts of the Greek people.

The patient is now too weak to react and is stoically undergoing treatment. We are facing a period of stabilisation. A painful one, but yet persistent. The main difference is that the fatigue of Greek society is such that people do not protest as they used to. "Crisis" is not seen as such anymore in Greece. It has become the new regime, the new normality governing our lives. What was once exceptional became the norm. *At the beginning we regarded crisis as a V: you are up, you go down and then up again. Now, crisis is perceived as an L: you go down and then you continue down on this line*.

There once used to be a narrative: things would get better and better. According to this narrative, the world would always move forward, in the right direction. It is like a classic Hollywood scenario: some suspense, but at the end the good guy wins. This is the essence of liberal or communist determinism. Well, history is nothing like a happy end movie. History is by definition full of open questions that might turn into nightmares. And particularly in fluid times of transition such as the one we are living in. Some would argue that we can learn from history, but I am afraid it is not so simple. *If we could learn from history, we would have learned already, but this is not the case*.

What we know from History is that it is not a one-way road, but an open question. Everything can change. The political dismantling of left-and-right-wing elites in Greece could possibly make room for a 'Let's make Greece great again' Trump-like discourse, which will, once again, create historic chaos. Besides, such an oligarch already exists in Greece. Ten years ago, he bought the most popular football team, three years ago he supported his own candidate who was elected mayor of Piraeus and, a few months ago, he bought the historical press 'flagships' and included an extreme, self-laudatory editorial in the first issue after the purchase with the title 'Why I stepped forward'.

How can I say it... It just seems historically weird that a country which will soon have undergone ten years of harsh 'adjustment' could continue to function under governments such as the ones it has had until today, whereas far-right populism is establishing itself in other EU Member States. The results of the Dutch and French elections rekindled the hope that 'it will be alright', but then came the AfD's electoral consolidation and for the first time we see that the 'pro-European' power status quo in Germany might not remain unaltered... No prudent European citizen can feel reas-

sured. Being sceptical about where Europe is currently headed is no Euro-scepticism, it is no renouncing Europe. On the contrary, it's Europe-related prudence.

Being afraid of, let's say, a Berlusconi-Erdogan mix in Greece attempting to take advantage of the low morale of the Greek people is no irrational fear. On the contrary, it would be tragic to adopt an insouciance similar to that of the Greek political elites before 2010, when we were reassured that 'the worst is behind us'.

Mediocre Europe?

However, the 'adjustment' argument, a neo-liberal argument, is in fact a European one. It is the argument which attempts to save Europe from the fierce echoes of populism. Or so it thinks. It struggles to do so with honesty. It is a European argument, based on the German guilt for the course of the 20th century and the hurt German national pride, a pride which finds its expression only in the logic of a strict Protestant instructor.

Although many accusations may be made about this argument, one thing is certain: it really wants to save Europe. Besides, it is the German government that, after responsibly accepting to take in most of the refugee population, finally shut its doors under the fear of the Far Right, not even attempting to implement an equitable distribution of responsibility within its territory. It is the same government that, after imposing unbearable memoranda of bail-out projects on the European South, hesitates, only a few years later, to implement a refugee 'memorandum' in the former Central Europe. Why is that? Germany is already host to most refugees. So why not show the same determination and exert pressure on other countries to distribute the responsibility, beginning with the reactionary core of the Visegrad Group, instead of considering that refugees accumulating in Turkey and the Greek islands is the right way to go?

This is absolutely unfair, inhuman and short-sighted. However, we stick to this practice and even extend its implementation. At the end of summer 2017, a summit was held in Paris with the participation of France, Italy, Chad, Niger and Libya, to determine how the African countries involved will prevent people from crossing the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, all these are but commonplace manifestations of (the 'banality of') evil, as Arendt would say.

Did anyone say 'human rights'? 'European values', maybe? Do we even wish for human rights or do we just put up with them so that they remind us how far ahead we are, but tend to forget about them when we are under pressure? A teacher once said to me: 'Human rights are like elevators. When there is a fire and you really need them, they never work'. Could he be right?

Rights are not illusions.

If we prove my teacher right, it will be like admitting that rights are just illusions in the minds of theorists and various lovers of the imaginary. In that case, they would be like the windmills in Cervantes' Don Quixote: nothing but illusions. A 'realist' inter-

locutor, let's say an EU official, would argue: *'Don't you understand that rights need to be re-assessed? Don't you understand that, if the EU is swarming with immigrants, fascists will thrive?'.*

He could also argue: *'How can we deal with the asymmetric threat of terrorism?'.*

These are all serious arguments in the logic self-defined as 'realism'. This logic understands me. It does not mock me. It listens to me condescendingly, but deep down it sees me as another Don Quixote. For realists, my words are nothing but well-meaning idealism.

Could they be right? Do we need to cut back on rights in order to preserve them? Because this is what they actually suggest. Limitations to rights are not irrational. They serve political strategies. I believe that, in hard times, unpleasant, right-limiting adjustments will be made. I believe that the state of emergency was inevitable in France after the terrorist assassinations. But for how long? Forever?

The point of view of my interlocutor is not realistic, but deeply cynical: it forgives reality, no matter what it is. The only thing that matters is that *it is there.* That it is happening. However, realism does not mean extracting all sense of justice from our judgement. Realism does not mean accepting inequality and injustice just because 'that's how it is'. Realism does not mean letting people die, be persecuted and starve while assuming that we will continue to live in peace, because this is simply dismantling the foundation of coexistence by condescendingly nodding to inhumanity. It is shattering the assumption that people have dignity. Trying to apply inhuman policies to human beings merely accentuates our moral and political deadlocks.

Cynicism is not realism. Realism means being aware of correlations and aiming to change them. Realism is a political virtue. Cynicism is not.

Mediocrity can't inspire. The evil does.

As a protagonist, Europe was capable of the best and the worst. Actually, the 'worst' was often justified as necessary action for the 'best' outcome. The struggle for religious freedom and the establishment of Christianity used unimaginable violence. The struggle for the self-determination of nations, a struggle for democratic self-determination, has preceded ethnic cleansing and genocide. The struggle for social justice and socialism has been no exception. The struggle for economic development has been associated with unstrained imperialism and colonial violence. The list is endless. Europe has been the embodiment of the two-faced ancient god Janus. Violent Europe, a beacon of modernity. No contradiction there. European dialectics have been and still are like this.

Europe no longer seems capable of the worst. However, it has long ceased to expect the best. Europe is just mediocre. European 'realism' is simply the acknowledgement of its mediocrity. That is why this 'realism' fails to inspire, no matter how hard it struggles to save us from the worst. Mediocrity can't inspire. The evil does.

That is why mediocre Europe is dangerous. Not for what it can do today, but for what it can bring the day after.

Human rights require striking difficult balances. We know that what 'is' is doomed not to achieve the result we desire. However, there is a desirable result and we are fighting for it. No victory is predetermined; on the contrary, when a fight is not put up, the only predetermined outcome is defeat. Because cynicism means coming to a point where you consider that what *is* happening is what *should be* happening. But then we are left with nothing. We have nothing left as moral beings.

Europe cannot be 'great again' and it knows it. It should be very careful though, just in case some of its nations attempt to do so in this uproar of frustration and in the context of the crisis. The danger is this one and not an abstract 'scepticism' in the sense of a general reservation against the undemocratic nature of European integration. Of course, the issue here is not neutral 'populism' either, as European 'anti-populists' like to call it, considering that any reaction towards their dominance is the same, thus leading to the sublimation of the Far Right. If we suppose that populism is the over-simplification of the content of political controversy, I can hardly see a more powerful 'populism' in Europe today than the neo-liberal discourse.

So our problem lies elsewhere. European nations are, historically and geographically, doomed to live close to one another, which is why their only option is to cohabitate without killing each other. It's as simple as this. This is why the 'European idea' is so valuable, separately from and independently of those who represent it each time. The other way against this idea, the most common one throughout European history, the one followed in times of self-cancellation and the fiercest selfishness of its peoples, is that of nationalism. This is why 'united Europe' is neither an a priori fetish nor, of course, is it 'trendier' for someone to determine oneself as its supporter and not its opponent. It's just ***safer***. That is what its founding fathers came up with and struggled amidst the ruins of World War II.

A mediocre Europe is not capable of the worst, as it used to be, but it does not inspire for anything better either. It does not persuade. That is the problem. When a common policy plan has no appeal, the worst historic outcome is just around the corner. It is true that we had a close call in Austria, the Netherlands and, lately, in France, but if the message we got is that 'we are on the right track', we are not complacent any more, but imprudent, plain and simple. The 2017 German elections painfully reminded us of this.

Ultimately, this is why the Europe of rights is not just a priority in terms of values; it is the very argument for safety and peace.

The crisis in the European Union and the response of the progressive forces of Europe

By Yiannis Dragasakis

The European Union in crisis

The European integration process, largely due to the eurozone crisis management method from 2010 onwards, has now become for millions of European citizens synonymous of a cruel and inexorable adaptation to the conditions of global competition as perceived by the neoliberal 'Orthodoxy'. In this context, social cohesion and democracy are overshadowed by the promotion of a global deregulation plan that intensifies inequalities at the European level, backs the generalised dissatisfaction, and at the same time, creates the illusion that nationalism could be a solution.

Today, in Europe, in the process of integration, there is a completely opposite picture to what dominated the beginnings of the European venture. At that time, citizens were joining the vision of European integration, with the expectation of greater economic prosperity, social justice and democratic freedoms. Nowadays, in the framework of the transnational entity 'European Union', a large number of European citizens do not recognize that the European integration project will be a condition of collective prosperity or social protection. The propulsion dynamics of integration has been replaced by the dissolving sense of divergence. The message of the crisis is clear: economic and monetary convergence without resource transfer, investment and development and without support/solidarity programs not only does not automatically lead to integration but drastically deepens deviations and undermines any effort of political integration.

Europe's citizens must once again believe that integration will bring a new framework for social protection and lead to growth that will increase the well-being of the many, and that only through this road will Europe be able to stabilize politically and socially.

The view that social conquests in Europe act as a 'plumb' in global competition is not only dominant in (neo)liberal elites. This is a simplistic approach that ignores the fact that social conquests gave Europe a comparative advantage: social and political stability and consensus; which especially at this time would be a historical mistake to abandon. These are two political facts that are not only about moral principles and values, but have also played an indisputable role in the economic development and prosperity of the Western countries and the consolidation of the Democracy.

Towards a change in political relations in Europe?

It is no coincidence that in two countries, Great Britain and Germany – where painful adaptations took place in the name of globalisation in a different intensity and at a different time – the demolition of the welfare state and the 'flexibilisation' of labour are now openly questioned. Jeremy Corbyn's undisputed sovereignty in Britain's Labour Party confirms the depreciation of the management model of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, while in Germany the Social Democrats' leadership during the election campaign took long distances away from the 'Agenda 2010'. If we take into account the intra-party changes in the Socialist Party of Spain, a scene of radical overhaul of one of the most important political sites of the European Union appears to emerge. This mobility is crucial and is shaped objectively by a favourable conjuncture which, under certain conditions, could be pushed forward to critically bring together the forces of the Left.

For its part, the radical Left, which has emerged strengthened in many European countries, has served as a way of pressing the forces within Social Democracy and has raised questions about an alternative management of the crisis in the direction of social justice. SYRIZA's government experience has shown that, despite the extremely difficult circumstances and asymmetric correlations, there is room for a left government project, furthermore it has highlighted the need for progressive strategic convergences, so as to remove the framework of austerity that erodes the social legitimacy base of the Union's endeavour. At the same time, there is the encouraging emergence of leftist trends in many of the parties in the European Social Democracy, but much will need to be done to achieve the desired progressive convergence, for which all sides should systematically work.

The crucial electoral confrontations that Europe has experienced since Brexit's dominance in June 2016, the French elections in spring, and the German elections in September, show that it is a matter of urgency to formulate an overall alternative plan that has as its central point of reference a new social contract.

In addition, a correction of European balances, mainly at a central institutional level, with the political framework of the eurozone, seems to be attempted. This is summed up in the French proposal for a Eurozone Treasury that will process a common budget and will be accountable to the European Parliament, a proposal likely to include the German proposal to tighten up the control of budgetary discipline. For the radical Left, this framework does not answer the main question: are these enough to restore citizens' confidence in the European venture? And how will the socio-economic conditions of the emergence of right-wing and far-right anti-European populism be dealt with, when the one-way choice of deregulation of labour relations and shrinking the welfare state is not questioned?

All of this is a crucial political challenge for the establishment of a progressive pole that will make social cohesion a sine qua non condition for the continuation and deepening of European integration. In this dialogue, on the basis of today's data, the

most diverse forces of the European Progressive Area could be involved, from the UK Labor Party, from SPD to Podemos in Spain, and SYRIZA.

Conditions of cooperation of progressive forces

The question arises naturally, why political forces and movements that have historically and recently been in conflict with each other can cooperate and converge with each other.

In our opinion, the difficulty lies not in overcoming the conflicts of the past but in formulating a realistic alternative proposal for Europe, and in identifying the political subject that will take it forward. It is not enough to conclude that the demolition of the acquired is not a solution and that a new European social contract is needed in line with the realities of globalisation. We need the new plan to emerge from the progressive pole not only to inspire and mobilise citizens and to make them believe in Europe again, but to inspire confidence without which there can be no economic growth – that is, realism of government management. It is necessary for new political subjects to emerge, in addition to progressive convergences, to organize the involvement of society in this process, to be in direct contact with the various anti-austerity movements struggling in the European public space, and to participate in fact, towards the vision of a democratic Europe of the peoples rather than the neo-liberal elites.

The experience of the Costa government in Portugal, with the critical support of the radical Left, is an important achievement. Also, starting a dialogue between PSOE under the leadership of Pedro Sanchez and the Left of Spain, politically represented by Podemos, shows us the substantial potential for cooperation between the political forces that until recently had been in a harsh confrontation. Unfortunately, in Greece, a corresponding framework of integration has not yet been formed, due to the current inability of domestic Social Democracy to cut off from its recent conservative and neo-liberal past. However, we believe that there is the possibility of progressive conferences around the need for a new Sustainable and Fair Growth Model and the creation of a new Social State, which will be the post-program contract for the country. A precondition, of course, is the clear choice of rejection of any association with the forces of the Right and neo-liberalism.

Political-ideological terms of shaping the European Progressive Poles: What Europe Do We Want?

A few months ago, the debate about 'where Europe is going' started and all the forces have begun to position themselves around this question. We believe that the political-ideological platform of the European progressive pole should be set up in response to this question. In this context, we are submitting some points that can serve as a starting point for dialogue:

- A plan for EU exit from the crisis should not overlook the founding principles that recognise the parity and common rights of the member states but must be compatible with these principles. Any direct or indirect regulation leading to closed leadership groups that create inequality between member states must be ruled out.
- The persistence of differences between member states must be avoided. Because the persistence of existing differences in levels of development involves the risk of marginalisation and forced exclusion from European integration processes.
- A crisis exit plan should provide for risk-sharing policies and European-wide mechanisms to tackle the problem of over-indebtedness, financing investment in infrastructure and deposit guarantees. The very architecture and functioning of the European Union, as it is today, is widening the existing inequalities.
- There cannot be a Security Union without a Social Europe. A Security Union without a Social Europe will be nothing but a European NATO. A common security policy can be based only on a common policy for a Social Europe.
- An exit plan from the crisis will be able to respond to the legitimacy crisis of the current EU and stop the rise of the far-right, only if it has a vision and gives a credible perspective to the undertaking of European unification and at the same time relies on a progressive social agenda that will give concrete answers to the specific problems of European citizens, above all, those relating to unemployment, the guarantee of decent work, the support of the welfare state, enlargement and accessibility to common goods and the security of citizens.

The ghost of a new crisis and the need to change power correlations

Fed has recently decided to reduce its balance sheet to gradually reduce the amount of money it has channelled to the US and the global market after the 2008-2009 crisis. Behind this decision lays undoubtedly the fear of a new crisis that, when it happens, should find the Fed ready and able to intervene. However, this debate also concerns Europe in an even more direct way. The possibility of a new crisis, one cannot predict its timing of course, is a second strong cause, after Brexit, to move Europe out of its stagnation and immobility. French politics of President Macron seems to invest in this argument.

However, this is not certain to happen, nor is it enough on its own. By invoking the risk of an upcoming crisis, it is not certain that the necessary changes will be made in time, but if there are any of them, they are likely to reflect their existing correlations and their conservative contexts.

The debate, therefore, on the future of Europe concerns not only the ideas, values and policies, but also the subjects, on the social and political level, that will fight to win the citizens' trust and to become a majority. In other words, the persuasiveness and credibility of an alternative plan is judged at the level of both values and ideas as

well as at the level of the subject that will commit to struggle for them. From this point of view, processes are important, but even more important are promotional initiatives of disengagement and release of inertial forces that could alter power dynamics.

The forces of the radical Left and of the social movements are pushing rightly the Social Democracy to get rid of the influence if not the hegemony of neoliberalism and to move to the left by acquiring more radical features. On the other hand, the forces of the Social Democrats are pushing those of the radical Left and of the social movements to be more pragmatic if they want to become a reliable government partner. This is a battle for hegemony within the wider area of the Left. This is an inevitable process. However, we know from history that these are processes that can last for a long time without effect, as their outcome depends on a variety of factors. Thus the ability of each Left forces to influence developments separately remains limited. The question arises whether this struggle for hegemony could be organized within the Left in a way that would at the same time make it possible to pursue its common attitude towards common opponents, to deal with common problems and to promote common goals.

Of course the answer is not easy and no version of it is without problems and contradictions. But if we accept that the absence of a comprehensive and credible alternative from the Left strengthens the tendencies towards the extreme right and nationalism, as the results of the recent German elections have shown, this should be taken seriously when discussing the above question.

The European acquis: foundations and prospects

By Aristidis Baltas

Let us set aside for once economic issues and their attendant constraints. In order to talk about ideas. And in respect to ideas, let us set aside for once Ancient Greece and its achievements. In order to talk about the ideas that forged under fire the unity of Europe. The Europe of our modern times.

The 17th and 18th centuries. The times during which Europe achieved its mental unity. This has been a unity to witch the legacy of Ancient Greece made a decisive contribution, but to which Greece itself, under Ottoman rule at the time, contributed relatively little. Perhaps this is the reason why this period is not often discussed in Greek textbooks.

Nevertheless, this mental unity has been achieved. Despite the bitter religious strife and the numerous intra-european wars with their heavy toll at all levels.

On what was this mental unity erected? On three fundamental pillars reinforcing each other.

The first pillar has been the enormous unificatory power of the Scientific Revolution: Copernicus in Krakow, Galileo in Florence of the Medicis, Descartes in Paris but also exiled to Amsterdam and to Stockholm, Kepler in Graz and Prague, Leibniz all over Germany, Newton in London. But also Pascal, Fermat, Boyle, Harvey, Huygens, among so many others. They all seeked to link systematically their ideas, with the decisive help and the almost superhuman communication talents of Mersenne and Oldenburg, so as to impose, with the sole power of sheer ideas, the mathematical reading of nature. In other words, to compose the science of Physics and the whole 'continent' of the natural sciences as we know and practice them since then. An everlasting achievement of the thus unified Europe.

The second pillar was the opening of the unlimited potential for human thought that has been named 'the Enlightment'. With its many branches or manifestations, some more radical item others, as they unfolded in this or the other country. Descartes once again, with the hubris liberating human thought from the jurisdiction of theology. Spinoza and Leibniz again, Berkeley, Locke, Hume and Hobbes, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, Kant and his Critiques, covered the 17th and 18th centuries with agreements, disagreements and disputes that crossed borders, ignored language differences, and abandoned long-standing traditions in order to bring forward the power of sheer ideas.

The third pillar has been built from the characteristics shared by the major political revolutions of modernity. After Cromwell, after Washington, Jefferson and Lafayette, after the French Revolution and its many protagonists, democratic rule and what we use to call 'European political culture' – universal suffrage, parliament, party system, separation between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, and so on- have arrived to be taken more or less for granted. And this despite retreats and dictatorial interludes as well as despite the grey zones in democracy we presently witness as increasing.

These are the three pillars upon which the 'European acquis' now rests, this is the acquis upon which Europe has erected its power. For it has been this acquis which withstood World War I, when Russell and Wittgenstein could exchange cordial letters despite belonging to opposite camps. And it was this acquis which withstood World War II as it became transformed into the anti-fascist struggle that spread to all of the European countries. It follows – at least in my opinion – that we are presently obliged to reflect on the future of Europe only in light of this acquis.

The founding manifesto of SYRIZA states: *'Our Europe is the Europe of its peoples, the Europe of its revolutions, the Europe of the social state, the Europe of respect for childhood, for the elderly and for people with special needs, the Europe of the Scientific Revolution, the Europe of the Enlightenment and its radical critique, the Europe of feminism, of environmentalism and of internationalism, the Europe of solidarity and democracy, the Europe of socialism. Our goal is socialism in Greece and in a European scale.'*

The bar is thus being raised. However, I believe it must be raised even higher. As it has begun to be raised, to cite one example, by the dialogue between Derrida and Habermas, as well as by the work of Balibar, among many others.

It must be raised higher because Europe is currently facing numerous new challenges. And this under circumstances that are evolving very dangerously. One of these challenges is what is referred to as 'refugee and migrant flows'.

It seems that refugees and migrants are flowing into Europe simply because they are drawn by our wealth, regardless of how large that wealth might actually be. And of course, by our democratic institutions. Regardless of how these might be functioning in practice. On our part, however, we are obliged to acknowledge that what moves refugees and migrants at a deeper level is something like the revenge of History. Because it is we, Europe, with our invaluable cultural acquis, who robbed them of their wealth and divided their countries by a stroke of a pen. Supposedly in the name of the very same acquis. It is we, Europe, who in the pursuit of profit, which is the hidden dimension of the very same 'acquis', destroyed civilizations as old as ours, rendering their descendants destitute and countryless.

Only if we recognize Europe's historical debt to these countries, to their people and to their civilizations can the historical wound we have caused begin to heal. In

order to start confronting at its roots the great challenge represented by the 'flows' that are disturbing our comfort.

Certainly, the above do not make up a 'realistic proposal'. It is my deeply held conviction, however, that only as long as the strategic goal remains ambitions and immovable, only as long as it inspires and cultivates the necessary outlook, can such issues and the associated balances of power be accurately and dispassionately assessed. That is the only way that the necessary realism can acquire substance and the power to drive change. The limits of what is feasible must be constantly expanded. Otherwise, if the strategic goal remains confused and inconstant, realism remains sterile. It is reduced to the dull management of what exists. And, ultimately, what leaves problems unsolved and things as they are.

Alter Europe – still possible?

By Lucas Blaha

The fundamental question is, what's the point of European integration? The European Communities (since 1993, the European Union) apparently, have not been created arbitrarily and unreasonably. Nobody is wantonly relieved of their sovereignty. If we take any of the classic textbooks on European studies or European integration, we find, that in principle only two fundamental answers can be traced back to the questions raised - safety and social welfare. Both were formulated by Altiero Spinelli in his vision of socialist and peaceful Europe. The important precondition for peace and safety is social peace and welfare. Hence the fundamental question is, whether the second fundamental goal of the European integration – social welfare – is being fulfilled. This is where we raise the question, whether the EU is able to protect what is usually called the European Social Model. Without it Spinelli's vision of Europe has no sustainable fundaments.

Objective trends confirm that the economic globalisation gradually weakens the social standards of the individual states (i.e. *the race to the bottom*), and if these states want to defend themselves, they need to unite into larger and stronger units. Exactly this thesis is also emphasised by Jürgen Habermas, who says that without multinational European coordination, Europe will not be able to resist the pressure that globalisation is putting on the systems of the welfare state and the shared values of social justice. (Barša, Císař 2008: 497) Habermas, however, also points out that such a united Europe must stand on solid democratic foundations, which not only assume human rights protection but also an important public participation and European public debate. Habermas thus considers the EU as a barrier against the degradation of the welfare state and legitimises the greater unity of the European Union by a greater degree of its democratisation.

The current problem with Habermas thesis is, that in the current state in which the EU is, not even one of his key arguments is applicable: the EU today, it seems, does not help to protect the European social model, rather it is stealthily decomposing it; the EU has an elitist character, and its fundamental problem is a deep democratic deficit. This does not mean that Habermas' normative vision is invalid, on the contrary, it provides a rational basis for further integration. It is not the normativity that is questionable, but the facticity, and therefore the current situation, where the EU is moving away from its citizens, risks that, instead of the next European *spillover* process, we will get a *spillback.*

As in various European countries, also the EU went through a turning point during the eighties of the last century, when the so-called neoliberal revolution took place. The ideology of the free market, deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation came into the spotlight. Briefly and clearly explained by Gosta Esping-Andersen: *'A common feature in the neo-liberal route is rising inequality and poverty.'* (Esping-Andersen 1997: 16)

When we think of the reasons why the social dimension of the EU has failed to develop, in the first place we can mention the already indicated problem of neoliberal hegemony, that came to Europe in the eighties together with neoliberal globalisation. The free market ideology and the opposition to the welfare state, has not only strongly leaned the until then relatively moderate and socially right-wing parties to the right, but also caused a sharp shift to the right in the left-wing camp. The social democracy in Europe has adopted a neoliberal vocabulary and the difference between the center-right and center-left political parties in the EU has narrowed to the notorious difference between Coke and Pepsi, ironically commented by Slavoj Žižek. (2007: 236-238)

There are obviously more reasons that predispose the European Union to the absence of real social policy and undermine the European social model. The second reason is a phenomenon that could be called - social nationalism. The EU member states protect their competencies in social field and stubbornly refuse to share powers in the field of social security with the European Union and, de facto, prevent harmonisation in the areas of taxation, social standards and social rights. The consequence is, that social policy as such, does not fall within the exclusive competence of the EU; we could include it in the shared competences, which means that the majority of social policy remains in the member states, and in the EU when deciding in this area, the unanimity (veto) applies. The social policy is at best expelled into the area of soft power (OMC), and if by chance the EU attempts to 'sneak' in any regulation or directive regarding social policy, it rather camouflages this intention as competitiveness and the fulfilment of the single market, in order to avoid conflicts of jurisdiction.

The current status therefore implies, that Europe is in a so-called race to the bottom, because through social dumping (artificial lowering of social measures to attract investors) are the more social and protectionist EU member states subject to pressure from the liberal and more cost-saving states (mostly from the post-communist region), which made their 'business' model based on radical neoliberalism.

In 2017, the European Commission decided to solve the race-to-the-bottom problem by proposing the so-called Posted Workers Directive, which establishes the 'same pay for the same job at the same place' rule. The proposal met a resistance from poorer post-communist countries, where workers earn three times lower wages. An extra income from working in the West is often the only way to improve the living standards of these workers and their families. Protectionist instincts started to manifest in Western European countries, which local politicians displayed in the lofty talk of social rights of workers from Eastern Europe. Eastern European states were presented

as neoliberal machines, which attack the social Europe. However, the opposition to the proposed directive cannot be just dismissed without scrutiny. The problem has structural causes; it is not about the wickedness of the acteurs. Without social and economic convergence in Europe, this problem is unsolvable.

Moreover, the problem is that the Commission intends to guarantee 'equal pay for equal work' principle only in the case of posted workers. The posted workers from the East in the West will have to be compensated in accordance with the collective agreements for local Western workers. The principle does not apply to the factories of Western European companies in Eastern Europe, which often pay three or four times lower wages to these employees than they would in the West. This hypocrisy is often forgotten.

This half-heartedness of the Commission's proposal therefore leads to the fact that Eastern Europeans feel aggrieved, and the Commission's proposal is perceived as just a protectionist barrier against competition from poorer countries, which would once again ultimately damage only the poorest. That is why there is a critical polemic about the proposed directive. The Commission's proposal could, in fact, endanger the jobs of hundreds of thousands of people in Central and Eastern Europe. The Commission is, however, between two fires. If the above-mentioned problem of 'social dumping' was not addressed, it could, in turn, increase dissatisfaction among employees in Western Europe, whose jobs are being taken by East Europeans and these cheaper 'dumping' wages. This also threatens the project of European integration; Euro-scepticism is on the rise in the West, just as in the East of Europe.

The fundamental solution for the raised problem is economic and social harmonisation, and to create a uniform social policy and tax policy, thus heading towards a common system of social protection across the European Union. This would mean that the supranational European institutions in Brussels acquire the key competences, which is what the leaders of nation-states are hindering. In the area of social affairs so to speak, the nationalists are uncompromising. Therefore, we can speak of social nationalism. The repulsion of national leaders to this transfer of competences in the social field to the Union, is not only of an ideological nature (nationalism that wants to preserve as much of the national sovereignty; neoliberalism, which wants to promote competition in the social systems to push social standards, as much as possible, to the favour of entrepreneurs), but also has quite a logical political flavour: social policy is a very useful tool in the electoral battle, which is over-used by local politicians to mobilise their voters.

National politicians, in principle, apply the legendary label once introduced by Otto von Bismarck as 'carrot and stick'. While the stick represents the repression by the power of the State, the carrot is the social policy and concessions to the weakest, in order to maintain social stability and ensure the desired election result. If the 'carrot' in terms of social policy is taken away from the national leaders and given to

the European Union, they would be left only with the 'stick' to maintain the stability and this could pose a serious weakening of their political positions. Furthermore, the supranational solutions have their problems as well. That is to say, there is no guarantee that the supranational approach will adequately address the social needs of individual member states. From the technocratic and far-away Brussels it is often hard to see the specific social problems of the periphery – especially if we consider that the interests of big and rich states are ultimately more represented than the interests of the periphery in every supranational project.

This entire process is closely linked to another reason, already the third in the row, preventing the EU to develop a stronger social dimension. This is the deeply rooted elitism in the whole process of European integration. Monnet's vision of European unification reckoned with the so-called Neofunctional approach, and thus the gradual pouring of integration from one area to another (snowball effect, *spillover*) without, having discussed the end of this process - the United States of Europe - with the public. (Booker, North 2006) Neofunctionalism, as highlighted by one of its main representatives, Ernst Haas, was counting on the fact that the above process will take place at the level of European elites, and thus above the heads of the citizens. (Jensen, 2010: 72-84) This is related to the loss of voters' interest in European topics with which, in fact, the entire project from the beginning implicitly counted on.

As Eric Hobsbawm notes, the strength of the EU in the process of European integration was based precisely on the fact that it was 'virtually immune to the pressures of democratic politics', making it an effective multinational body. (Hobsbawm, 1996: 431) This approach is pushed to the extreme by Moravcsik, who considers the outlined democratic deficit as beneficial, and due to the incompetence of citizens, in the economic field, considers their exclusion from the decision-making process in the EU, as the basic premise for successful integration. Finally, he ends with his famous phrase: The more boring the European policy is, and the more it discourages people from participating, the better for the EU. (Anderson 2011: 82-89)

In the recent years, especially with the emergence of the Eurozone, the trend of emptying democracy has even deepened: the most important matters in economics today are decided by the institutions, which did not undergo direct selection in democratic elections and even worse, many are practically irrevocable and their mandate is actually immutable. For example, the European Central Bank, which is a typical non-elected body, affects the lives of millions of Europeans, without being accountable or responsible to them. Its sole objective is to fight inflation, and unlike the central banks in the US, its objectives do not feature other socially important economic variables, for example combating unemployment, economic growth and so on. The narrow mandate of the ECB is practically committed to neoliberal policies, and this process is beyond any democratic control. This does not only apply for the ECB but for central banks in general. No wonder that Saskia Sassen considers the independent central

banks as the main drivers of the neoliberal project, that go beyond any democratic accountability and civilian control. (Sassen 2006: 233-234) Habermas (2012: 46-47) assesses the situation similarly: *'All the participating European governments lack the courage so far, they are jumping helplessly between the imperatives of major banks and rating agencies on the one hand, and their own concerns about the fact that they are threatened by the loss of legitimation in the rows of their own frustrated citizens, on the other hand.'*

I will try to point out the last structural cause that, still today, objectively preclude the EU to get armed with stronger social powers. Up till now, we have been looking for the reasons in ideology (neoliberal hegemony), in the patterns of political cycles of the national state (social nationalism) and in the deficit of democracy (elitism and distance from people). The fourth structural reason, which eventually lead to the degradation of the European social model through the EU's character of the existing treaties (EU primary law) which predetermine the EU institutions and bodies to monitor only policies that do not go beyond the scope of the treaties. Since the foundation of the European integration is the idea of a single free market and the social sector only acts as a discreet pendant to this goal, it is not surprising, that the EU concentrates on this area, in accordance with its powers.

From this clear mandate – to liberalise – also ensues many essential decisions of the European institutions. The economic freedoms are considered more important than social rights, for example the right to strike. The European Court of Justice confirmed in many of its judgments, that the EU is legitimately described as the *'market police force*.' (Ferrera 2012: 20)

What is more important, the decisions of the ECJ and the European Commission in many cases resulted from contracts that predispose the EU favouring the interest of free enterprise in the single market. To reverse this process will be extremely difficult and will require profound changes in the whole paradigm of integration. The fundamental question is: can we return to the Spinelli's vision of socialist Europe without big bang?

In the presented text, I have brought attention to several key structural reasons, because of which the European social model is in a crisis. By this, I do not question the potential that the EU holds in relation to the search for more social alternatives on the European continent, or in the global context. The question is, whether the EU neoliberalisation did not go too far, to make it possible for the social reformism to bring Europe back on the path of the traditional European social model.

Whether it is possible to reverse the neoliberal trends in the EU through them, is a huge unknown. The greatest paradox therefore remains that while the EU can rightly be regarded as the accelerator of neoliberalism in Europe over the past three decades, not to mention the unhealthy elitist aspects and other legitimate criticism, anyways, the truth is, that a united Europe offers the only real hope on how to save

the European social model in the globalisation "race-to-the-bottom" pressures. So today, the question is not whether we are for or against the European Union, but what kind of united Europe we want to promote, in order to preserve the social rights of the European citizens. When we ask, whether the EU can save the welfare state, there is no clear answer: it depends on whether there is the possibility for another European Union than its contemporary neoliberal and elitist image, and therefore, whether it is possible to create a union, that will be radically social, democratic, peaceful and progressive – the Europe that Spinelly dreamed of. The alternative Europe. The socialist Europe.

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Ventotene – it is time we wrote new manifesto!

By Peter Brandt / Antje Vollmer

I.

The Ventotene Manifesto 'Towards a Free and United Europe', written in 1941 by Alterio Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi during their internment on the island of Ventotene, links the prospect of liberating the continent from fascism and from the hegemony of Hitler's Germany to a root and branch restructuring of society, which was deemed a necessity in the progressive factions of the resistance in all countries, right through to the echelons of the middle classes, in order to guard against a resurgence of reactionary tendencies and fascism. Their goal was the emancipation of their nations, in particular the working classes, in a flourishing democracy that combined collective self-determination and individual freedoms.

Largely mirroring what left-wing parties would endeavour to achieve in the years to come, the manifesto spoke of the redistribution of land; the extensive nationalisation of big banks and basic and key industries; an otherwise mixed 'rational' economic order involving strong elements of participation; the creation of social welfare systems; the separation of church and state; and an egalitarian education policy. The authors of the manifesto assumed – rightly – that the military defeat of the German Reich and its allies in various different countries would trigger a revolutionary crisis in which the old institutions would disappear or at least, like the supremacy of the ruling classes, be radically challenged.

The call to move up a level from nation state politics with the 'European revolution' and create a supranational European federal state is a defining feature of the Ventotene Manifesto. It also expressly pays tribute to the progressive role played by the creation of nations and nation states in the 19th century. The authors were not talking about dissolving the traditional national units, which would still have extensive room to preserve their political and cultural identities. It was not the nation as a community of thought, culture and communication – that phenomenon peculiar to Europe – that was to be overcome, but rather the claims for dominance of competing nation states which were preventing Europe from playing a constructive role, in the progressive sense, in the future world order.

Spinelli and Rossi's bold draft was far ahead of its time for several reasons. There is no doubt that the Resistance everywhere was also, and not least, about national liberation, and that is how the peoples of Europe experienced the events of 1944-45. Furthermore, like most socialists, the authors did not reckon with the epoch-making

re-consolidation of capitalism which, in the shape of a regulated marked economy flanked by the welfare state, ushered in a new 'Golden Age' in the West in the 1950s; nor did they reckon with the Stalinist appropriation of the social revolution in the Soviet-influenced part of Europe. The beginnings of the stand-off between the two blocs in 1947-48 re-opened and magnified the divide between social democracy and communism as a result of their opposing views of democracy, to the point at which they became irreconcilable. The idea, especially in the social democratic and socialist part of the political spectrum, of establishing a united Europe as a third force alongside the US and the USSR – an idea which had also been mooted by the European left outside Italy both during the war and in the immediate post-war period – thus soon lay in tatters, especially since, from the outset, the British Labour Government refused to take on a leading role due to its financial dependency on the US. In the circumstances, the European project was obliged to assume a social and ideological complexion which bore no resemblance to that envisioned by Spinelli and Rossi in 1941.

Over the past decades the EC, or EU, has driven forward the renewed unleashing of market capitalism imposed since the late 1970s instead of curbing it and actively defending the European model of civilization and democracy, which differs from that of the US in its social welfare and in its own understanding of fundamental rights. It is now clear that the call for greater European integration will take us down the wrong path if it is not accompanied by policy change. The enduring democratic deficit of the EU must be rectified, and there must be a more transparent and functional demarcation between decision-making powers at national and European level if we want to win people over to the European idea once again.

II.

Following recent national elections in France, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands and the recent regional elections in Germany, even the greatest optimist has to admit that there is currently no direct path (despite Labour's relative success) which socialists or social democrats could take to reach a dominant position in government in their countries – nor is there any shortcut the political left in Europe can take to lead them back to majority support in society.

Although there was a fleeting moment when the German SPD entertained fond illusions that the situation had changed, those illusions were based on a misunderstanding. The euphoria at Martin Schulz being named as candidate for Chancellor had been unthinkingly interpreted as a long hankered after consensus with the SPD's politics; however, it was really meant as a mandate. A lot of people really did want everything to change. They wanted a 'German' or, better yet, a 'European' Bernie Sanders. There was a glimmer of hope that the eternal grand coalition, whose power base is, in all truth, dwindling, might finally come to an end. And what they really did

not want was the lowest common denominator, an ever decreasing circle of established parties making one last stand for the old ideas of Europe. To realise that is also to realise that we must choose another, more risk-laden path to win majority support in society and then in parliaments once more in the future; a path diametrically opposed to the currently prevailing mainstream that holds sway in powerful think-tanks and media. It is also necessary to realise that we must rid ourselves of the fear of directly attacking Angela Merkel and her Brussels arm of power, the European Council. We must free ourselves at last from the thrall of the uncrowned ruler of Europe, her Lord Keeper of the Seals Schäuble and her Brussels retinue.

This is all with good reason. Take foreign policy to start with. The image of the Germans in Europe has suffered to an alarming extent in the Merkel era. The more confidently the German Federal Government dominates in Brussels, the more hated it becomes. That is not just true of Greece, Spain and England; even in France, keeping a distance from Germany was a key electoral point for all presidential candidates. The political credit which German European policy had spent decades amassing, right up to the end of the last millennium, based on mutual respect, national modesty and an economic balancing of interests, has been depleted. The hard line taken by Wolfgang Schäuble in his role as taskmaster comes across as hypocritical and divisive. The Chancellor's frequent phone calls, her speed dates with all kinds of heads of state, and all the cosying up in front of the camera give the impression that there is no constructive plan or sense of direction.

What is the result? The most powerful politician on the continent has turned the word 'reform' into a nightmare for the peoples of Europe. She has thus failed to achieve her key purpose. She has used the special advantages of German economic and financial policy to set up a regime of excess profits in which all other national economies of southern Europe strain under the weight. No economist so far has been able to explain how a system can keep on working in the long term when it is based on a large export surplus in one country without offering fair trade opportunities or financial compensation to the partners and neighbours with whom it does the large majority of its foreign trade. This method of a unilateral advantage is short-sighted, unfair and will, sooner or later, turn against the beneficiary.

One feature of the Merkel era has been the growth of centrifugal forces within the EU. The departure of Great Britain, Brexit, is not primarily her fault, of course. Her unsolicited attempt to foist her refugee policies on Europe without any discussion helped to pave the way for Brexit – and also encouraged the former Eastern Bloc countries to distance themselves from the consensus that had existed in Europe. These young democracies simply feel overwhelmed by having such a mass of moral demands thrust upon them.

The European left as a whole seems to have stumbled into a trap. The German Chancellor's refugee policy, rooted in a combination of fatalism and action for action's

sake, has driven voters throughout Europe into the arms of right-wing parties – yet these are the voters whom the left should have understood and brought into the fold. Despite coming from a conservative Chancellor, this bulldozer approach is ultimately perceived as the product of left-wing thinking. What is even clearer is that the rise of successful right-wing populist parties has to be taken seriously throughout Europe as a symptom of the centrist and left-wing parties' failure to get through to a large part of the population, who no longer feel represented by those parties. The result is that protest in society, which in itself should not be maligned, is more likely to be expressed along right-wing or far-right lines in Europe today (the only exceptions being in Greece and the Iberian Peninsula). This is proof of the growing discontent at the fact that for decades even centre-left governments have pursued neoliberal economic and social policies that prescribed privatisation, deregulation, tax cuts and the axing of public services as the cure to our ills, and have been quick to put such policies forward as the inevitable consequences of globalisation.

The 'refugee crisis', which is fundamentally a migration crisis rooted in globalisation, threatens to absorb all our energies, without our having a clear idea of how to resolve it. The left can only solve this dilemma if it clarifies its own ideas about functional welfare states and international solidarity. Those who fail to identify the wars and geopolitical power struggles in the Middle East as the cause of destabilisation and organise resistance against them may be engaged in laudable social work, but are a long way from finding a political response to the real migration issues.

The north-south divide was once one of the main topics of left-wing social criticism. It is the greatest social problem of our time, caused in part by the cities of the northern hemisphere, and movements of populations will not make it disappear. The alternative to today's mass migration would be an international policy of peace and *détente*, and fundamental changes to the current global economic and financial order, including global social and redistribution policies. Let us be clear: this will require change among the poorest countries' governing elites if they are engaged in corruption and tribalism, as is sometimes the case.

In the face of overly idealistic views, not least on the political left, one sober realisation must emerge: neither Europe nor Germany can solve the world's problems alone, within their relatively densely populated territories. Any community that strives for and relies on cohesion and solidarity needs a basic level of social and cultural homogeneity and respect for established traditions, even as it continually draws on the wider world for fresh impetus.

III.

One negative consequence of Merkel's foreign policy is that Germany's and Europe's relationship with Russia has been completely ruined. Since the days of Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr, and continued by Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher and sub-

sequently Gerhard Schröder, the policy of *détente* between East and West has been a permanent cornerstone of a joint approach to peace and security policy in Europe. However, what is today called human-rights-based foreign policy is in reality a policy of intervention and sanctions steeped in morality and aligned to NATO interests, with strong irrational overtones of Russophobia. The fact that a country which 75 years ago was the victim of a war of aggression and destruction waged by Germany, and yet took the decisive steps to allow German reunification, might feel that this policy is deeply unfair, at least merits consideration. Who actually benefits from this permanent, resentment-charged confrontation? Only the hawks on all sides. Recent discussions envisaging vast hikes in arms spending, to levels approaching those last seen before 1989, are clearly steering national and EU budgets down that path. The risk of an armed conflict that no-one actually wants to happen occurring 'by chance' on the border between Russia and NATO has risen dramatically.

At the same time, the real economy has already missed out on many business opportunities with Russia – and incidentally also with China – that first emerged under Gorbachev in a short phase in which there was unlimited scope for development and for exercising influence. In that phase, ideas were being floated not only to establish genuine cooperation and integration between the CIS countries and NATO, but also to set up a shared economic and cultural space extending from the Atlantic to the Urals, from Lisbon to Vladivostok. At that time, the door was wide open for joint discussions on developing legal and social systems common to the entire European continent.

IV.

Germany and Europe have also seen their room for manoeuvre unnecessarily restricted when it comes to international conflicts. Politically, the concept of collective security was the underlying reason why Gerhard Schröder could dare to say 'no' to the war in Iraq in 2003. At that time, the policy was to balance out the differences between East and West, while allowing some room for manoeuvre within the Western alliance; that is no longer the case. The UN's global role in maintaining such a balance has been undermined by the repeated formation of coalitions of the willing. It would also be spurious to argue here that our foreign policy is not amoral but based on human rights. For we seem to set no store by those virtues in our dealings with our 'allies' Turkey and Saudi Arabia, who are among the most brutal abusers of human rights in the Middle East; instead "realpolitik" and double standards are the order of the day. In reality, Europe under the aegis of Angela Merkel has not changed its morality, but has veered away from the foreign-policy course taken by all her predecessors. Not least in view of America's current wavering, she sees Germany and, under its leadership, today's Europe of the EU, flying the flag at the forefront of the victorious West. This narcissistic portrayal has long borne no resemblance to the actual role played in the major theatres of conflict.

So it is high time to ask: what has become of the European left? Where is the peace movement? What about the lessons learned from the process of resolving the inter-bloc conflict and the cold war? Where was the once great tradition of left-wing solidarity when Greece faced unbearable humiliation? Where is the plan for peace in the Middle East, with European policy not propping up one of the parties to the conflict, but serving as an intermediary and establishing a balance? What is being done to strengthen the UN? And, crucially, where is a new approach to European policy – an approach that turns away from the politics of austerity and the neoliberal course on which Germany and others have steered the EU towards the destruction of Europe as an idea, and instead focuses on rescuing and developing, in a spirit of solidarity, the European model of civilisation, built on democracy and the welfare state?

Having drawn the wrong conclusions from the upheaval of the years around 1989, Europe's left as a whole lost sight of its identity and purpose, resulting in comprehensive defeat and irrelevance. This may, to some extent, have been unavoidable, not because of the downfall of the dictatorship in the east *per se*, but because of the conditions in global politics and global power relations, and their destabilising socio-political impact in that process. But the fact that large sections of the socialist, social democratic and green leadership have willingly, needlessly and permanently fallen prey to neoliberal and neoconservative policies and strategies, the practical outcomes of which have been discredited after decades of rash experimentation, is nothing short of self-inflicted impotence.

Provide a Marxist Critique of the Ventotene Manifesto!

By Judith Dellheim

It's quite an irony of history when Jean-Claude Juncker,[11] Angela Merkel[12] and the Union of European Federalists (UEF)[13] refer to the Ventotene Manifesto of 1941. The irony lies in that the Manifesto states clearly and boldly: 'In order to respond to our needs, the European revolution must be socialist.' They've probably never read the Manifesto, or simply assume that people are unfamiliar with it and have no desire to become familiar with it. Their reference to the text is an expression of a lack of ideas, but also a symptom of the weaknesses of socialists. That speaks in favour of an attempt to test whether re-reading the Manifesto of Ventotene – 100 years after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and 150 years after the publication of the first volume of *Capital* – could ignite a lively discussion amongst the left in Europe and induce an understanding of common political activities. Such a discussion must be concerned not least with the causes of the left's weaknesses and involve a radical self-critique. It must also address some questions. Why is there no strong movement that is dialectical, internationalist, emancipatory and based on solidarity? What would be possible now for its necessary organisation, and what, therefore, is to be done?

The Manifesto primarily bears the stamp of five ideas:

1. The 'divine entity' of the nation in which 'individual freedom is reduced to nothing' is the root cause, according to the Manifesto, for conflicts and wars between countries for territories and resources. 'Huge industrial, banking conglomerates and trades unions representing whole armies of workers' wish to use the State for their own interests and threaten to dismantle it. With the decay of the liberal-democratic legal order that thus occurred, 'the conviction grew up that only a totalitarian State' could secure social cohesion. But it primarily secured 'the existence of a thoroughly parasitic class of absentee landowners', of the monopolies and cartels, and of the 'plutocrats hidden behind the scenes who pull the politicians' strings'. In the face of grave social injustice, the social consensus is organised along racist ideologies and religious and irrational props. That led to an alliance of the totalitarian rulers in Japan

[11] ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf

[12] www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/08/ 2016-08-23-pk-merkel-renzi-hollande.html

[13] www.federalists.eu/uef/library/books/the-ventotene-manifesto/ All subsequent quotations from the Manifesto are from this source.

and Italy with the German fascists, and ultimately to the Second World War. But 'with every day that passes, the war the allies are fighting rekindles the yearning for freedom', encouraging progressive forces entrusted with 'the salvation of our civilization'.

It remains unsaid that the development of nation states in Europe was accompanied by colonialism and that 'our civilisation' is also, and in particular, based upon the slavery of those who are weaker at the global level. How the national question of the colonised and oppressed ethnic groups is seen by these groups themselves remains hidden.

2. 'Germany's defeat would not automatically lead to the reorganisation of Europe in accordance with our ideal of civilisation.' For that, 'conservative forces' must be fought, that is to say, 'the administrators of the major institutions of the nation states, the top-ranking officers in the armed forces including, where they still exist, the monarchies, the monopoly capitalist groups whose profits are linked to the fortunes of states, the big landowners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, whose parasitical income is only guaranteed in a stable, conservative society and, in their wake, the countless band of people who depend on them or who are simply blinded by their traditional power.' That speaks for a wise system of alliances with all those who regard themselves as threatened by the reactionary forces. 'Wise' means organising decisive action while considering the strengths and weaknesses of the various 'progressive forces'. The Communists have recognised the challenge of 'obtaining a sufficient following to assure victory'. They have 'turned themselves into a rigidly disciplined movement, exploiting the Russian myth in order to organise the workers, but which does not accept orders from them and uses them in all kinds of political manoeuvrings.' The Communists have thus maintained themselves and an extremely relevant part of the working class 'as far removed from the other revolutionary forces as they can', thus inhibiting the progressive forces as a whole. After the war, the reactionary forces would seek 'the restoration of the nation state [...] In appearance, these states might well be democratic and socialist on a large scale. It would only be a question of time before power fell into the hands of the reactionaries.' Militarisation and war would once again be predetermined.

The Manifesto is also characterised by the assessment that under the leadership of the progressive forces of Europe, a broad democratic alliance could come about, which at the same time struggles against exploitation and oppression according to social, ethnic and cultural background, gender, age, bodily and mental condition, and the nation state.

3. The 'European federation' could, on the basis of the experience of the Second World War, 'find easy solutions' for the defence of linguistic minorities, access to the sea for landlocked countries, the Balkan problem, the Irish question, etc. The necessary 'European arrangement of colonial possession' is brought up, *but nothing is said about the colonies in Africa*. It is announced that 'the European Federation is the only

conceivable guarantee ensuring that relationships with American and Asiatic peoples will work on the basis of peaceful co-operation, writing for a more distant future when the political unity of the entire world will become possible.' This is followed by the summary that 'the dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties [...] falls along a very new and substantial line: those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as being the ancient one, the conquest of national political power [...] and those who see the main purpose as the creation of a solid international State, who will direct popular forces towards this goal.'

Why should the colonised, particularly in Africa, desire this 'solid international State', or are they not conceived of as taking part in the 'European arrangement of colonial possession' and as potential progressive actors?

4. Even if the 'European revolution must be socialist', the 'guiding light in determining what steps need to be taken, however, cannot simply be the utterly doctrinaire principle whereby private ownership of the material means of production must in principle be abolished and only temporarily tolerated when dispensing with it entirely [...] The huge forces of progress [...] spring from individual interests.' They 'must be extolled and extended, by giving them increasing opportunities for development and employment'. At the same time, the common good must be a consistent political orientation and 'private property must be abolished, limited, corrected, or extended according to the circumstances and not according to any dogmatic principle'. In concrete terms, that means:

1) abolishing capitalist monopolies;
2) abolishing privileges resulting from inheritance and ownership; workers are to participate in land ownership and ownership in non-nationalised sectors;
3) the creation of equal starting conditions for young people;
4) the realisation of measures that 'guarantee a decent standard of living for all';
5) employees should be able to choose their own 'trusted representatives when collectively establishing the conditions under which they will agree to work'.

These revolutionary reforms must be realised 'to create very broad-based support around the new institutional system from a large number of citizens willing to defend its survival and to stamp freedom and a strong sense of social solidarity onto political life in a very marked way.'

Here, the interests of real and potential actors and the central importance of democracy and democratisation are clearly named. The orientations and recommendations regarding concrete challenges are also, and in particular, addressed to a future state.

5. A 'revolutionary party' capable of taking action must consist of members 'who agree on the main issues for the future. Its methodical propaganda must penetrate everywhere there are people oppressed by the present regime.' It should point out the

causes of concrete oppression, their connections to other problems, and real solutions. From the 'gradually increasing circle of sympathisers', the revolutionary party 'must pick out and recruit into the organisation only those who have identified and accepted the European revolution as the main goal in their lives, who carry out the necessary work with strict discipline day in day out, carefully checking up on its continuous and effective safety, even in the most dangerously illegal situations. These recruits will be the solid network that will give consistency to the more ephemeral sphere of the sympathisers.' It 'must be active first and foremost in those environments which are most significant as centres for the circulation of ideas and recruiting of combative men. It must be particularly active vis-à-vis the working class and intellectuals, the two social groups most sensitive, in the present situation, and most decisive for tomorrow's world. [...] Any movement which fails in its duty to ally these forces, is condemned to sterility' and will not attract other forces. 'By this dictatorship of the revolutionary party a new state will be formed, and around this state new, genuine democracy will grow.'

That these elaborations are strongly reminiscent of Lenin's party of a new type is surely due to the conditions under fascism and the political biographies of the authors. However – or, consequently – this demonstrates a very elitist way of thinking.

The Manifesto raises many problems, and proceeding from the questions posed at the beginning, the following are raised as topics for discussion in particular:

- the role of a conception of history and an engagement with history, particularly colonial history;
- the analysis and evaluation of military and above all socio-political power relations, especially the analysis and evaluation of participating and affected actors with their interests;
- the importance of a system of alliances that bases itself upon an analysis of actors and their interests and therefore upon property relations, and which presents proposals derived from this, the realisation of which would effect a process of societal democratisation;
- an engagement with Bolshevism and Stalinism, as well as with political practices that, proceeding from an interest in the control and tutelage of the members of one's own organisation or the citizens in one's own sphere of influence, is focused or fixated upon the nation state and its institutions;
- the importance of democracy in one's own organisation, and in the organisation and development of political and social alliances;
- coexistence of people within societies, Europe, and the world – their individual rights, their possibilities for influencing social developments, peace and solidarity.

That the Manifesto with all its deficits and contradictions still acts today as an invitation to reflection and dialogue lies in the contradictorily articulated interest in a

self-determined life characterised by cooperation in solidarity and an intact nature for all, in the dialectical aspect, in the rejection of Stalinism and the will for revolutionary activity. Nonetheless, the deficits should be taken seriously – particularly the marginalisation of the problem of colonialism and the interests of the colonised, solidarity between wage workers and their solidarity with other exploited groups in turn primarily in the colonies, the political education of wage workers, their self-organisation; the elitist aspect. In Marx's work, the marginalised are central, and the elite are marginalised – from the beginning of his scholarly and political activity to its end. 'The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital there,'[14] Marx writes in the first volume of *Capital* published in 1867. The year before, in the 'Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council' of the International Workingmens' Association, Marx proposed concrete points of emphasis with the aim of 'combining and generalising the till now disconnected efforts for emancipation by the working classes in different countries' in order to promote 'their ability to take their own fate into their own hands':[15] the collective analysis of the situation of the working class, struggles for the reduction of working time and common work toward general principles and recommendations for co-operation among wage workers, organising educational and learning processes and a harmonisation of interests between wage workers, struggling for free spaces for individual and collective health and self-determination, working purposefully and democratically toward the seizure of power by wage workers. Marx's talks, articles and letters enable us to study how an academically rigorous enlightenment of wage workers concerning their situation can be combined with encouraging them and empowering them to conduct a collective analysis, become politically active, and collectively reflect. Marx counted upon emancipatory practices of politicised wage workers in solidarity with one another and their vibrant internationalism. If this characterises their everyday life, it also determines the political everyday life of their own organisations – and not parliamentary and administrative aspects, which are ultimately focused upon the state in one's own country. With that, parliamentary and administrative aspects would be deployed in an internationalist way, on behalf of the expansion of emancipatory practices of solidarity. In this connection it will be also and especially demanding to discuss, which forms of property would become real and how – and in which areas of application – so that the emancipatory solidaristical would be able to develop successfully. So let's begin with a collective analysis, support, and the generalisation of such practices – also, and especially, assistance in solidarity for refugees – and with a critique of the Ventotene Manifesto using in particular Marx's critical legacy!

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[14] Marx, Karl Capital Volume 1, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 918

[15] www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1866/08/instructions.htm

Altiero Spinelli together with his sisters Gigliola and Fiorella, July 1942 in Ventotene

Meeting of the federalists in Monte Oriole, August 1943. In the foreground of the picture starting from right: Elide Verardi, Ernesto Rossi, Enrico Giussani, Carlo Pucci, Guglielmo Ferrero, Clara Pucci, Bruno Pucci, Mario Alberto Rollier, Ada Rossi, Eugenio Colorni, Lorenzo Ferrero, Aida Ferrero (private archive Rossi, Florenz

The Left in Germany and its responsibility towards Europe

By Michael Brie

Europe's Left has a shared history which stretches back well over 200 years. It began with the French Revolution, in which democratic left-wing and then Communist forces from various European countries played a role. The movement we now know as emerging early Communism and early Socialism was active in France, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and then Germany, and later in Poland and Russia. Moses Hess's book *Die europäische Triarchie (The European Triarchy),* which he published in 1841, represented an early German attempt to combine the ideas linked to the establishment of a confederation of European states with an approach to the social question.[16] This also influenced the Communist League. Groups from France, the Netherlands, the States of the German Confederation, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA attended its second congress, held from 28 November to 8 December 1847. Marx and Engels were given the task of drafting the League's manifesto, which opened with the following words: 'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre …'.[17] In 1864, almost 15 years after the revolution of 1848/49, and with it hopes for a Europe based on democratic republics in France, Germany, Italy and other countries, was crushed, the International Workingmen's Association, a second European and international party, was set up: its aim was a society based internally on the primacy of the interests of workers and externally on the principles of peace and the brotherhood of peoples. In the 20th century, the European Left split into social democrats and communists, and that split has yet to be overcome. The Left has never been able to exert any real influence on the development of the European Union or on the shaping of political and economic relations between the States of the former Soviet Union and the EU and between the EU and its neighbouring States in the Mediterranean.[18] The *Ventotene Manifesto*, which the independent Socialist and Communist Altiero Spinelli drew up together with Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni during his exile on the Italian island of Ventotene in 1941, never became the programme around which democratic left might have united. The antagonisms of the Cold War era were simply too strong. But

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[16] Moses Hess: Die europäische Triarchie. Leipzig: Otto Wigand 1841.

[17] Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: 'Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei'. In: O. Hg.: MEW, Bd. 4. Berlin: Dietz 1848, S. 459-493, here p. 461.

[18] See Judith Dellheim, Gabi Zimmer: Keine Feier am 25. März. Reihe Standpunkte der RLS. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung 2017, S. 2.

the vision of combining a radical transformation to create a solidarity-based economic order with pan-European cooperation and national and regional autonomy remained.

The deep crisis besetting the European Union and European Monetary Union in particular, the new divisions between East and West in Europe and the wars and civil wars, together with clear signs of the collapse of the State and civilisation, in the EU's neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean and the Middle East are daunting threats. All this is a far cry from the Common European Home which Mikhail Gorbachev called for as part of the *New Thinking*, from a *New Policy of Détente* or from a set of policies which acknowledge the fact that western Asia, North Africa and Europe and the peoples living there once formed a common civilisation and still have close links today.[19] The dangers are staring us in the face. Politics is in permanent crisis mode. 'Bailouts' to save the euro, the banks and States are practically a weekly occurrence. Repeated - often hopeless - attempts are made to prevent breaches of the most basic democratic principles on which the EU is founded and to halt and mediate in military conflicts. Refugee and migration policy is based on a combination of deterrence and half-hearted solidarity and assistance. The policy of destabilising 'uncooperative' regimes has been a complete disaster and has given way to ideas of supporting economic, social and political institutions.

It is becoming ever more clear that business as usual - the continued implementation of the EU's neoliberal and imperialist policies - will call the EU's own existence, the security of its Member States and the well-being of many of its citizens into question. Some right-wing responses have been put forward, calling for the nation state in its exclusive, racist form to be revived as a bulwark in the 'fight for survival'. The election of Donald Trump with his slogan 'America first' marks the beginning of a new era. Their responses to these challenges are setting the ruling elites apart from one another.[20] Some want to ignore the siren voices of nationalism and see their ideas as unrealistic in the context of the EU and its Member States. The USA is a global superpower. Even the largest EU Member States are in no position to claim that status for themselves. For this reason, the view that the divisive policy of punitive austerity should at least be relaxed is gaining ground in government circles in Germany and France. The IMF and the World Bank are warning that not everyone will be winners in an era of neoliberal globalisation - far from it, in fact - and calling for policies geared more deliberately towards fostering social cohesion, in the EU in particular. The rifts that negative, competition-driven market integration is causing in the EU are prompting many to call that policy into question. The policy of enlarging the EU eastwards and southwards has also reached its limits.

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[19] The so-called Israeli-Palestinian conflict is merely an extreme example of this.

[20] See Dieter Klein: Gespaltene Machteliten. Verlorene Transformationsfähigkeit oder Renaissance eines New Deal? Hamburg: VSA 2016.

The EU faces a whole set of crises which could quickly turn into disasters which threaten its very existence (financial and economic crashes, large-scale terrorist attacks and armed conflicts, the collapse of further States in the EU's neighbourhood, environmental disasters, etc.). Against this backdrop, the ruling elites will pursue two contradictory strategies and combine elements of both of them. On the one hand, they will try to strengthen imperialist economic, political and military options (whether at a national level or in a 'core Europe'). On the other, attempts will be made to combine this with offers of European investment and programmes to develop joint infrastructure, certain types of support to address social emergencies (youth unemployment, aid for refugees, etc.) and the easing of austerity.

The Left in the EU must focus on the fault lines between these strategies. If it wants to row against the neoliberal tide, it must develop a twin-track policy which takes the innate contradictions in the approaches being adopted by the ruling elite, as outlined above, as a starting point for a new approach of its own and at the same time builds up its own strength as a European force for solidarity, as a movement which unites the dependent and the oppressed with the aim of achieving solidarity-based emancipation. It would be a left-wing, twin-track strategy which addresses the contradictions in the approach taken by the ruling elite and seeks to act as a focal point for agonistic opposition[21] and the basis for 'revolutionary realpolitik'.[22]

The Left in Germany - civil society, trade unions, political parties - has a particular responsibility when it comes to implementing this twin-track strategy of radical, transformational "realpolitik". The Federal Republic is the economically most powerful Member State. The introduction of the euro, a measure which had Germany's fingerprints all over it, has strengthened the country's position. Previous interventions to stave off crises in the eurozone were also primarily responses to the pressure to find solutions consistent with conservative and neoliberal economic thinking in Germany. However, these solutions are now threatening to destroy the eurozone, on which the economic and political elites in Germany and many workers in the country's export industries have pinned their hopes. The election of Emmanuel Macron as President of France and the United Kingdom's decision to leave the Union mean that business as usual is no longer an option in the EU. The problems besetting the banking system in Italy are harbingers of a crisis in the third-largest State in the eurozone.

The likelihood is, therefore, that the problems facing Europe as a whole, the EU and the eurozone and the general atmosphere of crisis in international politics will prompt the new federal government to be elected in September this year to rethink

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[21] See Chantal Mouffe: Agonistik. Die Welt politisch denken. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2014.

[22] Rosa Luxemburg: 'Karl Marx'. In: Dies.: Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 1.2. Berlin: Dietz 1903, S. 369-377, hier S. 373; Michael Brie (Hrsg.): Radikale Realpolitik Plädoyer für eine andere Politik. Berlin: Dietz 2009.

its policies to a greater or lesser extent. The result will not be a change of course, but a policy change-light. The Left in Germany must seek to ensure that this policy change-light strengthens policies based on solidarity and mutual support in the eurozone and in the EU, that progress is made on pan-European projects to reduce tensions and improve cooperation and that a shift is made towards active steps to establish peace and stability in North Africa and the Middle East.

For a variety of reasons, the Federal Republic is a country which benefits more than others from a stable EU and from the euro. Because of Germany's strong export focus, long-term wage 'moderation', in particular in the services sector and as a result of the expansion of the low-wage sector, and, against this specific background, the undervaluation of the euro when measured against the country's economic performance, the competitive position of German concerns and firms has improved significantly over the past two decades. These benefits more than offset the country's net contributions to the EU budget. The reverse applies - to a much more marked extent - to many of the weaker countries in the EU and the eurozone. Given this state of affairs, the German Left would be entirely justified in calling for greater government support for the twin projects of the EU and the eurozone and for initiatives designed to bring about détente and peace throughout Europe and in North Africa and the Middle East, in the form of a steady increase in State spending and the provision of government loans. For decades the Federal Republic set aside *5%* of its gross national product to meet the cost of unifying the two Germanies. What possible reason could there be to spend less on the historic project of building a European House?

In particular in order to ensure that the policy change-light is, as far as possible, a change for the better, the German Left must develop and confidently advocate positions of its own. It is not for the German Left to decide whether other countries should leave the eurozone or not. It does have a duty, however, to advocate comprehensive, solidarity-based support for the countries which need it, to help them achieve social, democratic and environmental objectives. For that reason, it must seek to use social dialogue to thrash out policies which can bring real change. The four pillars of such policies are justice, security, the transition to a socially and environmentally sustainable society and an overt policy of solidarity and joint development in the EU and vis-à-vis its neighbours in eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa. Policies of this kind begin with redistribution - from private budgets to public budgets and from the top downwards. Anyone who is serious about justice, the rebuilding of society or peace must address the issue of redistribution. Without massive redistribution of wealth, the foundations of security - education, healthcare, care for the elderly and the chronically sick, integration, culture and a commitment to peace - cannot be developed to the required extent. Complex, fragmented societies in particular are dependent on the largesse of the State. Another yardstick for the effectiveness of such a policy is the establishment of a pensions system which not

only protects people against poverty, but also safeguards living standards which have already been achieved.

Fair redistribution and security also redefine the debate about the future. The renovation of the entire building stock of town and city councils and local authorities to make them more environmentally friendly, an energy transition which puts production and supply in the hands of local authorities, the regions and a network of cooperatives and abandons coal as a source of energy, a new transport policy which points the way towards the largely car-free and mobile society of the future, internet libraries which offer free access to the knowledge of the present and the past ... all these ideas should be on the table. Germany should make money available for wide-ranging experiments with new manufacturing methods and ways of living, starting with a basic income (as in Finland), free local public transport (as in the Estonian capital Tallinn) and climate-neutral municipalities (Ludwigsburg's objective). At times of uncertainty, diversity and a willingness to experiment are vital if we are to learn lessons which can be applied in the future and react quickly and intelligently to crises.

These approaches are important at EU level in particular. The decades of European integration via the markets, integration achieved, in other words, by pitting different parts of Europe against one another - decades of negative integration - must now give way to decades of positive integration on the basis of solidarity. A monetary area without active wealth redistribution which fosters the development potential of the weaker States cannot survive. A Union of theoretically equal States in which the strong leave the weak further and further behind is doomed to collapse. We want the much touted EU peace project without having to pay for it, or better yet as a captive German export market. That cannot work and does not add up. Neighbouring States in which people have lost all hope of ever leading a decent life are descending into civil war and terror, a process which is being fuelled by third parties and military interventions. European politicians have long fought shy of taking the action which this situation so obviously calls for. The policy of crisis management employed thus far has prevented the collapse of the eurozone, but it has not generated a groundswell of support for solidarity-based development. The German Left must throw its weight behind a pan-European policy of redistribution and transformation.

It must follow a twin-track strategy: firstly, continue to resist the new right inside and outside parliament and put pressure on the ruling elites to change policies to make them as socially and environmentally sustainable, as democratic and as peace-oriented as possible; and secondly, place the issue of a resolutely left-wing government in Germany on the agenda in order to make it clear that there is support for alternative policies and that we must prepare the ground for them. Then, the European Left as a whole will finally be given a place at the top table when economic, financial, peace and security policies are discussed.

There are, therefore, two options: policy change-light, which the Left should endeavour to influence as much as possible, or a complete change of course which the Left, in Germany in particular, should advocate. There is only one problem: the latter is not feasible at the moment. For a long time, it has been the Gordian knot of politics. There is some common ground between the two options, but they are not interchangeable. Unlike policy change-light, a complete change of course will require immense effort, will be difficult to achieve and will call for significant additional spending. When the world is as chaotic as it is now, not only bad things, but also unexpectedly good things, are possible. At times like these the onus is on us to create and grasp opportunities - for a fairer and more peaceful world. After all, how does the *Ventotene Manifesto* end: 'The moment has arrived in which we must know how to discard old burdens, how to be ready for the new world that is coming, that will be so different from what we have imagined. [...] The road to pursue is neither easy nor certain. But it must be followed and it will be!'

A New Vision of Europe: Learning from the South

By Boaventura de Sousa Santos

A sense of historical and political exhaustion haunts Europe. After five centuries of providing the solutions for the world, Europe seems incapable of solving its own problems. There pervades a feeling that there are no alternatives to the current critical state of affairs, that the fabric of social cohesion and post-WWII social contract that linked gains in productivity to gains in salaries and social protection is forever gone, and that the resulting increase in social inequality, rather than delivering higher economic growth, is indeed plunging Europe into stagnation. European social cohesion is degenerating before our eyes, sliding into European civil war by some Fatum (overpowering necessity) from which Leibniz saw modern European reason being liberated.

This is all the more puzzling if we consider that at least some of these seemingly intractable problems are somewhat similar to problems that non-European countries have confronted in recent years with some measure of success. More puzzling yet is that these countries, in addressing their problems, have drawn on European ideas and experiences. They have reinterpreted them in new ways, by twisting and reconfiguring some of their components and mixing them with other components derived from non-European sources, while engaging in a kind of intellectual and institutional bricolage focused on concrete results rather than on orthodox models and dogmas.

The sense of exhaustion is compounded with a sense of miniaturization. Europe seems to be shrinking, while the non-European world seems to be expanding. New actors emerge on the global scene, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), while Europe appears less and less relevant. Moreover, in a rather paradoxical way, as the EU expanded and deepened the distinctiveness of Europe's presence and profile in world affairs became diluted. When the western European countries were less dependent on Brussels's directives and were viewed as independent actors, they, however acting in isolation, projected a vision of Europe as a benevolent and peace-loving actor in international affairs, a profile clearly contrasting with the one projected by the USA. In contrast, when in our days the president of France, following slavishly on the steps of the USA, enthusiastically embraces the idea of bombing Syria, with this caricatural act he is not only inducing the suicide of the French left but also wrapping up the soul of Europe in the diploma of the Nobel Peace Price awarded to the EU in Oslo on 10th of December 2012 and setting it on fire.

In addressing this epochal Geist, I start from two ideas that are far from being consensual. First, Europe, no matter how extraordinary its accomplishments in the

past, has nothing to teach the world anymore. Second, Europe has extreme difficulty in learning from non-European experiences, namely from the global South. Concerning the first premise, Europe's high period as an imperial and global power ended in 1945. Devastated by the war, it benefitted from the helping hand of the USA, then the overwhelming world power. Once the latter started to decline in the 1970's, instead of trying to carve out a new autonomous trajectory, Europe tied its fate to that of the USA by developing a partnership with it which over the years has become more and more unequal. In the meantime, the peripheral countries of the global South, many of which were European colonies at the end of WWII, became independent and, in one way or another, tried to find their own ways of making history in a post-European world. It was all along a bumpy road, since Europe and its superior ally, the USA, would question and challenge any attempt at delinking from the capitalist world system; the Soviet Union, in turn, did not accept any alternative to capitalism other than the one it was itself trying to develop. The movement of the non-aligned (starting with the Bandung Conference in 1955, convened by the presidents Nehru (India), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt), Nkrumah (Ghana) and Tito (Yugoslavia, now Serbia), was a first manifestation of an historical intent to carve out a path beyond the double and self-contradictory vision Europe offered of itself to the world, now liberal and capitalist, now Marxist and socialist, both of them highly exclusionary and demanding unconditional loyalty. This dichotomization of global affairs, dramatically illustrated by the Cold War (at times very hot indeed, as in the Korean war), posed intractable political dilemmas to the new political elites of the global South, both at the national and regional level and at the level of the United Nations, even if for those most distanced from the western culture capitalism and communism were two twin traps laid out by the same 'white man's' supremacy.

Several attempts at making history with some measure of autonomy followed in the subsequent decades until we reached the end of the XX century with the emergence of the BRICS. Such an emergence dramatized the diversity of world experience. Interestingly enough, the political and social innovations that came with it were based for the most part on European ideas, but they were processed in different ways; they were, in a sense, re-appropriated and hybridized, mixed with non-western ideas, in a bricolage of ideas and practices. A lot can be learned from this historical experience.

Here enters the second premise. The extreme difficulty Europe has to take into account such rich historical diversity, to reflect productively upon it and to use it for solving its own problems. The main reason for this difficulty lies in an entrenched colonialist prejudice that has outlived historical colonialism for many decades. For five centuries Europe saw itself as holding the key to the problems of an ever expanding and inherently problematical world. Colonialism, evangelization, neocolonialism, imperialism, development, globalization, foreign aid, human rights, humanitarian assistance have been some of the keys of the Eurocentric solutions for the problems of

the world. Being dependent on such solutions, the non-European world was bound to adopt them, either voluntarily or by force, because of its subalternity vis-à-vis Europe. The colonialist prejudice writ large is at the source of Europe's difficulty in learning from the experiences of the world. How could Europe possibly benefit from world experiences that relate to problems that Europe had supposedly solved long ago?

There is, however, one window of opportunity which has emerged in the last two decades, and to which the current financial, economic, political, ecological crisis has given it a new visibility. What if Europe, rather than being the solution for the problems of the world, were itself the problem? Is Europe so unique that it has to rely solely on its own experience to solve its problems? Or is Europe, on the contrary, part of a much wider world from whose experience it could benefit? The question does not imply that Europe needs to take lessons but rather engage in a new conversation with the world, a process of reciprocal learning based on more horizontal relations and mutual respect for differences. For better or worse, Europe did teach lessons to the world for a long time. One might be tempted to think that now it is time for the non-European world, the global South, to teach lessons to Europe. Then Europe teaching the world; now the world teaching Europe. I think, however, that a wrong metaphor does not get better by being inverted. In my view it is rather the time for a post-colonial, post-imperial conversation between Europe and the vast non-European world. Rather than inverted teaching, we need mutual learning. Since no one has a magical solution for the problems of the world, no absolute knowledge from which such a solution could derive, a new conversation of the world is the only alternative to the continuation of imperial domination and global civil war we seem to be entering.

Learning from the South

In the following I try to answer two questions. Under which conditions would such mutual learning be possible? Which would the main areas of such global learning be?

Before I answer these questions it should be noted that the formulation of these questions presupposes that a new vision of Europe is both possible and necessary. Why do we need a new vision? How should it look like? By asking these questions we are assuming, as a hypothesis, at least, that the old vision is not valid anymore or is not working as it should. Of course, we are also assuming that we have a clear and consensual idea of how the old vision looked like. None of these assumptions can be taken for granted. It seems to me that the sense of uneasiness that haunts Europe today derives from this abyssal uncertainty. Europeans are being led to aspire for a new vision of Europe, even if they don't exactly know why, nor how exactly such vision will differ from the old vision whose profile they at best only vaguely grasp.

There are other uncertainties and paradoxes which I am not going to address here except for a brief reference to one of them. It concerns the question of what counts as Europe. How many Europes are there? Is it made of 51 countries or of the 28

European Union countries? What does it mean to be European? We should bear in mind that there is no official definition of what 'European' means, at least for cultural policies. The break-up of the Soviet Union, the re-unification of Germany, and the large-scale movement of migrants, workers and refugees throughout Europe have added complexity to the very idea of Europe and European identity, as new identities and new borderlands get juxtaposed and multiple layers of 'insider' or 'outsider' status develop. Immigration offices and customs commissions may also develop their own ideas of Europe and European identity. For this reason, some authors (e.g. Cris Shore 1993) claim that the talk of 'the European identity' is premature. Just as there is not 'one Europe' but a plurality of historically specific and competing definitions of Europe (Seton-Watson 1985; Wallace 1990), so there are rival and contrasting 'European identities', depending on where the boundaries of Europe are drawn and how the nature of 'European-ness' is perceived, a problem identified very early on (cf. Kundera 1984; Dahrendorf et al. 1989). In mentioning these complexities and uncertainties, I only want to draw attention to the fact that the idea of a new vision of Europe is intimately linked with the idea of the multiple and often contradictory boundaries of Europe.

Under which conditions would such mutual learning be possible?

Given Europe's imperial and historical past, the first condition for mutual learning is the readiness to learn from the global South, from the experiences of the immense regions of the world that were once subjected to European rule. Learning from the South invokes geography and cartography. However, in the sense used here, the South is a metaphor for the systematic suffering inflicted upon large bodies of population by Western-centric colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy (Santos 2014: 215). As should be clear, this suffering is not an exclusive doing of Europe. On the other hand, historically, Europeans have also fought against colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. The metaphor is about measures, scales and weights, about dominant and subaltern, majority and minority movements and trends. They tell us that Europe was for centuries a very strong center that ruled the world by creating subordinate peripheries or margins. Continuing with the metaphor, there is a South because there was and still is a North. Learning from the South means learning from the peripheries, from the margins. It is not easy because, viewed from the center, the South is either too closely dependent on the North to be able to be different in any relevant way or, on the contrary, so far apart that its reality is incommensurable with that of the center. In either case, the periphery has nothing to teach to the center.

1-The first condition of learning from the South is to clarify what kind of South or Souths are to be engaged in the conversation. This clarification presupposes the willingness to consider a new cartography of Europe. We are reminded of famous phrase by Metternich, the Austrian statesman, in the first decades of the XIX century – 'Asien

beginnt an der Landstrasse' – that is to say, Asia began then in the outskirts of Vienna. In the nineteenth century, the zone around the Landstrasse (the name of the street) was occupied by immigrants from the Balkans. Then as now, the distinction between the Balkans and Europe was clear, as if the Balkan countries were not part of Europe.

The specification of what the South means is particularly complex in the case of Europe. The South that confronts Europe as the other is both outside and inside Europe. The South outside Europe comprises the countries which are sources of raw materials to be explored by North-based multinational corporations; countries whose natural disasters elicit European humanitarian aid; countries which are unable to sustain their population, giving thus rise to the problem of immigration that 'afflicts' Europe; countries which breed terrorists that must be fought with utmost severity. The South inside Europe bespeaks the immigrants, the Roma people, the children of immigrants, some of whom having lived in Europe for generations and even holding European passports, but are not viewed as 'Europeans like the others.' They become particularly visible when rioting and their protests highlight their otherness.

There is, however, another South inside Europe. It is a geographical South, though partaking of the metaphorical South as well. I mean the countries of the south of Europe, Greece, Portugal and Spain in particular. In the present circumstances, it is hard to imagine Europe learning from its southern countries. The more cynical ones will even say that from them only what is not to be done is to be learned. The way this sounds true and justifies how the economic and financial crisis is being managed has deeper historical roots than people may think. In order to understand it, we need to go back a few centuries and observe the historical oscillation between centers and peripheries inside Europe. A Mediterranean center that did not last more than a century and a half (during the sixteenth century and half of the seventeenth century) was superseded by another one that ended up lasting much longer and having far more structural impact. The latter center was a center with roots in the twelfth and thirteenth century Hanseatic League, a center oriented to the North Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, and embracing the cities of northern Italy, France, the Netherlands and, in the nineteenth century, Germany. This center has always been surrounded by peripheries: in the north, the Nordic countries; in the south, the Iberian Peninsula; in the southeast, the Balkans; in the east, feudal territories, the Ottoman Empire and semi-Europeanized Russia since the eighteenth century under Peter the Great. In the course of five centuries, only the northern peripheries had access to the center, the same center that is still the core of the European Union. The truth is that there have always been two Europes and often two Europes inside each country (Catalonia and Castille in Spain, northern and southern Italy, etc). This duality is more entrenched in the European culture than we might think, which may explain some of the difficulties in addressing the current financial crisis. What on the surface seems to be a financial or economic problem is, at a deeper level, also a cultural and so-

cio-psychological problem. I suggest that this deeper layer may be more present in the financial or economic solutions than we might be willing to imagine.

An illustration may clarify what I mean. From the fifteenth century onwards and up to the eighteenth century there are many narratives by travelers and merchants of northern Europe focusing on the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the living conditions of southern Europe. What is striking about these narratives is that they ascribe to the Portuguese and the Spanish exactly the same features that the Portuguese and Spanish colonizers ascribed to the "primitive and savage peoples" of their colonies. Such features ranged from precarious living conditions to laziness and lasciviousness, from violence to friendliness, from disregard of cleanliness to ignorance, from superstition to irrationality. A few quotes from the eighteenth century: 'The Portuguese are slothful, not industrious at all, they don't take advantage of the riches of their land, nor do they know how to sell those of their colonies' (Chaves, 1983: 20). The Portuguese are 'tall, handsome and sturdy, generally quite dark, which results from the clime and their intermixing with negroes' (Chaves, 1983: 24). In other words, the miscegenation which the Portuguese viewed as one of the benevolent aspects of their colonialism is turned against them to substantiate a colonial prejudice. When one reads today some German popular press about the PIIGS one wonders if the underground (and even overground) colonial prejudice is not still at work.

2-The second condition of learning from the South is the acceptance that the world of the future will be a post-European world. The future will not be dictated to the world by Europe as it has been in the past. This vision of the future will, however, not come about before Europe settles accounts with its past. The colonial enterprise meant that the peoples and nations subjected to European rule, despite being heirs to pasts immensely different from those of the Europeans, were condemned to aspire to a future dictated by Europe, a future linked to the European one as the master's future is linked to the slave's. Thereby, Europe's future became hostage to the bonds imposed on the others. How many ideas and projects were discarded, discredited, abandoned, demonized inside Europe just because they didn't fit the colonial enterprise? To what extent is the colonial past overcome?

Once the cycle of historical colonialism was closed, neocolonialism has proved to be a resilient burden for many countries, reproduced through a wide range of policies, some more benevolent than others, from military intervention to development programs, from special rights of access to natural resources and to humanitarian assistance. The illusion of a post-colonial interruption prevents European governments from scrutinizing more strictly the global operations of European corporations, be they promoting baby formulas in hunger-ridden regions, land grabbing, speculating with food commodities, claiming patent rights over medicines, thereby making them unaffordable to the majorities of people that need them, restricting peasants' access

to seeds, causing environmental disasters and massive displacements of people due to mining projects of unprecedented scale, etc.

The colonial world, far from being just an immense domain of victimhood, was also a multifaceted site of resistance and survival ingenuity. Herein lies the immensely diverse experience of the world which indeed might have been even greater if it were not for the massive destruction of subordinated knowledges and experiences (epistemicide) once deemed unfit for the service of the colonial enterprise (Santos 2014: 236). Of course, the past cannot be undone, but the ways it conditions our present should be object of deep reflection and of political transformation. Historical colonialism may be (almost) over, but it goes on under new guises in our cities, minds, and textbooks, as racism, sexism, ethnic profiling, xenophobia, intolerance, arrogant multiculturalism, punitive immigration laws, inhuman refugees' camps, etc.

The world school of unlearning and learning

Europe has to go back to school, the school of the world and of its infinite diversity, and be willing to unlearn many self-evident ideas that were truthful and useful in the past but are not so anymore. It must be willing as well to learn about new ideas, some of which are altogether unfamiliar and others which are strange as if reflected in an surprising mirror, European ideas long ago discarded and forgotten as they were excluded, suppressed from a vaster European family of ideas. While going back to school, Europe should also entertain the possibility that some of the old, most vibrant European traditions may today be found outside Europe after being appropriated and creatively transformed by the peoples subjected to European colonialism and neocolonialism.

As strong examples, I offer three classes of unlearning followed by learning.

Human Rights and Interculturality

Especially since World War II, Europe has been facing an intercultural challenge to its legal and political cohesion, due not only to migratory processes, but also to the recognition of Europe's subnational diversity. Again, the outside-inside divide is increasingly becoming an inside-inside divide. As cultural difference becomes a dimension of cultural citizenship, human rights issues and citizenship rights issues become more intertwined than ever, even if conservative forces tend to pull them apart. The quest for a broader notion of European citizenship, moving from the traditional national scope of citizenship to a broader, European scale, is inherent to the idea of a cosmopolitan conception of humanity and human rights.

It seems to me that the defense of interculturality and human rights will become more and more one and the same struggle. However, in a post 9/11 world, the call for interculturality has become both more difficult and more necessary. On the one side, there is the danger that a short-sighted conception of security will repress in-

terculturality for fear of seeing control escape; on the other, it is increasingly obvious that the victim of such a conception will be not just interculturality but core human rights as they have been conventionally understood in Europe.

There is no question today about the hegemony of human rights as a discourse of human dignity (Santos 2015: 1-10). To be sure, this must be considered as a European contribution to the struggle of humankind for dignity and emancipation. Nonetheless, such hegemony faces a disturbing reality. A large majority of the world's inhabitants are not the subjects of human rights. They are rather the objects of human rights discourses. The question is, then, whether human rights are efficacious in helping the struggles of the excluded, the exploited, and the discriminated against, or whether, on the contrary, they make those struggles more difficult. In other words, is the hegemony claimed by human rights today the outcome of a historical victory, or rather of a historical defeat?

We must begin by acknowledging that human rights have a double genealogy in European modernity, an imperial genealogy and a revolutionary genealogy. In their name, lots of atrocities have been committed against defenseless populations for no other reason than their being in the way of European plundering of their riches. However, human rights have been at times a powerful tool in fighting for democracy and decency and against tyranny and oppression caused by state and non-state agents. Europe has always had difficulty realizing that other grammars of human dignity, besides human rights, have always been available to people, and are still today. Suffice it to say that twentieth-century national liberation movements against colonialism did not invoke the human rights grammar to justify their causes and struggles. They fought in the name of national liberation and self-determination. Today, two other grammars of human dignity are calling for an active European engagement. The first one is not as foreign to European roots as many may think, but it is nonetheless viewed today as un-European. I am referring to Islamic conceptions of human dignity and their emphasis on duties, rather than on rights, and on the value of the community (the umma) as the ultimate root of dignity and human worthiness. The rampant Islamophobia that plagues Europe is preventing Europe from engaging in a productive conversation with one fifth of the world's population and with an increasing proportion of its citizenry. For how long can this obstinate refusal go on before civil conversation yields to civil war? In this regard, the integration of Turkey in the EU would have been a welcome development. It would build a bridge between Europe and the closest Muslim world, after, of course, the Muslim European world.

In this regard, there is still another platform for a new conversation with the world involving unlearning followed by learning worth underlining. I am referring to the issue of secularism. Secularism is an entrenched paradigm in the European way of life, and rightly so. The tragic experience of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries left Europe with no other positive alternative than the separation of state and church,

the idea that freedom of religion can only be accomplished in a society whose public sphere is free from religion. I will not discuss here the complexities of the European solution to the religious question. I just want to emphasize that, for complex reasons, we seem to be entering a post-secular age, as Charles Taylor (2007) calls it. Habermas (2009) has likewise spoken of post-secularity as one of the defining characteristics of our time. In my view, we are heading to difficult times in this regard; European participation in the world conversation would recommend that a distinction between secularism and secularity enter the public debate as soon as possible. Secularity is a philosophical and political stance that defends the separation of state and religion but admits the presence of non-secular stances in the public sphere, whereas secularism is the embodiment of the public sphere itself and the sole authoritative source of public reason, thus leaving no room for non-secular stances in the public space. In this regard, the European movement is uneven and we should consider, for instance, the United Kingdom more advanced than France.

The other grammar calling for unlearning/learning on the part of Europe are the rights of nature. I am referring to a luminous constitution innovation brought about by the Constitution of Ecuador of 2008. It states in its article 71: 'Nature, or pachamama, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes. All persons, communities, peoples and nations can call upon public authorities to enforce the rights of nature. To enforce and interpret these rights, the principles set forth in the Constitution shall be observed, as appropriate. The State shall give incentives to natural persons and legal entities and to communities to protect nature and to promote respect for all the elements comprising an ecosystem.'

In cultural terms, the idea of rights of nature is a hybrid entity. It appropriates the European idea of human rights and mixes it with non-western, indigenous cosmovisions of nature (Orbe 2010). Nature, however, for the dominant European cosmovision, at least since Descartes, is a res extensa (an extended thing, a corporeal substance without a soul) and, as such, deprived of the dignity granted to human living creatures. Given the deep ecological crisis we are entering, I suggest we learn from such conceptions of nature and rights through what I call intercultural translation in order to address the problems caused by the crisis (Santos 2014: 212-235). If this could be achieved, we would be witnessing a fascinating instance of a cultural boomerang: human rights would have left Europe setting humans against nature, fly over the world, and return to Europe to bring humans and nature together again.

In light of this diversity concerning conceptions of dignity both inside and outside Europe, I propose, against traditional conceptions of universalism, intercultural dialogues on isomorphic concerns, for instance, between Western human rights, Hindu dharma, Islamic umma, Latin American indigenous peoples' pachamama or buen vivir or African sage wisdom and ubuntu. As a result, a new hypothetical new

human rights may become widely accepted in Europe: we have the right to be equal when difference makes us inferior; we have the right to be different when equality de-characterizes us.

Alternatives to Development or the Other Economies

In this regard, the first unlearn/learn exercise involves revisiting the world as a field of very unequal exchanges. Europe's prosperity was achieved through huge transfers of wealth from the global south, from its colonies first and then through neocolonial conditions and restrictions. In light of recent commercial controversies setting apart Europe and the global South, a good focal point for unlearning/learning in this regard would be the consideration that what is good for European corporations is not necessarily good for Europe. Given the disturbingly massive investment in lobbying by European and non-European corporations in Brussels and Strasbourg, this will be a difficult lesson to learn. Short of it, the proclamations by European leaders of the need for more inclusive horizontal relationships based on cooperation and mutual respect will be viewed by their non-European partners as mystifying window dressing.

The second unlearn/learn exercise concerns alternatives to development and the role of non-capitalist economic relations inside capitalist societies. The financial and economic crisis has underscored current impasses confronting global decisions on climate change and sustainable development and the disheartening marginalization of Europe in this field in spite of its leadership in environment-friendly energy policies. On the other hand, many initiatives are taking place in other parts of the world to which Europe, in general, pays little attention, if it knows them at all. Peasants' claims to land that seemed historically condemned have re-emerged with great strength and political clout throughout Latin America, Africa, and India. Non-capitalistic economic organizations – often called social solidaristic economy, economy of care or 'the other economy' – are mushrooming in countries as diverse as Brazil, South Africa, Mozambique, and India. Recent political changes in some countries have declared a moratorium on the conventional concept of economic development and framed the economic policies by resorting to non-Western conceptions, such as Sumak Kawsay or Sumak Qamaña (buen vivir/good life, in Quechua and Aymara respectively) (Santos 2010). However involved in heated internal and international controversies, these initiatives point to post-capitalistic and post-developmentalist futures and paradigms in non-utopian terms, that is, to the extent that they translate these visions into concrete political agendas. Until very recently, Ecuador has provided a most remarkable example by advancing the most innovative proposal in a post-Kyoto world: to leave unexplored in the subsoil the immense oil reserves in the National Park Yasuni-ITT – considered by UNESCO as the world's richest biodiversity region – on the condition that the developed countries compensate it for its losses with half of the revenue it will fail to obtain by renouncing oil exploration.

A new social and economic common sense seems to be emerging to which the current financial, economic, energetic and environmental crises could lend a new credibility. In spite of significant progress in energy policy, Europe has not been able to affirm leadership in the global debate on sustainable development and on alternative development. Well-organized economic interests and their political leverage do their best to block these movements and the paradigmatic changes they point to. However, the trend seems irreversible and only needs a broader scope and international outlook and the political opportunity for social experimentation in order to become a central factor in the political agenda at the European level.

Healing

This is probably the most surprising domain of unlearning/learning to be undertaken by Europe in the world school. Throughout European history there abound conflicts, wars, rivalries, competitions, among nations that were eventually solved or overcome only after much suffering. Only in the WWII between 60 and 80 million people died; it was the deadliest conflict in human history. In spite of this, rarely were there attempts to heal the wounds of the past by other means than political arrangements that left untouched the underlying resentments, hurt feelings, painful emotions. No sustained attempts have ever been made at non-economic reparation and reconciliation. Reparation and reconciliation at the level of the soul. European inter-politics has always been the focus, not European inter-subjectivity. The immediate period after WWII is particularly illustrative in this respect. Shortly after the war, the European priority tirelessly pursued by Churchill was organizing a defense against the new enemy, Stalin, an artificial European Union built upon ruins, a 'cold war' zealot, delivering its security to the US global interests. It was all about politics and economics; the culture and the soul were left to each country to deal with.

The current crisis, no matter how it will be solved, and even assuming that it will be solved in the most auspicious way, will leave behind a cultural trauma of great magnitude, the trauma caused by a sudden transformation: the friendly neighborhood that the EU once seem to be turned, in a matter of months, into a prison house filled with ghosts of the past, a fast transition from a political model based on equal partners to a model of master states and client states, from commonly agreed rules to imposed conditionalities and double standards, from the glorification of European values to an exclusionary rhetoric at times with racist undertones. This trauma is not just economic or political. It is cultural and will last for generations to come. In order to minimize its repercussions, Europe should engage in another instance of unlearning/learning with the world, in this case, by taking seriously the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions that in South Africa and in several Latin American countries sought to heal the wounds caused by an authoritarian recent past. The European situation is different but not completely unrelated. It will be incumbent on

a new European wide pedagogy to convince the youth of southern Europe, half of it unemployed and unemployable in the near future, that they are not a lost generation and that they are as European as the other youth of the rest of Europe. Economic solidarity is, of course, crucial to overcome the current crisis, but even more crucial and far-reaching is non-economic solidarity. If, once the crisis is over, European politics will be reduced to budgetary policing and monitoring, it may well succeed in preserving the European Union, but the soul of Europe will be lost for a very long time.

Conclusion

I argue in this paper that Europe either engages in a vast process of unlearning/learning with the global South or is condemned to fall back into its highly problematical internal dissention and rivalry which, in the not so distant past, led to the most tragic consequences. It will be a difficult endeavor, given the centuries-old inclination of Europe to look at the outside world as an object of domination rather than as a partner for mutually enriching cooperation. While this is difficult, it is not totally impossible, if the conditions put forward in this paper are taken into consideration. I do not defend a Eurocentric institutional reconstruction of Europe along the lines proposed by Habermas (2012). As magnificent as he is as a scholar, Habermas cannot conceive of the possibility of learning from the global South. As for me, on the contrary, I submit that it is in such learning, in the intercultural possibilities it opens for a vast process of democratizing democracy in Europe, that the key for the only new vision of Europe worth fighting for lies.

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A tray made by Ernesto Rossi that from the island of Ventotene and the detainees, 1940.

The Manifesto of Ventotene (1941)

By Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi

I – The crisis of modern civilization

Modern civilization has taken as its specific foundation the principle of liberty which says that man is not a mere instrument to be used by others but that every man must be an autonomous life centre. With this definition in hand, all those aspects of social life that have not respected this principle have been placed on trial in the grand, historical process that has begun.

(1) The equal right shared by all nations to be organized into independent states has been recognized. All peoples, defined by ethnic, geographic, linguistic and historical characteristics, were to find, within the state organization created according to its own particular concept of political life, that instrument best suited for satisfying its own needs independent of any outside intervention. The ideology of national independence was a powerful stimulus for progress. It helped overcome narrow-minded parochialism with a sense of the vaster solidarity against foreign oppression. It eliminated many of the obstacles that hindered the circulation of people and merchandise. It extended within the territory of each new state the institutions and systems of more advanced societies to those populations which had remained undeveloped. It also brought with it, however, the seeds of capitalist imperialism which our own generation has seen expand to the point of forming totalitarian states and to the unleashing of world wars.

No longer is the "nation" considered to be the historical product of the communities of man that, as the result of a lengthy process of increasing similarities of custom and aspiration, find their state to be the most efficacious form of organizing collective life within the framework of the entire human society. It has, instead, become a divine entity, an organism that has to consider only its own existence, its own development, without the least regard for the damage this might cause to others.

The absolute sovereignty of national states has given each the desire to dominate, since each one feels threatened by the strength of the others, and considers as its living space an increasingly vast territory wherein it will have the right of free movement and can ensure itself of the means of a practically autonomous existence. This desire to dominate cannot be placated except by the predominance of the strongest state.

As a consequence of all this, from guardian of civil liberty, the state was transformed into the master of vassals bound into servitude, and it held within its power all the faculties needed to achieve the maximum war-efficiency. Even during peacetimes, considered to be pauses during which to prepare for subsequent, inevitable wars, the

military class predominates by now in many countries over civilian society. Expressions of civil policy, therefore, such as schools, research, productivity, administrations, function with difficulty and are mainly directed towards increasing military strength. Women are considered merely as producer of soldiers and are awarded prizes in much the same way as they are awarded to prolific cattle. From the very earliest age, children are taught to handle weapons and to hate what is foreign. Individual liberty is reduced to practically nought since everyone is part of the military establishment and constantly subject to recall in the armed forces. Repeated wars force men to abandon families, jobs, property, often demanding the ultimate sacrifice for reasons of which no one really understands the value. It takes just a few days to destroy the results of decades of common effort made to increase general well-being.

The totalitarian states are those that have most consistently achieved the unification of all forces, in effecting the greatest concentration and the highest degree of self-sufficiency. These are the organizations which have proved to be most suited to the current international environment. If even one nation moves a step towards a more accentuated totalitarianism, it is followed immediately by the others, drawn through the very same furrow by their will to survive.

(2) The equal right of all citizens to participate in the formation of the intentions of the State has been recognized. This was to have been the synthesis of the freely expressed changeable economic and ideological needs of all the social categories. A like political organization has allowed for the correction or at least the minimizing of many of the most jarring injustices inherited from previous regimes. But freedom of the press, of assembly and the extension of suffrage, made the defence of old privileges increasingly difficult, while maintaining a representative system of government.

Those who owned nothing slowly learned to use these instruments to battle for the rights acquired by the privileged classes. Taxes on unearned income and on inheritances, increasing duties to be paid on increasingly large incomes, tax exemptions for low incomes and on prime necessities; free public schooling; increased social security spending; land reforms; control of factories and of manufacturing plants — these were threats to the privileged classes in their well-fortified citadels.

Even the privileged classes who had consented to the equality of political rights, could not accept the fact that the under-privileged took advantage of this in order to achieve economic and social equality in fact as well as word, and that would have lent concrete significance to the liberty these rights promised. After the end of the First World War, the threat became too serious; it was only natural that certain classes warmly approved and sustained the installation of dictatorship. Legal weapons were thus struck from the hands of popular adversaries.

On the other hand, the formation of gigantic industrial and banking groups, and of trade organizations bringing together whole armies of workers; groups and unions pressuring the government to obtain that policy which most clearly responded to their

particular interests, threatened to dissolve the very state into so many economic baronies bitterly fighting among themselves. Liberal, democratic instruments became the tools these groups used to exploit all of society even more, losing the prestige they had had. In this way, the conviction took hold that only a totalitarian state, in which individual liberties were also abolished, could somehow resolve the conflicts of interest that existing political institutions were unable to control.

In fact, then, the totalitarian regimes consolidated, generally speaking, the various social categories at those levels they had reached a bit at a time; using police control of every aspect of each citizen's life, and through the violent silencing of all dissenting voices, these regimes barred every legal possibility of further correction of the actual state of conditions. This ensured, then, the existence of a thoroughly parasitic class of landowners who contributed to social productivity only by cutting the coupons off their stocks; the monopoly holders and the chain stores that exploit the consumers and volatise the sums set apart by small investors; the plutocrats hidden behind the scenes pulling strings on the politicians and running the machinery of the State for their own, exclusive advantage, behind the appearance of higher national interests. The colossal fortunes of a very few have been preserved, and the misery of the masses as well, excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of modern culture. Another expression has been preserved substantially in the economic regime in which material reserves and labour, that ought to be applied to the satisfaction of fundamental needs for the development of vital human energies, are instead addressed to the satisfaction of the most futile wishes of those capable of paying the highest prices; an economic regime in which, through the right of inheritance, the power of money is perpetuated in the same class, and is transformed into a privilege without any correspondence to the social value of the services rendered. The field of proletarian possibilities is thus reduced, and in order to make a living, workers are often forced to accept exploitation by anyone who offers a job.

In order to keep the working classes immobilized and subjugated, the trade unions have been transformed from the free organizations of struggle that they were, directed by individuals who enjoyed the trust of their associates, into police surveillance organs run by employees chosen by the ruling class and responsible only to them. If improvements are made in this economic regime, it is simply and solely dictated by the needs of militarism, that has joined with the reactionary ambitions of the privileged classes in giving rise to and strengthening totalitarian states.

(3) The permanent value of the spirit of criticism has been asserted against authoritarian dogmatism. Everything affirmed must have reason in itself, or it must disappear. The greatest conquests our society has made in every field are due to the methodicalness of this unbiased attitude. But this spiritual liberty did not survive the crises created by the totalitarian states. New dogmas to be accepted like articles of faith, or to be accepted hypocritically, are taking over all fields of Knowledge.

Albeit no one knows what race is, and the most elementary notions of history emphasize the absurdity of the statement, physiologists are held to believe, demonstrate and convince that one belongs to a chosen race – simply because this myth is needed by imperialism to excite the masses to hate and pride. The most evident concepts of economic science must be anathema if the autarchic policy, balanced trade and other old stand- bys of mercantilism can be presented as extraordinary discoveries of our times. Because of the economic interdependence of all parts of the world, the vital space needed by any population which wants to maintain a living standard consonant with modern civilization, must be considered the entire globe. The pseudo- science of geo-politics has been created, however: it will demonstrate the consistency of the theory of living spaces, giving theoretical cover to the imperialist desire to overpower.

History is falsified in its essential data, in the interests of the ruling classes. The shadows of obscurantism newly threaten to suffocate the human spirit. The social ethic of liberty and equality is undermined. Men are no longer considered free citizens who can use the State in order to reach collective purposes. They are, instead, servants of the State, which decides their destinies, and behind the will of the State is masked the will of those who hold the power. Men are no longer the subjects of law; arranged hierarchically they are expected to obey without discussion all their superiors, culminating in a suitably deified Chief. The caste regime is born, arrogant, out of its own ashes.

This reactionary, totalitarian civilization, after having triumphed in a series of countries, finally found, in Nazi Germany, the power that was thought to be capable of drawing the final consequences. Its victory would mean the final consolidation of totalitarianism in the world. All its characteristics would be exasperated to the greatest degree, and progressive forces would be condemned for long years to the role of simple opposition.

The traditional arrogance and intolerance of the German military classes can give us an idea of what the character of their dominance would have been like, after a victorious war. Victorious Germans might even concede five years of generosity towards other European peoples, formally respecting their territories and their political institutions, in this way satisfying the false sentiment of patriotism of those who consider the colours of the boundary fence, and the nationality of the politicians in the forefront; and instead it is the ratio of power and the effective content of state organs, that warrant attention. However camouflaged, the reality is always the same: a new division of humanity into Spartans and Athenians.

Even a compromise solution between the two sides in battle would be one more step ahead for totalitarianism. All those countries which had eluded Germany's grasp would be forced to adopt its same forms of political organization, in order to be adequately prepared for the next war.

Hitler's Germany, however, did succeed in felling the minor states one by one, and this action forced increasingly powerful forces to join battle. The courageous fighting spirit of Great Britain, even in that most critical moment when it faced the enemy alone, was the cause that brought the Germans to collide against the valiant resistance of the Red Army, and gave America the time it needed to mobilize its boundless productive resources. And this struggle against German imperialism is closely linked to that of the Chinese people against Japanese imperialism.

Immense masses of men and wealth are already drawn up against totalitarian powers whose strength has already reached its peak: at this point it can only gradually consume itself. The opposing forces, instead, have already overcome their worst moment and are now on the way up.

The war of the allies awakens more forcefully each day the desire for liberation, even in those countries which had submitted to violence and had lost their way due to the blow they received. And even in the very Axis populations this desire has been re-awakened: they realize they have been dragged into a desperate situation, simply to satisfy the lust for power of their rulers.

The slow process, thanks to which enormous masses of men passively let themselves be formed by the new regime, adjusted to it and even contributed to its consolidation, has come to a halt. And the opposite process has begun. Within this immense wave, slowly gathering momentum are included all the progressive forces, the most enlightened groups of the working classes that have not let themselves be swayed, either by terror or by flattery, from their ambition to achieve a better quality of living; it included as well the more aware elements of the intellectual classes, offended by the degradation of human intelligence; businessmen and investors who, feeling they are capable of new initiatives, want to free themselves of the trappings of bureaucracy and national autarchy, that encumber their every movement; and all those others who, due to an innate sense of dignity, cannot bend before the humiliation of servitude.

Today, the salvation of our civilization is entrusted to these forces.

II – Post-war duties – European unity

Germany's defeat would not automatically lead to the reformation of Europe according to our ideal of civilization.

In the brief, intense period of general crises (during which the fallen governments lie broken, during which the popular masses anxiously await a new message and are, meanwhile, like molten matter, burning, susceptible to being poured into new moulds, capable of welcoming the guidance of serious internationalists), the classes which were most privileged under the old national systems will attempt, underhandedly or violently, to quench the thirst, the sentiments, the passions groping towards interna-

tionalism, and they will ostentatiously begin to reconstruct the old, state organs. And it is probable, that the English leaders, perhaps in agreement with the Americans, will attempt to push things in this direction, in order to restore the policy of the balance of power, in the apparent and immediate interests of their empires.

The conservative forces, that is: the directors of the fundamental institutions of the national states; the top- ranking officers in the armed forces up to, where it applies, the sovereign; the groups of monopolistic capitalists who have bound their profits to the fortunes of the states; the big landowners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who can expect their parasitical income only in a stable, conservative society; and following these, the interminable band of people who depend upon them or who are simply blinded by their traditional power. All these reactionary forces already sense the structure creaking, and are trying to save their skins. A collapse would deprive them in one blow of all the guarantees they have had up to now, and would expose them to attack by the progressive forces.

The revolutionary situation: old and new trends

The fall of the totalitarian regimes will have the sentimental meaning for entire populations as the coming of "liberty"; all restrictions will disappear and, automatically, complete freedom of speech and of assembly will reign supreme. It will be the triumph of democratic tendencies. These tendencies have countless shades and nuances, stretching from very conservative liberalism to socialism and anarchy. They believe in the "spontaneous generation" of events and institutions, in the absolute goodness of impulses from the lower classes. They do not want to force the hand of "history", or "the people", or "the proletariat", or whatever other name they give their God. They hope for the end of dictatorships, imagining this as the restitution to the people of their inalienable rights to self-determination. Their crowning dream is a constitutional assembly, elected by the broadest suffrage and with the most scrupulous respect of the rights of the electors, who must decide upon the constitution they want. If the population is immature, the constitution will not be a good one; but it can be corrected only through constant efforts of persuasion.

The democratic factions do not deny violence on principle: but they wish to use it only when the majority is convinced of its being indispensable, that is, when it is little more than an almost superfluous "dot" over the "i". They are, then, useful leaders only in times of ordinary administration, during which the population is generally convinced of the validity of the fundamental institutions, and if they are to be modified, then only in relatively secondary aspects. During revolutionary times, when the institutions must not simply be administrated, but rather created, the democratic procedures fail clamorously. The pitiful impotence of the democratic faction during the Russian, German, Spanish revolutions are the three most recent examples. In these situations, once the old state apparatus has fallen, along with its laws and its administrations,

there is an immediate swarming of assemblies and popular delegations in which all the progressive socialist forces converge and agitate, either with the appearance of former legality, or scorning it. The population does have some fundamental needs to satisfy, but it does not know with precision what it wants or what to do. A thousand bells ring in its ears. With its millions of minds, it cannot orientate itself, and it breaks up in a number of tendencies, currents and factions, all struggling with one another.

In the very moment in which the greatest decisiveness and boldness is needed, the democrats lose the way, not having the backing of spontaneous popular approval, but rather a gloomy tumult of passions. They think it their duty to form a consensus and they present themselves as exhortatory preachers, where instead there is a need for leaders to guide where they themselves know they are going. They miss chances that would be favourable to consolidating a new regime while they attempt to make certain bodies work immediately when a longer preparation is needed and they are in any case more suited to periods of relative tranquillity. They give arms to their adversaries who use them then for revolt. They represent, in their thousand tendencies, not the will for renewal, but the confused whims and desires found in every mind that, becoming paralysed, actually prepare the terrain for the growth of the reaction. Democratic political methods are a dead weight during revolutionary crises.

Bit by bit, as the democrats wear down their initial popularity as assertors of liberty by their endless polemics, and in the lack of any serious political and social revolution, the pre-totalitarian political institutions will inevitably be reconstituted, and the struggle will again develop following along the lines of the old class opposition.

The principle according to which the class struggle is the condition to which all political problems are reduced, has become the fundamental line especially among factory workers, and has given consistency to their politics, up to the point where fundamental institutions were not questioned. But this line becomes an instrument to isolate the proletariat, when the need to transform the entire social organization is imposed. The workers, educated in the classist system, cannot see beyond their particular class, or even category, claims, without worrying about how to connect these with the interests of the other social strata. Or they aspire to a unilateral dictatorship of the proletariat in order to achieve the utopistic collectivisation of all the material means of production, indicated by centuries of propaganda as the best cure for all evils. This policy attracts no other strata, except the workers, who thus deprive the other progressive forces of their support, or it leaves them at the mercy of the reaction cleverly organized to break up the worker movement.

Among the various proletarian tendencies, followers of the classist politics and of the collectivist ideal, the Communists early recognized the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient following to assure victory. They therefore transformed themselves — unique among the other popular parties — into a rigidly disciplined movement. It has

exploited the Russian myth in order to organize the workers, but it does not accept their word as law and it does utilize the workers in the most disparate manoeuvres.

This attitude makes the Communists, during revolutionary crises, more efficient than the democrats. But their maintaining the workers separate as much as they can from the other revolutionary forces – by preaching to them that their "real" revolution is yet to come – turns them into a sectarian element which, in decisive moments, weakens the sum of the progressive forces. Besides this, their absolute dependence upon the Russian State, which has repeatedly used them in pursuing its national policies, impedes this Party from undertaking political activity with continuity. They always need to hide behind a Karoly, a Blum, a Negrin, and then to go along towards ruination with the democratic puppets that had been used. Power is attained and is maintained, not simply through cunning, but with the capacity of responding to the needs of modern society in an organic and vital manner.

If the struggle were to remain limited by the traditional national boundaries, it would be very difficult to avoid the old uncertainties. The national states, in fact, have so deeply planned their respective economies, that the main question would soon be which economic group, that is, which class, ought to handle the controls of the plan. The progressive front would be quickly shattered in the brawl between economic classes and categories. The most probable result is that the reactionaries would benefit more than anyone else.

A real revolutionary movement must rise from among those who have known how to criticize old, political statements; it must know how to collaborate with democratic and with Communist forces as well as with all those who work for the break-up of totalitarianism, without becoming ensnared by the political practices of any of these.

The reactionary forces have capable men and officers who have been trained to command and who will fight ruthlessly to preserve their supremacy. When it is necessary, they will call themselves the lovers of liberty, of peace, of general well-being, of the poorer classes.

The point they will seek to exploit is the restoration of the national state. Thus they will be able to grasp that most widespread of popular sentiments, most deeply offended by recent events, most easily utilized for reactionary purposes: the patriotic sentiment. In this way they can also hope to confuse their adversaries' ideas more easily, since for the popular masses, the only political experience acquired up to this time has been within the national context, and it is therefore fairly easy to converge them and their more short-sighted leaders into the terrain of the reconstruction of the states felled by the tempest.

If this purpose were to be reached, the reaction would have won. In appearance, these states might well be broadly democratic and socialistic; it would only be a question of time before power returned in the hands of the reactionaries. National jealousies would again develop, and the state would again express its satisfaction

at its own existence in its armed strength. In a more or less brief space of time the most important duty would be to convert populations into armies. Generals would again command, the monopoly holders would again draw profits from autarchy, the bureaucracy would continue to swell, the priests would keep the masses docile. All the initial conquests would shrivel into nothing, in comparison to the necessity of once more preparing for war.

The question which must first be resolved, and if it is not then any other progress made up to that point is mere appearance, is that of the abolition of the division of Europe into national, sovereign states. The collapse of the majority of the states of the continent under the German steamroller has already placed the destinies of the European populations on common ground: either all together they will submit to Hitler's dominion, or all together they will enter a revolutionary crisis after his fall, and they will not find themselves adamantly distinct in solid, state structures. The general spirit today is already far more disposed than it was in the past to a federal reorganization of Europe. The hard experience of the last decades has opened the eyes even of those who would not see, and has matured many circumstances favourable to our ideal.

All reasonable men recognize that it is impossible to maintain a balance of power among European states with militarist Germany enjoying equal conditions, nor can Germany be broken up into pieces once it is conquered. We have seen a demonstration that no country within Europe can stay on the sidelines while the others battle: declarations of neutrality and non-aggression pacts come to nought. The uselessness, even harmfulness, of organizations like the League of Nations has been demonstrated: they pretend to guarantee an international law without a military force capable of imposing its decisions respecting the absolute sovereignty of the member states. The principle of non-intervention turned out to be absurd. According to it each population was left free to choose the despotic government it thought best, as if the constitution of each of the single states were not a question of vital interest for all the other European nations. The multiple problems which poison international life on the continent have proved to be insoluble: tracing boundaries through areas inhabited by mixed populations, defence of alien minorities' seaports for landlocked countries, the Balkan Question, the Irish problem, and so on. All matters which would find easy solutions in the European Federation. Just as corresponding problems, suffered by the small states which became part of a vaster national unity, lost their harshness as they were transformed into problems regarding relationships among various provinces.

On the other hand, the end of the sense of security which an unassailable Great Britain inspired, the England which advised "splendid isolation"; the disbanding of the French army and the disintegration of the Republic at the first serious collision with the German forces (a result which, it is hoped, has lessened the chauvinistic attitude of absolute Gallic superiority); and particularly the risk of total enslavement. These are all circumstances that favoured the constitution of a federal regime, placing an

end to current anarchy. And the fact that England had accepted the principle of Indian independence; and that France had potentially lost its entire empire in recognizing defeat at the hands of the German army, make it easier to find a basis of agreement for a European arrangement of colonial possessions.

To all of this must be added the disappearance of some of the most important dynasties, and the fragility of the bases which sustain the ones that survive. It must be taken into account that these dynasties, in considering the various countries as their own traditional perquisites, together with the powerful interests backing them, represented a serious obstacle to the rational organization of the United States of Europe, which can only be based on the republican constitution of the federated countries. And, once the horizon of the Old Continent is passed beyond, and all the peoples who make up humanity embrace in a grand vision of their common participation, it will have to be recognized that the European Federation is the single conceivable guarantee that relationships with American and Asiatic peoples can exist on the basis of peace cooperation; this while awaiting a more distant future, when the political unity of the entire globe becomes a possibility.

The dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer follows the formal line of greater or lesser democracy, or of more or less socialism to be instituted; rather the division falls along the line, very new and substantial, that separates the party members into two groups. The first is made up of those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle is the ancient one, that is, the conquest of national political power – and that, although involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again. The second are those who see as the main purpose the creation of a solid international state; they will direct popular forces towards this goal, and having won national power, use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity.

With propaganda and action, seeking to establish in every possible way the agreements and links among the single movements which are certainly being formed in the various countries, the foundation must be built now for a movement that knows how to mobilise all forces for the birth of the new organism which will be the grandest creation, and the newest, that has occurred in Europe for centuries; in order to constitute a steady federal state, that will have at its disposal a European armed service instead of national armies; to break decisively economic autarchies, the backbone of totalitarian regimes; that it will have sufficient means to see that its deliberations for the maintenance of common order are executed in the single federal states, while each state will retain the autonomy it needs for a plastic articulation and development of a political life according to the particular characteristics of the people.

If a sufficient number of men in European countries understand this, then victory is shortly to be in their hands, because the situation and the spirit will be favourable

to their work. They will have before them parties and factions that have already been disqualified by the disastrous experience of the last twenty years. It will be the moment of new action, it will also be the moment of new men: the MOVEMENT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE.

III – Post-war duties – Social reform

A free and united Europe is the necessary premise to the strengthening of modern civilization, for which the totalitarian era represented a standstill. The end of this era will immediately revive in full the historical process of the struggle against social inequalities and privileges. All the old conservative structures which hindered this process will have collapsed or will be in a state of collapse. This crisis must be exploited with decision and courage.

In order to respond to our needs, the European revolution must be socialist, that is it must have as its goal the emancipation of the working classes and the realization for them of more humane living conditions. The orientation to be chosen for the steps to take must not, however, depend solely on the purely doctrinaire principle which states that the private ownership of the material means of production must, as a general rule, be abolished, and that it can be tolerated only temporarily when there is no other choice to be made. The general state control of the economy was the first, utopistic, form in which the working classes imagined their liberation from the yoke of capitalism. Once it was achieved, however, it did not produce the hoped for results; on the contrary, a regime came into existence in which the entire population was subject to a restricted cell of bureaucrats who ran the economy.

The truly fundamental principle of socialism, in which the general collectivisation was nothing more than a hurried and erroneous deduction, is the principle which states that the economic forces must not dominate man, but rather – as for the forces of Nature – they must be subject to man, guided and controlled by him in the most rational way, so that the broadest strata of the population will not become their victims.

The gigantic forces of progress that spring from individual interests must not be slaked by the grey dullness of routine. Otherwise, the same insoluble problem will arise: how to stimulate the spirit of initiative using salary levels and other provisions of the same kind. The forces of progress must be extolled and extended, they must find increasing ranges for development and utilization; at the same time, the barriers which must guide these forces towards objectives of the greatest advantage for all of society, must be strengthened and perfected.

Private property must be abolished, limited, corrected, extended: instance by instance, however, not dogmatically according to principle. This guideline is easily inserted into the forces of forming a European economic life freed from the nightmares

of militarism or national bureaucracy. The rational solution must be used in place of the irrational, in the consciousness of the working classes as well. In an effort to describe in greater detail the content of this guideline, while pointing out that the convenience of each point of the programme, and the way it is to be effected, must always be judged in relationship to the premise by now accepted as indispensable: European unity, we would like to emphasize the following aspects:

(a) Those enterprises which conduct a necessarily monopolistic activity, and that are therefore in the condition to exploit the mass of consumers, must no longer be left in the hands of private ownership; the electricity industries, for example, or those industries which must be maintained for the common good but that, in order to survive, need customs protection, subsidies, preferential orders, etc. (the most visible example of this kind in Italy is the steel industry); those enterprises which, for the size of the capital investment and the number of employed workers, or for the importance of the sector involved, can blackmail various state organs, imposing upon them policies that would be advantageous to themselves (for example, the mining industries, banking institutes, arms manufacturers). In this field, nationalization must undoubtedly take place on a vast scale, bearing in no regard acquired rights.

(b) The characteristics private property has had in the past and the right of succession, have permitted the accumulation in the hands of a few, privileged members of society, of riches which, in a revolutionary crisis, would be opportune to distribute in an egalitarian manner, in order to eliminate parasitic classes and in order to give the workers the means of production that they need, so as to improve their economic conditions and help them reach greater independence. We can consider, that is, agrarian reform: distributing the lands directly to farmers, the number of landowners increases enormously; industrial reform which would extend ownership to the workers in sectors not nationalized, through cooperative management, employee profit sharing, etc.

(c) Youth is to be assisted with all the necessary provisions in order to reduce to a minimum starting positions in the long struggle ahead of them. In particular, the state schools ought to offer the effective possibilities of continuing studies up to the highest level to those who merit it, instead of only to the wealthy students; and it should prepare in each branch of study, trade schools, semi-professional schools for training in the liberal arts and sciences, a number of students corresponding to the market demand, so that on the average salaries are about the same for all the professional categories, even though within each category there may be differences, depending upon individual capacities.

(d) The almost unlimited potentiality of mass production of goods of prime necessity through modern technology, allow everyone to be guaranteed, at relatively low social cost, food, lodging, clothing and that minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity. Human solidarity turned towards those who succumb in the economic battle ought not, therefore, be shown with same humiliating forms of

charity that produce the very same evils it vainly attempts to remedy. Rather it must take a series of measures which unconditionally guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone, without lessening the stimulus to work and to save. In this situation, no one would any longer be forced by misery to accept unfair work contracts.

(e) The working classes can be liberated only after those conditions described above are fulfilled. These classes must not be left at the mercy of the economic policies of monopolistic trade unions which simply translate into the working world the same overpowering methods of big capital. The workers must once again be free to choose their own emissaries in collective bargaining sessions defining the conditions under which they will agree to work, and the state must give them the legal means to guarantee the observation of the terms agreed to. All monopolistic tendencies can be efficaciously opposed once these social transformations have been achieved.

These are the changes needed to create a broad group of citizens interested in the new order and willing to struggle for its preservation, and for the purpose of giving the solid stamp of liberty to political life, imbuing it with a strong sense of social solidarity. With these bases, political liberties can truly have a concrete meaning; not simply a formal one, and for everybody, since the mass of citizens will be independent, and will have sufficient knowledge to be able to exert continuous and efficacious control over the governing class.

It would be superfluous to dwell at length on the constitutional institutions; not knowing at this point, or being able to foresee, the conditions in which they will be drawn up and will have to regulate, we could do no more than repeat what has already been repeated – the need for representative bodies, the formation of the law, the independence of the magistracy that is to take the place of the present one for the impartial application of the laws handed down by higher authorities, the freedom of the press and of assembly in order that public opinion be enlightened and that all citizens have the possibility of effectively participating in the life of the state. Only two questions demand further and deeper definition because of their particular importance for our country in this moment: the relationship between Church and State; the quality of political representation.

(a) The Treaty which concluded the Vatican's alliance with Fascism in Italy must absolutely be abolished in order that the purely sectarian character of the state be asserted and defined and the supremacy of the state in civil matters be unequivocally determined. All religious faiths are to be equally respected, and the state must no longer strike the balance of religions.

(b) The house of cards that Fascism built with its corporativism will collapse together with the other aspects of the totalitarian state. There are those who hold that material for the new constitutional order can be salvaged from this wreck. We do not believe this. In totalitarian states, the corporative chambers are the crowning hoax of police control of the workers. Even if the corporative chambers were a sincere

expression of the will of the various categories of producers, the representative bodies of the various professional categories could never be qualified to handle questions of general policy. In more specifically economic matters, they would become organs for the accumulation of power and privilege by the categories having stronger union representation. The unions will have broad collaboration functions with state organs which are appointed to resolve those problems which regard these categories most directly, but it is absolutely excluded that they be given any legislative power, since this would create a kind of feudal anarchy in the economic life of the country, leading to renewed political despotism. Many of those who ingenuously were attracted by the myth of corporativism, can and should be attracted by the job of renewing structures of similar purpose. But they must realize the absurdity of the solution they might vaguely desire. Corporativism can only be concretely expressed in the form it was given by totalitarian states: to regiment the workers beneath leaders who controlled their every move in the interests of the ruling class.

The revolutionary party cannot be amateurishly organized in the moment of decision. It must start now to form at least its central political philosophy, its leaders and directors, the primary actions it will take. It must not represent a heterogeneous mass of tendencies, united merely negatively and temporarily, that is, united by their anti-Fascist past and the active expectation of the fall of the totalitarian regime, ready to go each its way once this goal has been reached. The revolutionary party knows that only then will begin its real work. It must therefore be made up of men who are in agreement on the main problems of the future.

Its methodical propaganda must penetrate everywhere where there are those oppressed by the present regime. It must use as its starting point those problems which are the source of greatest suffering to individuals and classes and show how these are connected with other problems, and what the real solution might be. But from this gradually increasing circle of sympathizers, only those who have identified and accepted the European revolution as the principle purpose of their lives are to be recruited into the movement. Day by day, with discipline, the work is to go on; its continuous and efficacious safety is to be provided secretly, even in those most dangerously illegal situations. Thus the more solid network of workers will be set up to give consistency to the more fragile sphere of sympathizers.

While not overlooking any occasion nor any sector in which to spread its cause, it must turn first and foremost to those environments which are the most important ones as centres for the circulation of ideas and as centres for the recruiting of aggressive men; primarily towards the two social groups which are most sensitive to the current situation and decisive for tomorrow's circumstances, that is, the working class and the intellectuals. The first is that which is least submitted to the totalitarian rod and that will most readily reorganize its ranks. The intellectuals, particularly the

younger among them, are those who are most spiritually suffocated and repulsed by the current despotism. Other classes will gradually be drawn into the movement.

Any movement which fails its duty to ally these forces is condemned to sterility. A movement made up of intellectuals alone will not have the strength it needs to overwhelm reactionary resistance, it will distrust and be distrusted by the working class; and even though it is animated by democratic sentiment, it will be prone to losing its hold before the difficulties present in the mobilisation of all other classes against the workers; that is, before the threatened restoration of Fascism. If, instead, the movement is backed only by the proletariat it will be deprived of the clarity of thought and expression which only the intellectual classes can furnish, and that is needed so that new roads and new duties be well defined; it will remain a prisoner of the former classism, it will see everyone as a potential enemy, and will slither towards the doctrinaire Communist solution.

During the revolutionary crisis, it is up to this movement to organize and guide progressive forces, utilizing for its purposes all the popular organs which form spontaneously as ardent crucibles in which the revolutionary masses are melted, not for the drawing up of plebiscites, but rather waiting to be guided. It derives the vision and security of what must be done not from a previous consecration of what is yet to be the popular conscience, but the knowledge of representing the deepest necessities of modern society. In this way it issues the initial regulations of the new order, the first social discipline directed to the unformed masses. This dictatorship by the revolutionary party will form the new state, and, surrounding this state will grow the new, genuine democracy.

There are no grounds for fearing that a similar revolutionary regime will develop into renewed despotism. This may develop if a servile society has been formed. But if the revolutionary party continues with determination from its very first action to create the conditions necessary for individual freedom, conditions under which all citizens can really participate in the life of the state, it will evolve towards increasing comprehension of the new order, even though moving through eventual and secondary political crises, and acceptance of it by the population. It will be growing, therefore, in the direction of increasing possibility of functioning, and of free political institutions.

The moment has arrived in which we must know how to discard old burdens, how to be ready for the new world that is coming, that will be so different from what we have imagined. Among the old, the inept must be put aside; and among the young, new energies are to be stimulated. At this time those who have perceived the reasons behind the present crisis in European civilization are seeking one another, and are beginning to string the loom upon which the future will be woven. Therefore, they are gathering the inheritance left by all those movements which worked to raise and enlighten humanity, and which failed because of their miscomprehension of the purpose to be achieved or the ways to achieve it.

The road to pursue is neither easy nor certain. But it must be followed and it will be!

Biographies

Prof. Dr. Elmar Altvater, until 2004 Professor for international political economy at the Free University Berlin, author of several books on economic, political, social and ecological aspects of globalisation. Member of the Euromemorandum group, of Attac and of the party DIE LINKE in Germany.

Bertrand Badie, born in 1950 in Paris, France, Professor of Political Science at l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, member of the advisory board of several journals such as the European Review of International Studies, the International Journal of Human Rights, Journal of International Relations and Development. He is a specialist in sociology of international relations.

Etienne Balibar, French philosopher, Professor Emeritus of moral and political philosophy at Université de Paris X – Nanterre and Professor Emeritus of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine. He also holds a part-time Anniversary Chair in Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University, London. He has published widely in the areas of epistemology, Marxist philosophy, and moral and political philosophy in general.

Aristides Baltas, born in 1943, is the Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Science at the National Technical University of Athens and M.P. from the Attica region. He has been a founding member of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), and had been appointed as the Minister of Culture and Sports of Greece, and as the Minister of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs, in the cabinet of Alexis Tsipras from 27th January 2015 to 4th November 2016.

Lubos Blaha, PhD, is a Slovak Marxist philosopher, political scientist and politician. Currently he is a member of parliament for the social-democratic SMER-SD party. He is the Chairman of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for European Affairs since 2012 and author of dozens of radical-left philosophical books and studies, e.g. Back To Marx? (2009), The Matrix of Capitalism – An Approaching Revolution? (2011) or The Antiglobalist (2018).

Prof. Dr. Peter Brandt, Professor for Modern History from 1989 until 2014 at the University of Hagen (FernUniversität Hagen). From 2003 until 2017 he was director of the interdisciplinary Dimitros-Tsatsos-Institute for European Constitutional Science. Author of various articles on European and German history of the 17th until the 20th century. Political publicist and editor of the online magazine www.globkult.de. Member of the Board of the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation. Member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Prof. Dr. Michael Brie is senior fellow at the Institute for Critical Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin in the field of history and theory of socialism and communism. He is chief-editor of the series Contribution to Critical Transformation Research. Most recent books are on Communism. The ghost does not rest (edited together with Lutz Brangsch) (Hamburg 2016), Karl Polanyi. A socialist thinker for our time (Hamburg 2016, Montreal 2017) and Rediscovering Lenin. Dialectics of revolution and metaphysics of dictatorship (Hamburg 2017, Moscow 2017) were published.

Luciana Castellina joined the Italian Communist Party in 1947. Excluded from the Communist Party in 1970. Together with some friends she founded afterwards 'Il Manifesto', a daily magazine that is still existing in Italy. She founded also the Party PdUP and was Member of the Italian and of the European Parliament between 1976 and 1999. Now she is member of the steering committee of Sinistra Italiana. She is a writer and has published several books (latest: 'Manuale antiretorico dell'UE', manifestolibri 2017).

Dimitris Christopoulos, born in 1969, is a Greek academic and activist. Elected President of the FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) in 2016, after having chaired the board of the Hellenic League for Human Rights, the biggest and oldest Greek human rights association for eight years (2003-2011). Christopoulos serves as an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and History of Panteion University in Athens. His academic publications, books and interventions reflect par excellence his activism as a public intellectual not only in the field of human rights.

Judith Dellheim studied political economy from 1973 until 1978, earning her PhD in 1983. She has worked in the foreign trade of the GDR. Since 1990, she has been working on economies of solidarity, on political parties and movements, and on economic policies. She has been a member of the Federal Board of the PDS from 1995 until 2003, a free-lance scientific consultant from 2004 until 2010, and senior researcher at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation since 2011.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Dörre, born in 1957, holds a chair for Sociology of Work, Economic and Industrial Sociology at the FSU Jena. He is one of the directors of the DFG-Research Group on Post-Growth Societies and is co-editor of the Berliner Journal für Soziologie (BJS) and Global Dialogue.

Yannis Dragasakis, born in 1947, is the Deputy Prime Minister of Greece. He has been a founding member of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), and was first elected as a Member of the Hellenic Parliament (MP) in 1989 for the Coalition of the Left. Between November 1989 and February 1990, he was appointed Alternate Minister of National Economy in the Cabinet of Xenophon Zolotas. Yannis Dragasakis has studied Politics and Economics in Greece and abroad.

Jean Pierre Dubois, 65 years old, Professor in Constitutional Law at South-Paris University (Paris-Sud), Honorary President of the French Human Rights League (LDH). Former Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR/FIDH).

Rainer Land, PhD, is a philosopher, economist and social scientist. He studied in the 1970s at the Humboldt University in Berlin (GDR) and was a research assistant at the Thünen Institute for Regional Development until 2017. His theoretical work is focusing on building blocks for an evolutionary social economics of the modern age, on ecological economics and functional problems of the Eurozone. Empirical research is available on industrial sociology topics, the energy transition and the functional and structural changes in agriculture and rural areas.

Gustave Massiah, Engineer and Economist, former professor at the Architectural school of Paris-La Villette, Member of the International Council of World Social Forum (representative of CRID), Former president of CRID (Center of research and information on development, coalition of 54 French associations for international solidarity), Founding member of CEDETIM (Center for Research and Initiatives for International Solidarity) and IPAM (Initiatives for another World) and of AITEC (International association of technicians, experts and researchers), former General Secretary of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of peoples.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Coimbra (Portugal), and Distinguished Legal Scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is Director of the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra.

Michalis Spourdalakis, born in 1954, is Professor of Political Sociology of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and Dean of the School of Economics and Politics at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He has served as Chair to the Hellenic Political Science Association (2010-2014). He is currently in the chair of the Hearings Committee on the Revision of the (Greek) Constitution.

Dr. Antje Vollmer, Politician, theologian and author. She was Member of the German Parliament from 1983-1990 and for three years Co-chair of the party 'Die Grünen' in the German Parliament. From 1994-2005 she was the Vice-President of the German Parliament. Currently she is working as a journalist for different newspapers and journals and as an author of books on contemporary history and history of the resistance against the Nazi regime in Germany.

Prof. Dr. Frieder Otto Wolf, **b**orn in 1943, teaches philosophy at the Freie Universität Berlin since 1973. From 1976 to 1977 was a lecturer on social theory at the University of Coimbra, Portugal; from 1984 to 1999 he represented the Greens in the European Parliament, from 1994 to 1999 as a MEP.

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Ventotene, a small island off the west coast of Italy, was Mussolini's internment camp for Italian antifascists. It was there, where Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni came with the vision of a unified and war-free Europe. In June 1941 the Ventotene Manifesto was finally agreed among the prisoners and, written on cigarette papers and concealed in the false bottom of a tin box, it was smuggled off the island.

Criticising the economy trying to escape from political regulation and democratic participation and becoming self-perpetuating, the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto set the foundations for the political battle against the totalitarian side of neoliberalism.

The cracks of the present EU have been the result of its current policy direction, where antagonism, austerity and isolation prevail over social justice, solidarity and integration. Where humanist values are abandoned.

Under these circumstances a critical re-appropriation of the Manifest of Ventotene is now more important than ever.

Autored by
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