

ANTI-FASCISM AND PRO-EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The end of the First World War favored in Italy a rethinking of its place in the European framework. This was true for both of the nationalism that would lead to fascist totalitarianism and of the revision and reworking initiated by liberal, democratic and socialist cultures and culminating in *Giustizia e Libertà* and democratic anti-fascism. In the period between the end of the conflict and the *Ventotene Manifesto*, the relationship between the global framework and the European framework, and between the latter and the Italian framework, was fine-tuned. Francesco Saverio Nitti, Luigi Einaudi, Giovanni Agnelli and Attilio Cabiati, Ugo La Malfa, Carlo Rosselli, Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni all contributed to this process. The Italian and European question thus became one of the central points of reflection. They laid the bricks that built an alternative to the nationalism of fascism on a continental level, resulting in the proposal of a federal Europe. The systematization proposed by these cultures would have influenced not a little in the definition of the European proposal by the Italian side and the contribution that derived in the achievements of the second postwar period.

Keywords: Fascism, Italian Democratic and Liberal Anti-Fascism, *Giustizia e Libertà*, Europeanism, Nationalism, European Federalism.

FOREWORD

In this paper I aim to analyse the evolution of the broad liberal, democratic and socialist spectrum, faced with the radical change in Europe after World War I. Europe is a key element of the Italian identity. As Giuliana Laschi has written, “Europeanism and federalism as structural elements of a part of Italian politics started at a cultural level already between the two

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wars”, with Luigi Einaudi and the movement *Giustizia e Libertà*.¹ Its cultures gradually focused on a project that took shape between the two wars and that resolved the European question (visible to all contemporary cultures) within a plural paradigm. In fact this project was at the basis of the idea of the unification of the old continent as a reality capable of assuming a different physiognomy corresponding to the reorganisation of the rapidly changing world. On the one hand, the idea of new features of post-war Europe was part of the global rethinking carried out by these cultures at a time when the prospect of democratic inclusion seemed weakened and lacking in appeal after the affirmation of the model based on the October Revolution. On the other hand, there was the totalitarian nationalism and the devastating crisis of the classical liberal paradigm that was fully manifested between the two wars.²

And yet, after the end of the Thirty Years’ War in the twentieth century,³ it was from that world that the proposals came and imposed themselves in governing globalisation. World War One war also regarded as the initial stage of the long civil war that swept through Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴ The defining elements of the civil war were caused precisely by the irreducible conflict over what Europe would look like after the carnage. An irreversible rupture with the past had taken place, and it had accelerated the processes of transformation. After all, from a global perspective the Great War was the first stage of that journey which, over the course of the century, would lead to the reduction and then the overcoming of what Kenneth Pomeranz defined as the ‘great divergence’.⁵ Europe was one of the many actors of the new global world that was taking shape. And this outcome was a source of worry at the time.

The years between the two wars, with the new forms of European civil war, were therefore a period of painful processing of the different perspectives and new scenarios in the old continent. One could even argue that Europe was the first to experience – both in the nation State and in the Empires that it had built up – the tragic inevitability of the alternatives that arose with the acceleration of global changes triggered by the Great War. The scenarios evolved radically, there were deep feelings of loss and disorientation; while in the meantime new and unprecedented experiments in political systems and geographical reconfigurations were taking place.

¹ LASCHI 2020: 27.

² POLANYI 1944; PATEL 2016.

³ MAYER 1981.

⁴ NOLTE 1987; MAYER 1990; TRAVERSO 2008.

⁵ POMERANZ 2000.

1. ITALY AND THE PATHS OF POST-WAR EUROPE

In the old continent, Italy was the first to face the possible alternatives that Europe would struggle with.⁶ Italy was a country in a unique condition. The upheaval of internal balances, due to the end of the phase during which the national statute was established, was accompanied by the perpetuation of the form of State and government.⁷ The country also exhibited Europe's dual condition: both victorious and defeated. Italy narcissistically resolved this new condition with the successful formula of mutilated victory. In the Italian peace, the celebration of the democratic defence of nationality coexisted with the aggressive nationalistic impulses of the myth of absolute sovereignty, as Einaudi put it. The Brenner border and the promise of Dalmatia set in the London Pact coexisted with the exaltation of Fiume's claims about being Italian. Reflections on the characteristics of post-war Europe and the poisonous nationalistic tale of the mutilated victory arose in Italy, as well as in the rest of the continent. These sentiments were one of the challenges that Europe had to face and risked being broken apart by, suspended between old impulses and new demands. They illustrated the initial shaping of a continent that could either use its plurality as the basis of a new and innovative order or let it be a driver of renewed nationalism based on the rise of mass politics. The result was a destructive aggression that eventually led to the death of what had survived the decisive blow of the Great War, amid countless painful torments.

The rethinking of Europe in terms of overcoming nationalism was developed by liberal and democratic cultures. It began with Woodrow Wilson's considerations in 1919 on the United States as the hope of the world. Since then, hypotheses of a peaceful and fruitful cohabitation of the European countries that had been torn apart during the Great War began to emerge. These initial reflections also developed in connection with the fact that in Italy, precisely because of the cohabitation of victory and defeat that I mentioned before, the totalitarian nationalist perspective⁸ was formalised for the first time and in the successive steps as a solution to the European crisis. The mutilated victory, i.e. the open wound caused by the gap between Italy's reality and aspirations, was therefore only a local manifestation of a more general European feeling.⁹ And the one as well as the other,

⁶ NERI SERNERI 2016.

⁷ MAIER 2012.

⁸ GENTILE 2008.

⁹ See MAZOWER 1998; KERSHAW 2015.

in their nationalistic nature, would inevitably bring to another devastating conflict in order to be resolved.

That myth had an extraordinary capacity to encapsulate the state of mind of large portions of the country, since it effectively expressed aspects that were undoubtedly present in the Italian reality of the time. The country appeared to be grappling with an eternal and unresolved chase and was constantly unhappy with its *de facto* conditions. The reasons for the collective dissatisfaction differed according to culture, class, and specific regional and local conditions, but they were rooted in a shared feeling of inadequacy, revealed precisely by the war and the post-war period. Italy was plunged into war not only without any experience of integration – a state of affairs that it shared with other European countries and above all with the defeated ones – but it also lacked political forms that were fully organised and homogeneously spread throughout the country, and thus unable to properly operate. In addition to the traditional ruling classes, democrats, and activists (according to Bellah's definition),¹⁰ there were also socialists and Catholics. The latter two appeared to be destined to lead the first post-war period after the universal male suffrage elections of November 1919.¹¹ However, in the circumscribed areas where these forms were present and clearly in the majority, they counted on an apparently total consensus, which contradictorily expressed and obscured the actual conditions of pluralism. In short, Italian pluralism was in its infancy, proof of the condition of separateness that the country was in. In comparison with the rest of the continent, Italian pluralism had so far been inadequate.

After the First World War, in Italy, the aspiration to lead society into a liberal democratic cohabitation was successfully opposed. The experiments of radical transformation were frightening, but only localised jolts. Instead, an entirely new and unprecedented political experience materialised, which made nationalism the input for the insertion of the demos into the nation. It was an unprecedented form of governance of national societies and of their projection onto the European and global stage. This new outcome of mass politics was compared by the most attentive analysts of the left – from the German communists to Antonio Gramsci¹² – to experiences of the recent past and more precisely to Bonapartism, in the concrete historical experience of Louis Bonaparte and the Second Empire. According to Carlo Rosselli, in the 1930s the Italian case was far from being a peripheral phenomenon of a backward country. On the contrary, it was

¹⁰ BELLAH 1974: 439-468.

¹¹ SALVADORI 1994.

¹² MANGONI 1976.

showing itself as a model capable of expanding into the heart of Europe and as a serious alternative to democratic systems.¹³

National-fascism contained something profoundly different at its core. It outlined the stabilisation of transformations that had already taken place, and did not prospect a new season of prosperity and expansion of new productive forces, what Hobsbawm called 'the Bourgeois world'.¹⁴ It was therefore the opposite of the latter. In fact, as Carlo Rosselli wrote on the eve of the Ethiopian war, "Mussolini and Crisis, and Mussolini and Misery have become synonyms".¹⁵

2. EUROPE IN THE REFLECTION OF LIBERAL AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL CULTURE

And yet, as mentioned above, the first political elaboration based on the need to cut the Gordian knot of absolute sovereignty came from the liberal and democratic cultures, who were in favour of the First World War. Giovanni Agnelli and Attilio Cabiati reflected on the political and institutional frameworks that could contain the accelerated processes of globalisation that came with the rise of industrial society. "The structure of a cosmopolitan society was being built regardless of the foundations",¹⁶ they wrote. They identified those foundations in the proposal for a European federation. Francesco Saverio Nitti, author of the most audacious political experiment to transform liberalism into a conflictual pluralist democracy in post-war Italy, carried out a worried reflection on the consequences of peace similar to that of John Maynard Keynes.¹⁷ Luigi Einaudi revealed the difficulty for political cultures to grapple with the consequences of the Great War and the transformations it had provoked. Perhaps this is also why his considerations remained a seed that didn't really flourish in the nationalistic totalitarianism context that Italy was the first to propose. Totalitarianism expanded into the heart of Europe and dragged the continent into a new paradigm. It seemed the most effective solution to the challenges of the time. A wider and reshaped Europe after the end of the central empires and the geopolitical changes coexisted with the persistence of national claims and with an initial sharing of the European rearrangement proposed by the national-fascists. In *Letters of Junius*, Einaudi drew atten-

¹³ ROSSELLI 1988; 1992.

¹⁴ HOBBSAWM 1975.

¹⁵ ROSSELLI 1992: 159

¹⁶ AGNELLI CABIATI 1995: 5.

¹⁷ KEYNES 1919; NITTI 1921; CANALE CAMA 2020.

tion for the first time to the need to overcome the myth of the sovereign state. This awareness of the development of global processes coexisted, however, with the practices that derived from that reality. This was shown by his support to the claim of Fiume, even though it was based on the affirmation of the principle of nationality.¹⁸

After World War Two, his vision changed significantly. He reiterated all the arguments that he had used between 1918 and 1919 to oppose the League of Nations as a possible solution due to the intangibility of absolute state sovereignty. On these foundations, the ‘ambitious empire’ of the Second Reich had tried to impose “European unity [...] by force”. But he added a new aspect. In 1943, he argued that this objective had also and above all been pursued by the Third Reich: “Hitler wanted to unify Europe by subjugating it”. If ‘that monstrous attempt’¹⁹ to *Griffnach der Weltmacht*²⁰ had “failed”, the “unification of Europe” in democratic and shared forms, even if they were not aware of it, was one of the Anglo-Saxons’ war aims. Italy, after its totalitarian experience and the catastrophe that followed, could only regain credibility if it closed its accounts with nationalism. As Einaudi wrote,

The only way forward for Italy is to return to the traditions of our Risorgimento as vindicators and defenders of a new unified Europe. The objective should not be to regain territories and promote so-called ‘national’ small material interests, but to restore a great moral position. In order to conquer the victors from a position of defeat, we must affirm stronger moral values than them.²¹

In the midst of the vacuum in which the country found itself, two opposing ways of dealing with the post-war reality had emerged. The country was frustrated in its search for security. In addition to the disappointing results of the peace treaties, forces that had wanted or opposed the war were rising tumultuously, leading to unprecedented social and political unrest. The first path Italy could take was seeking self-confidence, pursuing goals of self-sufficiency and launching a silent counter-offensive against Versailles. The second path, on the contrary, acknowledged the growing global interrelationships between the different parts of the world, and at the same time the need to bring to a definitive end the structures of power and mentalities of the old regime. For Einaudi, on a European level the latter were exemplified by the sense of danger that had accompanied the

¹⁸ EINAUDI 1920.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 38.

²⁰ FISCHER 1961.

²¹ EINAUDI 2001: 38.

Hohenzollern dynasty. In fact, the dynasty was the bearer of the “idea that the ‘chosen’ people have the right to live freely, have its colonialist place in the sun without depending on the will of any other people, and without reaching agreements and transactions with them”.²² The fall of the Hohenzollern dynasty would have been sufficient to bring about a stable peace and to take the next step of acknowledging the growing interrelationships. This could have been the starting point for a new geopolitical conformation of Europe, and new methods and institutions to organise the growing interdependence generated by the structural transformations that had made the need for new forms of integration more pressing in the economy, politics and society. As Einaudi wrote, “only free nations will be able to bind themselves mutually in order to guarantee to themselves, as parts of a superior state body, security against the attempts at hegemony. In the present international anarchy, the strongest state is invincibly drawn by the deadly dogma of absolute sovereignty”.²³

The expectations and certainties of 1918 and early 1919, however, clashed with the liveliness of neo-nationalism. In the Italian case, not only was the monarchy fully involved with it. The House of Savoy, like the Hohenzollerns, fell prey to the sense of danger and emptiness that the collapse of the monarchies of continental Europe had generated and exacerbated, as Carlo Morandi observed in 1945.²⁴ However, the various liberal circles were also affected. Even those who had regarded the fracture between yesterday’s world and the present caused by the war as a need for an institutional arrangement of growing transnational and global interdependence, initially mistook the apparent heterogeneity of the fascist movement and nationalism as an effective way to restore liberalism. In a sense, it was seen as a very useful tool to solve the social and political dilemmas of the new times. At the time, some thought that there could be a potential cohabitation between new continental structures, based on institutional realities that went beyond the absolute sovereignty of the states, and the new totalitarian nationalism, which made of absolute sovereignty its unquestionable dogma. In this way, it was believed that it would be possible to rebuild the foundations that the war itself had irreparably shattered. So Einaudi’s thinking in the following years appeared to be completely detached from the reality that, starting from Italy, seemed not only to predominate, but even to give meaning to the post-war world. In fact, in his struggle “against the Leviathan State” and the “myth of the

²² EINAUDI 1920: 111-125.

²³ *Ibid.*: 33.

²⁴ MORANDI 1945: 103-105.

sovereign State”²⁵ – one could say the Charles Maier’s *Leviathan 2.0*²⁶ –, Einaudi resumed and refined his reflections of the first post-war period. Only with the defeat of fascism they did appear realistic.

The cultures that after the Great War more openly immersed themselves in the fully democratic dimension that opened up, not without lacerating contrasts, emerged. As already observed on several occasions, in order to fight the rise of fascism, which aimed at exalting the ‘total’ in support of nationalist objectives, anti-fascists opposed the richness of the ‘plural’ and the inevitable supranational consequences that derived from it. For fascists, the national-fascist flare-up was the solution to the questions that the war had opened up. For anti-fascists, global conformation – in this sense the very different judgement on the potential of the League of Nations was paradigmatic – was closely intertwined with the ways, procedures and practices of the internal organisation of national societies.

One might say that for the first time there was a proper reflection on Italy’s European projection. This could be attributed to the transformations that the Great War had accelerated but that were not fully perceptible apart from being a new social articulation that was more complex and conscious than in the past, as Renzo De Felice observed many years ago with regard to the rising fascist movement.²⁷ Italy’s European projection was regarded by the anti-fascists as one of the foundations of multiplicity, plurality and the healthy conflict that would derive from it. Moreover, it could contribute to overcoming national borders, given that those cultures reflected the internal rootedness of European political cultures. In fact, those transformations reflected the perspective of Italy’s integration in a wider area. It is also true, however, that this inevitable outcome, which certified the not yet visible intertwining between Italy and Europe was a point of arrival, not a reality. In the face of the strength of nationalism, from Giovanni Amendola’s contemporary reflections transpires the awareness that such a maturation would take years, if not decades, and above all would pass through terrible trials. It was, however, a sowing that in the democratic field germinated and flourished.

In Giovanni Amendola’s newspaper *Il Mondo*,²⁸ a very young Ugo La Malfa – a pupil of Silvio Trentin,²⁹ an antifascist and federalist professor, exiled in France during the fascist dictatorship –, also discussed this issue.

²⁵ EINAUDI 2001: 96-100; 201-211.

²⁶ MAIER 2012.

²⁷ DE FELICE 1975.

²⁸ SARUBBI 1998²; CAPONE 2013.

²⁹ MALANDRINO 2007; CORTESE 2016.

A few months before the exceptional laws of 1926, he was convinced of the European scope of the Italian Fascist experience. It gave new culture, new motivation and new goals to nationalism. In this sense, fascism was a European fact because it offered Europe a vision and a strategy that not only soothed its wounds, but gave it a renewed perspective. This vision emerged first on a national level, and then it was reflected more generally in the old continent, threatened by the new economic and political realities. Of course, insisting on this ground, which – wrote La Malfa – had already offered a “miserable failure” during the world conflict, “would have been simply crazy”, given that “on the European battlefields an increasingly serious crisis of impoverishment and decadence would have originated”. Hence the hopeful expectation: the League of Nations and the mechanism for depleting national sovereignty of its *Covenant* could be the way forward for another Europe to establish itself rather than the one dominated by nationalism. Democracy and socialism, European bourgeoisie and proletariat could have found “a fertile ground for struggles and new social conquests”.³⁰

3. THE RADICAL RETHINKING OF CARLO ROSSELLI

Less than ten years later, hopes of the power of the League of Nations had been completely crushed, and the countries building a new form of national-imperialism were detaching themselves from it. The European civil war was entering a new phase to determine ways of being together.

Carlo Rosselli’s work contained a radical rethinking of political culture in the light of the new reality of totalitarianism. The complex problems of Europe, which was enveloped by the change of its geopolitical condition and by the different consequences and reactions to the irruption of the masses, had led to alternative responses to that of the democrats, who had to take into account the deep divisions. Social revolution, political totalitarianism, revision of democratic and socialist cultures on a global rather than merely continental level, and also a rethinking of national logic in the new world were all themes that innervated the profound attempt to revise socialist and democratic culture put forward by Carlo Rosselli.

He was often poorly understood even by some of his followers due to its intellectual and especially political unscrupulousness. In this lies his originality, that is in founding the *Giustizia e Libertà* movement/party of European anti-fascism and what from that experience, intertwined with

³⁰ LA MALFA 1988: 9-12; SODDU 2008.

similar and autonomous changes triggered by global transformations, later became the Partito d'Azione. In this sense they were the Italian contribution to the European crisis. Politically, it constituted an alternative response to the dilemmas posed by totalitarianism. Precisely for this reason, it had a predominant role in the elaboration of a new European sensibility, capable of going beyond its own culture and entering into broader areas.

Giustizia e Libertà was therefore the movement of anti-fascism, just as the Partito d'Azione was the party of the Resistance.³¹ But if we want to go beyond slogans and seductive suggestions to try to understand the history of two political realities so closely intertwined, we must comprehend that anti-fascism, as well as the Resistance, were not mere ideological clubs directed against opponents, but decisive components of a project that expressed a specific and defined political culture, developed in the country that first shaped the national-fascist response to the dilemmas of its time. And, like all contemporary political cultures, it was capable of escaping the limits of the organisational forms it assumed, which responded to the contingencies of the time. On the contrary, it expressed a vision, sensitivity, mental schemes, hypotheses, values, symbols and myths of a longer period. In this sense, the political culture of Giustizia e Libertà and Partito d'Azione not only both survived beyond their time, but also expressed a well-defined and specific ruling class. Like all political forces they responded to the most diverse needs of their time, but at the same time they expressed and elaborated a new political culture, the fundamental feature of which was a full and complete secularisation, which marked the entire twentieth century. Rosselli countered the narcissistic flattery of ideology by contrasting the naked reality of things, and with a secularised and even experimental method he endeavoured to grasp the deeper meaning that lived beyond the deceptive surface of the world established by ideologies. In this sense, Rosselli in the 1930s was able to look beyond the triumphant nationalism and the European prospects it contained. He strove without prejudice to outline another perspective that would have paved the way to safeguard its existence from Europe and which differed from that unconditional war on racist totalitarian nationalism.

In January 1935, according to Carlo Rosselli it had taken on the physiognomy of a “total opposition” between “the totalitarian fascist state, on the one hand, and universalism, human society, on the other”.³² He wrote on March 22 that “the unification of Europe, if it happens, will be done with the same methods with which national unities were made: revolutions, and

³¹ BRESCIANI 2017; DE LUNA 2021.

³² ROSSELLI 1992: 101.

perhaps even wars".³³ The only way to solve the struggle between the two worlds was open conflict, since it was an irreducible clash between two visions and two forms of coexistence in Europe and the world. Hence the need for anti-fascism to equip itself with a clear strategy and with politically concrete proposals that were not just the result of a response to fascism. It was necessary to openly oppose a war of principles that would have the power to mobilise the masses. In this sense, faced with the fascist's use of force, the great positive objective that anti-fascism had to embody was precisely "to build Europe". The programme, which until then had been "left to diplomats and to Coudhenove Kalergi",³⁴ was to be realised through the direct election of a European constituent assembly which, as the founder of Justice and Freedom wrote, would "draft the first European federal constitution, appoint the first European government, establish the fundamental principles of European coexistence, devalue borders and customs, organise a force at the service of the new European law, and give life to the United States of Europe". And he concluded: "For the European left, there is no other foreign policy apart from the United States of Europe, the European Assembly. The rest is *flatus vocis*. The rest is a catastrophe".³⁵

The roots of the *Ventotene Manifesto* therefore lay in the series of events, failures and sufferings of anti-fascism. They gave political meaning and perspective to the Resistance of the democrats. It became one of the seven qualifying points of the political project of the Partito d'Azione and characterised its existence. From there came that large ruling class and those militants, who were scattered in different formations that went from republicanism to the type of communism that had not been bewitched by Soviet-style totalitarianism. In a framework of incomprehension much wider than the narrow nationalist universe, they dedicated themselves to the difficult European construction, which in the *Ventotene Manifesto* had found its first planning.

Between the two wars, Italy felt both victorious and defeated, and more than any other European country Italy experienced a sense of emptiness in the changed global climate after Versailles. It was in this environment that the first manifestations of both fascist totalitarianism and of the new democracy were produced. From a European perspective, the foundations of policies had to deal with coming to terms with the new interconnections. The mass dimension of nationalisms for the purposes of a new decisive conflict about the organisation of Europe was based precisely on

³³ *Ibid.*: 134.

³⁴ THÉRY 1998.

³⁵ ROSSELLI 1992: 169-172.

their totalitarian and domineering exaltation. The policies, which took into account the evolution based on ever more stringent interdependencies, placed on Europe the inescapable need for an obligatory rethinking of itself and its political organisation. Interdependencies were the starting point for building the new supranational reality.

Rosselli's hope that the forces of the left would be able to act as midwives in the process of European unification did not come true. The emergence of the great powers that supported the anti-fascist coalition in the Second World War and the organisation of the new phase of globalisation into competing ideological, political, military and economic blocs decisively conditioned the new European perspective after the Second World War. The left-wing parties that formed what was then called the labour movement had to overcome the most tense phases of the relationship between the blocs in order to revise their cultures. Only after the first post-war decade and at different times did they embrace the European project and become its protagonists. While the founding phase was mainly determined by the catholic democratic forces and their leaders who had been formed in the tensions, tears and dramas of the first half of the 20th century,³⁶ the political reworking of the idea of Europe came with the *Ventotene Manifesto*, the work of three anti-fascists of the next generation. Two of them – Ernesto Rossi³⁷ and Eugenio Colorni – had gone through the revision of the liberal and socialist left triggered by the conflict between fascism and anti-fascism in order to provide solutions to the issues of the time. Altiero Spinelli,³⁸ on the other hand, had come to Europeanism through the communist commitment for which he had been imprisoned. In this sense, he was truly a successor and interpreter of Carlo Rosselli's unprejudiced thinking because of its fully secularised nature. Rosselli's principles did not rest on ideological abstractions but were guided by the actual reality of his own time. In 1936, the year in which no obstacle seemed to stop the irresistible advance of fascism – with the conclusion of the war in Ethiopia, the remilitarisation of Rhineland and the civil war unleashed in response to the victory of the Popular Front in Spain – Rosselli had warned that it was certainly not in the supposed religious militarism of the Germans that the origins were to be sought. It was about Europe, its cultures, its way of thinking and relating. It was no coincidence that mass nationalism had manifested itself in Italy, even if it had emerged victorious from the war. As Rosselli put it, "The causes of

³⁶ OLIVI SANTANIELLO 2005; KAISER 2007.

³⁷ BRAGA 2007.

³⁸ GRAGLIA 2008.

the fascist phenomenon are much more general and cannot be related to national characteristics".³⁹

CONCLUSION

"If [...] it is not possible to trace the signs of an early Europeanism in the interventions of international politics between the two wars, an examination of the main historical writings of that period clearly shows how profoundly 'European' De Gasperi's political culture was".⁴⁰ It culminated in the project of the EDC, which accentuated the federalist elements of European construction. How is it that in the Italian attitude that accompanied the short life of the project "clear traces of the approach and positions of Altiero Spinelli and the European Federalist Movement that exercised at that stage a certain influence on the positions of the Christian Democrat leader" could be seen? And why did the De Gasperi "want to be accompanied by La Malfa in December 1951, when the Prime Minister took part in the conference – which gave rise to Article 38 of the Treaty of the ECD – of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs"?⁴¹

Finally, why did that area continue to have a strong influence on the left that was moving from Sovietism to Europeanism? Spinelli's collaboration with Pietro Nenni first – so much so that in 1970 the socialist leader and La Malfa indicated him as Italian commissioner to the European Community – and then with Enrico Berlinguer – Spinelli was elected national deputy in 1976 and European deputy in 1979 in the lists of the PCI – showed this.⁴² It is no coincidence that the recognition of the European legitimacy of the PCI was ratified by the participation and by the speech of Pet Dankert, president of the European Parliament, at the funeral of the communist leader in 1984.

The European perspective of Italian antifascism blossomed from the mere reflection on the constitutive, devastating fragility of nationalism. In its affirmation were the very weak bases of the Italian construction, which therefore had a vital need to anchor itself firmly to the supranational reality, in a global condition of clash between two ways of conceiving and realizing globalization. The reflection of the democratic anti-fascists between the two wars – the Machiavelli of the 20th century,⁴³ to use the defini-

³⁹ ROSSELLI 1992: 325.

⁴⁰ GUALTIERI 2006: 69.

⁴¹ SODDU 2008: 177.

⁴² GRAGLIA 2008, 476 ff.

⁴³ SPINELLI 1993.

tion that synthesized Spinelli's ambitious project – offered in its outcomes a political reading aimed at identifying the roots of political reality, as an alternative to political religions. European construction as a relationship between national and supranational dimensions was therefore a necessity, an alternative to catastrophe, not only for the European left but for all the forces that sought to find a solution to the crash of totalitarian and illiberal nationalism.

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