

## **The Manifesto: from one island to another**

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This is the English translation of a document famously written on a tiny island in the Tyrrhenian sea between 1941 and 1942. The text exudes civil and political passion and is couched in rich, flowing - at times emphatic, for example in the case of Eugenio Colorni's preface - Italian prose. There is a fervour to its language, as if the conditions imposed, the physical limitations inflicted by imprisonment on its authors - intellectuals but also militant politicians - somehow induced them to adopt more resounding, more marked tones to express themselves. It is as if they sought to give greater force to their words and to the substance of their thoughts as these took on the form of a great forward- looking project, precisely on the island of Ventotene. It looks to the future not only of Italy but of the whole of Europe with extensive, appropriate references to the rest of the world. It foresees the birth of a hegemony- free European Federation with a single currency and no custom tariffs, free emigration for its citizens and one single foreign policy: Europe as a civil place of cohabitation for free individuals rather than a tool in the hands of others. Sixty years on, the *Manifesto* is still extraordinary in its far-sightedness and in the clarity with which it anticipates many of the problems facing us and the world we live in today. We are also struck by the force of the tones used to outline this world of ours, they are the tones of the *spoken word*. Despite the fact that the text is written, we are struck by the force that echoes orality, the energy of the *voice*. Because this *Manifesto* - unlike Marx and Engels' more famous document of 1848, also written on an island, and, according to historians, a source of inspiration for the Italian document which does, however, clearly set out to broaden its vision compared to the earlier work-brings with it the energy of 'thinking together'; it brings us the product of the common project of the three great intellectuals who wrote it but it also brings us the different tones of voice. For the scholar of British culture, and inter-cultural relations in general, some of the issues raised by the *Ventotene Manifesto* are particularly thoughtprovoking.

While praising 'the courageous combativeness of Great Britain, even at the most critical time, when it stood alone against the enemy', the text forgets neither the Irish question nor the issue of defending minorities; it anticipates the question of Indian independence and reflects on the failure of the great colonial endeavours. And, starting with the blow struck by the racial laws, introduced in

Italy by the Fascists in 1938, it touches on the folly of racism and desire for dominance implicit in imperialism. It draws a model of globalization, in the true sense of the word, that is to say with the world viewed as the heritage of all human beings: "Due to global economic interdependence, the living space needed by any people wanting to maintain a living standard in line with modern civilization is now the entire world".

In making this text available to an English-speaking audience, this translation has a twofold objective. The first, as is always the case with chronologically distant texts, is that of bringing it closer to the contemporary reader, who speaks a different language and inhabits a different culture, preserving its readability: the text clearly uses archaic vocabulary and also has a rather formal register, as can be seen in expressions such as "contratti di lavoro iugulatori" (oppressive work contracts, where "iugulatore" literally refers to something that strangles or chokes) or "la ferula totalitarian" (the totalitarian rod or ferule). There are also many examples of metaphorical language such as "the straw house built by Fascist corporatism". The second objective of the translation is to adapt the complex Italian in which it is written, with its many long subordinate clauses, especially in the case of Eugenio Colorni's above mentioned preface, to the rigour and conciseness of a language such as English.

This English translation of the *Ventotene Manifesto* is the third to appear in Italy over recent years, a sign of the increasing interest in this text and the message it conveys. While the two previous versions were motivated by militant interest and passion and - as they are available on the internet - have the merit of bringing the *Manifesto* to a wide audience of English-language readers, the translation presented here is the product of an institutional initiative. The Lazio Region has adopted the *Ventotene Manifesto* as part of its Statute and is promoting, together with the "Sapienza" University of Rome, the translation of the text into all the languages of the European Union. And so, one hundred years on from the birth of Altiero Spinelli, the man who inspired it, the *Manifesto* takes on a leading role in our institutions and universities, in history books but also in literary anthologies. We read and study it today not only for its political and civil content, but also as a literary and human document of exceptional importance.

## Preface

Eugenio Colorni (Rome 1944)

These documents were conceived and written on the Island of Ventotene between 1941 and 1942. In this extraordinary environment, in the grips of the strictest discipline, having to struggle for every piece of fragmented information, with the despondency of forced inertia and anxiety over our forthcoming liberation, some of us began to re-evaluate all the problems that had been the very motivation for past actions and the attitude adopted towards the struggle.

Our distance from actual political activity gave us a more detached point of view, leading us to reconsider traditional positions, trying to identify the reasons for past failures not so much in technical errors of parliamentary or revolutionary tactics or in a generally 'immature' situation but rather in the inadequacy of the overall approach and the fact that the struggle had been deployed according to traditional rifts with too little attention being paid to new elements that were redefining the world.

As we prepared to fight the imminent great battle, we felt the need not only to correct past errors, but also to redefine the terms of the political problem, having freed our minds of doctrinal preconceptions and party myths.

And so it was, for some of us, that we came to develop the central idea of the essential contradiction, responsible for the crises, wars, suffering and all the exploitation that afflict our society: this contradiction was the existence of geographically, economically and militarily distinct sovereign states, considering other states as rivals and potential enemies, all living in a permanent, mutual condition of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. There are several reasons why this idea, not new *per se*, was considered innovative at the time and in the context in which it was developed:

First of all, the internationalist solution, that features in the manifesto of all progressive political parties, is considered by these parties, in a certain sense, as a necessary and almost automatic consequence of reaching the goals that each of them sets out. Democrats believe that establishing, in each country, the regime that they each advocate, while transcending all cultural and moral frontiers, would doubtlessly lead to that unitary awareness that would in turn represent the premise they deem indispensable for the free union of people, including the political and economic spheres. On the other hand, the Socialists

believe that the establishment of dictatorial regimes of proletarian rule in the different states will automatically lead to a collectivist international state.

However, an analysis of the modern concept of state and of all the interests and feelings that this entails, clearly illustrates that, although similarities between regimes can facilitate cordial relations and collaboration between states, it is by no means certain that they will lead either automatically or progressively to unification, as long as there are collective interests and feelings defined by the maintenance of a unity enclosed within individual borders. We know through experience that chauvinist feelings and protectionist interests can easily lead to clashes and rivalry even between two democracies; and there is nothing to say that a rich socialist state must necessarily pool its resources with another much poorer socialist state, simply because they are both governed by similar regimes.

The abolition of political and economic borders between states does not therefore necessarily derive from the contextual establishment of a given regime within each state: it is a problem *per se*, to be dealt with separately with tailor-made means. It is true that one cannot be a socialist without also being an internationalist but this is true on ideological grounds rather than out of political or economic necessity and the socialist victory in individual states does not automatically lead to an international state.

The federalist thesis was also highlighted independently because the existing political parties, with a history of internal struggles within each nation, tacitly assume through habit and tradition that the national state must of course exist and they therefore consider problems of international order as questions of "foreign policy" to be resolved through diplomatic channels and agreements between the various governments. This attitude partly causes and partly comes from the concept mentioned above, whereby once power has been gained in a specific country, agreement and union with likeminded regimes in other countries follow automatically, with no need for political struggle expressly dedicated to this precise aim.

But the authors of this document held the deep-rooted conviction that whoever decides to tackle the problem of international order as the main issue of this historical period and considers its solution as the unavoidable premise for solving all the institutional, economic and social problems that afflict our society, must necessarily consider all issues of internal political conflict and the attitude of individual political parties from this point of view, even as far as the tactics and strategies of daily struggle are concerned.

A new light is cast on all these issues - from constitutional liberties to class struggle, from planning to gaining power and implementing it - if viewed from the premise that the main objective is a united international order. Indeed,

political manoeuvring, supporting one or other of the forces involved, stressing one political slogan over another, changes dramatically if the essential goal is considered to be the seizing of power and the implementation of specific reforms in each individual state on the one hand or the establishing of economic, political and moral premises for the foundation of a federal system embracing the entire continent on the other.

Another reason, and perhaps the most important, was the fact that while the ideal of a European federation, a prelude to a global federation, might have seemed a remote utopia only a few years ago, it appears today, at the end of this war, as an achievable goal, almost within reach. The drastic shift of people provoked by this war in all the countries who experienced German occupation, the need to rebuild an economy nearing total collapse on a new basis and to re-evaluate all problems relating to political borders, tariff barriers, ethnic minorities etc., the very nature of this war, with the national element so often overshadowed by ideology, in which small and medium size states gave up much of their sovereignty in favour of stronger states and the Fascists replaced the concept of "living space" with that of "national independence" should all be seen as factors that render the issue of a federal organization of Europe, in the aftermath of the war, ever more topical.

The issue is of interest to forces from all social classes, for both economic and ideal reasons. It can be approached through diplomatic negotiation and popular action, promoting related studies among the educated classes and provoking a *de facto* state of revolution from which it will then be impossible to retreat. It can also be achieved by influencing the executive of the victorious states and by spreading the message among the defeated states that only in a free and united Europe will they find salvation and freedom from the disastrous consequences of defeat.

Our Movement was born for this very purpose. We have been motivated to create an autonomous organization, with the objective of promoting the idea of a European Federation as an achievable goal in the immediate post-war years because of the priority, the pre-eminence of this problem over all others affecting our immediate future and the certain knowledge that, if the situation is allowed to return to old nationalistic patterns, the opportunity will be lost for ever, ruling out lasting peace and welfare for our continent.

We are fully aware of the difficulties facing us and the power of the forces who seek to obstruct us, but we believe this to be the first time that this problem has been taken up as an issue for political struggle, not as some remote ideal but rather as a pressing, tragic necessity.

Our Movement has now survived two difficult years as an underground organization under Fascist and Nazi oppression: our supporters are all from the

rank and file of anti-Fascist activism and believe in the use of armed struggle to obtain freedom. We have already paid the heavy price of imprisonment for the common cause: we are not and do not want to be a political party. As is becoming increasingly clear, our Movement seeks to influence the different political parties both from without and within, not only to foreground the internationalist cause, but also, more importantly, to bring about a situation whereby all political problems will be viewed from this new, as yet little explored, perspective.

We are not a political party because, although we actively promote all research into the institutional, economic and social framework of the European Federation and although we take an active role in the struggle to bring this about, taking care to identify favourable forces within a future political system, we do not wish to comment officially on institutional details such as the extent of economic collectivization, the extent of administrative devolution etc. etc. which are inevitable features of the future federal organism. All these problems are openly discussed at length within our movement and all political persuasions, from Communism to Liberalism, are represented. Indeed, almost all our members are active in one or other of the progressive parties and are all united in promoting the basic principles of a free European federation, not based on any form of hegemony or totalitarian system, but with the structural solidity that makes it something more than a simple League of Nations. These principles can be summarized as follows: one single federal army, monetary union, the abolition of tariff barriers and emigration restrictions between states belonging to the Federation, direct representation of citizens within federal assemblies, one common foreign policy.

In these first two years, our Movement has gained popularity among anti-Fascist groups and parties. Some of them have pledged their support and goodwill publicly.

Others have asked us to cooperate on their manifestoes. It is perhaps not too presumptuous to say that the merit is in part ours, if the problems of the European Federation appear so often in the Italian underground press. Our review, «L'Unità Europea», follows domestic and international affairs closely, adopting an entirely independent stance.

These documents, the product of the development of the ideas which gave birth to our Movement, represent however only the opinion of their authors and are not a statement of the Movement's position. They are merely intended as a suggestion of topics to debate for those who want to rethink all the problems of international politics while bearing in mind recent ideological and political experiences, the results of the latest research in economics and down-to-earth, realistic future perspectives. They will soon be followed by further

research. We hope they will lead to a flurry of ideas and that, in the present atmosphere, fuelled by the impelling need for action, they will stand as a clear contribution to increasingly determined, enlightened and responsible action.

*The Italian Movement for the European Federation*  
Rome 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1944

## **Towards a Free and United Europe. A draft Manifesto**

Altiero Spinelli – Ernesto Rossi

### **I. The Crisis of Modern Civilisation**

Modern civilization has elected the principle of freedom as its foundation, whereby man must not be a mere instrument in the hands of others, but rather an autonomous centre of life. Acting according to this code, all aspects of society that do not reflect this principle are now under scrutiny, part of a great historical trial.

1) The equal right to organize themselves into independent states has been granted to all nations. Every people, as defined by their ethnic, geographical, linguistic and historical features, was required to find the instrument best suited to their needs within the state organization created specifically for them according to their conception of political affairs, without outside influence. The ideology of national independence was a powerful incentive to progress. It helped replace petty parochialism with a widespread sense of solidarity against foreign oppression. It removed many of the obstacles that hampered the free movement of people and goods. It brought the institutions and systems of the more advanced populations to the less developed, within the borders of each new state. However, this ideology bore within it the seeds of capitalist imperialism that our generation has seen grow and grow, leading to totalitarian states and the outbreak of world wars.

The nation is no longer considered the historical product of coexistence among men who, following a lengthy process, have achieved a greater harmony in their customs and aspirations and view their state as the most effective way of organizing collective life within the context of all human society: in fact, it has become a divine entity, an organism whose sole concern is its own existence

and development, without a second thought for the harm it may cause others. The absolute sovereignty of these national states has led to the desire of each to dominate over the others, since they feel threatened by their strength, and each nation feels the need for increasingly vast territories as part of their "living space" to guarantee their right to free movement and self-sufficiency, without needing to rely on others. The only way to placate this desire for domination is through the hegemony of the strongest state over all the other subordinate nations.

As a result, the state has turned from being the guardian of the freedom of its citizens into a master who has relegated all his subjects into servitude, and has every faculty at his disposal to make them as war effective as possible. Even in periods of peace, considered as pauses during which to prepare for subsequent, inevitable wars, the objectives of the military class in many countries now predominate over the objectives of the civilian population, rendering free political systems increasingly difficult to operate. The main objective of education, scientific research, industry and administration has become that of increasing the military strength of the nation. Mothers are only useful in so far as they produce soldiers and as such are awarded prizes in much the same way as prolific animals at agricultural shows. Children are trained from the very earliest age to handle weapons and to hate foreigners. Individual freedom is non-existent since everyone has some part to play in the military system and is constantly recruited for national service. The continuous succession of wars forces men to abandon their families, their jobs, their property, and even sacrifice their own lives for values that no one truly understands. The results of decades of effort to increase the common good are destroyed in just a few days.

It is the totalitarian states who have unified all forces most coherently, through the highest degree of centralization and autarchy and have thus proved themselves as the most suitable bodies for today's international environment. As soon as one nation takes a step towards a more marked form of totalitarianism all the others will follow behind, dragged in the wake by their will to survive.

2) The equal right of all citizens to contribute to the definition of the state's will has been established. This right was to have been the synthesis of the changing economic and ideological needs of all freely determined social classes. This form of political organization made it possible to correct or at least mitigate many of the more strident injustices bequeathed by previous regimes. But developments such as freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the continuous extension of suffrage, made it increasingly difficult to defend former privileges, while maintaining a representative system.

Gradually the disinherited learned to use these tools to launch an attack on the acquired rights of the privileged classes. Duty on unearned income and inheritances, higher tax bands for greater wealth, tax exemptions for low incomes and essential goods, free public education, increased spending for social security and insurance, land reforms and industrial safety all threatened the privileged classes in their well-fortified citadels.

Even the privileged classes who had supported equal political rights, could not accept the deprived using them to achieve a *de facto* equality with a very real content of actual freedom. When the threat became all too serious at the end of the First World War, it was only natural for these privileged classes to welcome with open arms and support the fledgling dictatorships that removed the legal weapons from their opponents' hands.

Moreover, the creation of huge industrial and banking groups and trade unions with whole armies of workers under the same banner - groups and trade unions who put pressure on government to come up with policies that would best defend their specific interests - threatened to reduce the state into a series of economic fiefdoms, each in bitter opposition to the other. To best exploit the general public, these groups adopted the liberal-democratic system as their tool thereby undermining its prestige until there grew the conviction that only a totalitarian state, abolishing all individual liberties, could in some way resolve the conflicts of interest that the existing political institutions could no longer contain.

Indeed, subsequently, the totalitarian regimes consolidated the overall position of the various social categories at the levels that each had achieved and precluded all legal means of further alterations to the *status quo* through the use of police control over every aspect of civilian life and the violent suppression of all dissidents. All this guaranteed the survival of a totally parasitic class of absentee landowners and rentiers whose sole contribution to social productivity was cutting off the coupons from their bonds. It assured the future of monopolists and the whole chain of companies who exploit their customers, causing the savings of small-time investors to vanish into thin air. It strengthened the plutocrats, behind the scenes, who pull the politicians' strings to run the state machine to their own, exclusive advantage, under the guise of pursuing higher national interests. The vast fortunes of the few have been preserved along with the poverty of the masses, excluded from enjoying the fruits of modern culture. And so we have the substantial preservation of an economic regime in which the material resources and work force, which ought to be deployed to satisfy the fundamental needs for the development of essential human energies, are instead redirected to satisfy the utterly futile wishes of anyone who happens to be able to pay the highest price. It is an

economic regime where the power of money is perpetuated within the same class, because of the right of inheritance, becoming a privilege that has absolutely no relation to the social value of the services actually offered and where the range of proletarian opportunity is so restricted that workers are often forced to allow themselves to be exploited by whoever offers them any form of employment.

In order to keep the working classes in their place and submissive, the trade unions have been transformed from independent organizations of struggle, whose leaders enjoyed the trust of their members, into bodies for police surveillance run by employees chosen by the ruling class and answerable solely to them. Any improvements made to this economic regime are always dictated purely by military expediency which has merged with the reactionary aspirations of the privileged classes to create and consolidate these totalitarian States.

The permanent value of a critical approach has been asserted against authoritarian dogmatism. All assertions had to be proved or else disappear. The greatest achievements in all fields of our society are due to the methodicalness underlying this open-minded perspective. But this spiritual freedom has not withstood the crisis brought on by totalitarian states. New dogmas to be accepted either through an act of faith or through hypocrisy are gradually taking over in all fields of knowledge.

Although nobody can define what a "race" is, and the scantest understanding of history reveals the absurdity of the very notion, physiologists are required to believe, demonstrate and convince others that one belongs to a chosen race, simply because imperialism needs this myth to excite hate and pride in the masses. The most obvious concepts of economic science must therefore become anathema thus allowing autarchic policy and trade balance along with some of the other old favourites of mercantilism to be presented as extraordinary new breakthroughs. Due to global economic interdependence, the living space needed by any people wanting to maintain a living standard in line with modern civilization is now the entire world. But the pseudo-science of geopolitics has been conjured up with the intention of proving the validity of the living-space theory and providing a theoretical guise for imperialist oppression.

Essential historical facts are falsified, in the interests of the ruling class. Libraries and bookshops are purged of any works considered unorthodox. Once again the shadows of obscurantism threaten to suffocate the human spirit. The social ethic of freedom and equality has itself been undermined. Men are no longer considered free citizens who can turn to the state to achieve their collective goals. They are now servants of the state, and it is the state that

defines their goals, while the will of the state is obviously that of those who wield power. Men are no longer subjects in their own right, but are organised hierarchically and forced to silently obey the authorities presided over by an appropriately idolised leader. Out of its own ashes, the caste-based regime is reborn, as overbearing as ever.

Having triumphed in a number of countries, this reactionary, totalitarian civilization has finally found in Nazi Germany sufficient strength to proceed to its logical conclusion. After careful preparation, boldly and unscrupulously exploiting the rivalries, egoism and stupidity of others, dragging other European vassal states along behind them - Italy foremost - and allying themselves with Japan, which has identical plans in Asia, they have set about their campaign of oppression and domination. Their victory would represent the definitive consolidation of totalitarianism in the world. All its characteristics would be exasperated in the extreme, and progressive forces would be condemned to the role of mere negative opposition for many years.

The traditional arrogance and hard line of the German military class can give us an idea of what their dominance would be like if they won the war. The victorious Germans might affect a gloss of generosity towards other European populations, formally respecting their territories and political institutions, and so govern by satisfying the false patriotic sentiments of those who set a higher price on the colour of the border flag and the nationality of prominent politicians than on the power relationships and true business of the state's institutions. Whatever its guise, there would only be one reality, with society being divided once again between Spartans and Helots.

Even a compromise between the opposing factions, would be a further step forward for totalitarianism because all the countries that managed to escape Germany's clutches would be forced to adopt the very same forms of political organization to prepare themselves adequately for the renewal of hostilities.

Although Hitler's Germany has toppled smaller states one after the other, its actions have pressed increasingly powerful forces to enter the fray. The courageous combativeness of Great Britain, even at the most critical time when it stood alone against the enemy, forced the Germans up against the valiant resistance of the Russian Army, giving America time to mobilize its endless productive resources. This struggle against German imperialism is closely linked to the struggle of the Chinese against Japanese imperialism.

Vast numbers of men and immense wealth are already lined up against the totalitarian powers whose strength has reached its apex and can now only gradually wane. The opposing forces, on the other hand, have already overcome the hardest challenges and they are growing in strength.

With every passing day, the allied war-effort arouses the desire for freedom even in the countries that had yielded under violence and lost their way under the pressure of the blow. It has even aroused the desire for freedom among the population of the Axis countries who realize they have been dragged into a hopeless situation, for no better reason than to satisfy their rulers' lust for power.

The slow process, whereby vast numbers of men meekly allowed themselves to be shaped by the new regime, adjusted to it and thereby contributed to its consolidation, has stopped and the reverse process has begun. This huge wave, which is slowly swelling up, brings together all the progressive forces, the more enlightened sections of the working class unswayed by either terror or flattery from their ambitions for a better life, the more perceptive intellectuals, offended by the degradation imposed on intelligence, entrepreneurs, ready for fresh challenges, who want to be free from restrictive red tape and national autarchy, and, finally, all those who, through an inborn sense of dignity, do not know how to bow down under the humiliation of servitude.

The salvation of our civilization is now entrusted to all these forces.

## **II. Post-war Tasks. European Unity**

Germany's defeat, however, would not automatically bring about the reorganization of Europe in line with our ideal of civilization.

In the brief but intense period of general crisis (with the states battered and bruised and with the masses anxiously awaiting a new message, like malleable, burning, molten matter, ready to take on new forms under the guidance of serious internationalists), the classes most privileged under the old national systems will try, underhandedly or violently, to dampen the wave of internationalist feelings and passions and will contribute ostentatiously to the reconstruction of the old state institutions. And it is likely that the British leaders, possibly together with the Americans, will try to move in this direction, so as to restore a policy of balance-of-power, seemingly in the immediate interests of their respective empires.

All the reactionary forces - in other words, the administrators of the institutions necessary in nation states, the highest ranks of the armed forces right up to the monarchy in the countries that have one, the capitalist monopolies that have tied their profits to the fortunes of the state, the great landowners and church hierarchy, whose parasitic income is guaranteed only by a stable, conservative society - and, in their wake, the endless retinue of people who depend on them or who are simply blinded by their traditional

power, all these forces can already feel the boat sinking and are trying to jump overboard to save themselves. If the boat does go down, they would suddenly lose all the privileges they have become accustomed to and would be exposed to the assault of progressive forces.

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION – OLD AND NEW TRENDS

Emotionally, the fall of the totalitarian regimes will represent the advent of "freedom" for entire populations; all restraint will disappear and, automatically, widespread freedom of speech and assembly will take over. It will be a triumph for democratic tendencies with their countless nuances, ranging from extremely conservative liberalism to socialism and anarchy. These beliefs are based on trust in the "spontaneous generation" of events and institutions and the absolute goodness of any impetus from the rank and file. They do not want to force the hand of "history", or "the people", or "the proletariat", or whatever other name their god goes by. They hope for the end of dictatorships, imagining this moment as the restitution to the people of their inalienable right to self-determination. The crowning touch for them is a constituent assembly, elected by the most extensive suffrage, with scrupulous regard for the rights of voters, to decide what kind of constitution to have. If the population is immature, the result will be a poor constitution and amendment will only be possible through constant persuasion.

Democrats do not shy away from violence on principle but aim to use it only when the majority is convinced there is no other solution, when it is, in other words, little more than a near superfluous "dot" over an "i". They are, therefore, suitable leaders only in times of ordinary administration, when the majority of the population is convinced of the soundness of its main institutions, with need for only a few slight inconsequential changes. In revolutionary times, when institutions, rather than being administered, must be created, democratic rule fails miserably. The pitiful impotence of democrats during the Russian, German and Spanish revolutions are three among the most recent examples. In such cases, after the demise of the old state apparatus, along with its laws and administration, a large number of popular assemblies and representative bodies immediately spring up, under the same guise as the old regime, or scornful of it, and become points of convergence and centres of agitation for all the progressive socialist forces. The population does indeed have some fundamental needs to satisfy, but does not know precisely what it wants and what to do. A thousand bells ring in its ears. With its millions of minds, it does not know which way to turn, and disintegrates into a myriad factions, all in competition among themselves.

Just when the utmost decisiveness and courage is needed, democrats lose their way, not having the support of spontaneous popular backing, but rather a troubled riot of passions. They think it their duty to create consensus, presenting themselves as zealous preachers, when what is really needed are leaders with a clear objective in mind. They waste the opportunities to consolidate the new regime by setting up straightaway new bodies that really need longer periods of preparation and are more suited to relatively tranquil times. They provide their opponents with the weapons which they in turn use to overthrow them. With their thousands of factions, they do not stand for renewal, but rather the confused ambitions of paralysed minds, as they lay the ground for reactionary tendencies. The political methodology of democrats is to be considered a dead weight during a revolutionary crisis.

While the democrats whittle away their initial popularity as champions of freedom with their ceaseless war of words, with no credible political and social revolution, the pre-totalitarian political institutions would inevitably re-form, and the struggle would once again develop along the old lines of class conflict.

The principle that sees the class struggle as the root of all political problems has always been the fundamental guideline of factory workers in particular, and has helped give consistency to their politics for as long as the fundamental institutions were not being questioned. But it becomes an instrument that isolates the proletariat, once the need arises to totally reorganise society. These workers, having been educated within the class system, can only see the demands of their own class or, even worse, of their own professional category with no thought as to how their interests are related to those of other social classes. Alternatively, they aspire to a unilateral dictatorship of the working class to achieve the utopian collectivization of all the material means of production, trumpeted as the supreme cure-all by centuries of propaganda. This policy has no hold over any other class but the workers, who thus deprive the other progressive forces of their support, or leave them at the mercy of the skilfully organized reaction which crushes the proletarian movement.

Among the various proletarian groups who adhere to class politics and collectivist ideals, the communists have recognized the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient following to lead them to victory and so, unlike the other popular parties, they have turned themselves into a strictly disciplined movement, exploiting the Russian myth to organize the workers and, without being dictated to by them, uses them for all kinds of political tactics.

This attitude makes the communists more efficient than the democrats during a revolutionary crisis. But their tactic of keeping the workers as distant as possible from the other revolutionary forces, preaching that their "real" revolution is yet to come, makes them a sectarian element and a weak spot at

the critical moment. Furthermore, their total dependence on the Russian state, which has repeatedly used them to pursue its national policies, prevents them from undertaking any long-term political activity. They always need a Karoly, a Blum or a Negrin to hide behind, only to fall flat on their faces along with the democratic puppet in question, because power is achieved and maintained, not simply through cunning, but by being able to address the needs of modern society systematically and responsibly.

If in the future the struggle were to remain restricted within traditional national boundaries, it would be very difficult to escape the old contradictions. The nation states have already planned their respective economies in such detail that the main question would soon become which group of economic interests, in other words which class, should have control over the plan. The progressive front would soon crumble in the fight between economic categories and classes. In all likelihood, the reactionaries would stand to gain the most.

An authentically revolutionary movement must spring from those who have criticized the old political framework: it should be able to cooperate with democratic and communist forces and more generally with all who contribute to the downfall of totalitarianism without, however, becoming ensnared by the political practices of any of them.

The reactionary forces have capable men and leaders, trained to govern and who will fight relentlessly to maintain their supremacy. When their backs are up against the wall, they will know how to mask their true nature, proclaiming themselves champions of freedom, peace, general welfare and the impoverished. Already in the past we have seen how they worked their way into popular movements, paralyzing and deflecting them, transforming them into the exact opposite. Without doubt, they will be the most dangerous obstacle.

They will try to play on the restoration of the nation state. This will allow them, in turn, to play on the most widespread feeling among the population, a feeling so damaged by recent events and so easily manipulated to reactionary ends: patriotism. In this way they can even hope to confuse their opponents' minds more easily, since the only political experience to date for the popular masses has been within the national context and, therefore, it is relatively easy to channel both them and their more short-sighted leaders into the reconstruction of the states destroyed in the storm.

If they succeed in this, the forces of reaction will have won. These states might well appear to be broadly democratic and socialist: it would only be a question of time before power fell back into the hands of the reactionaries. National jealousies would resurface, and every state would once again try to fulfil its needs exclusively through the use of armed force. Sooner or later the

main objective would be that of trying to convert the whole country into a series of armies. Generals would be giving orders again, monopoly holders would once again profit from autarchies, bureaucracy would multiply and priests would keep the masses quiet. All initial achievements would shrivel away to nothing when faced with the need to prepare for war again.

The most pressing problem, without whose solution progress is merely an illusion, is the definitive abolition of the division of Europe into national, sovereign states. The collapse of most of the continent's states under the German steamroller has already meant a common destiny for the people of Europe: they will either all succumb to Hitler's dominion, or, after his fall, they will all enter a revolutionary crisis where they will not find themselves separated and defined by solid state structures. People are in general far better disposed than in the past towards a federal reorganization of Europe. The harsh experience of recent decades has opened the eyes of even those who refused to see, and has brought about many changes favourable to our ideal.

All reasonable men recognize the fact that it is now impossible to maintain a balance of power among independent European states with militarist Germany on a par with other countries, nor can Germany be carved up into small pieces or kept at heel once it is conquered. Manifestly, no European country can remain on the sidelines while the others fight, with all declarations of neutrality and non-aggression pacts becoming null and void. We now have the demonstration of how pointless, not to say harmful, organizations such as the League of Nations are: they claimed they could guarantee international law without the need of a military force to impose its decisions while all the time respecting the absolute sovereignty of member states. The non-intervention policy has turned out to be absurd, with every population supposedly left free, as it was, to choose the despotic government they thought best, almost as though the domestic constitution of each individual state was of no fundamental interest to all the other European nations. The multiple problems poisoning international life throughout the continent have proved unsolvable: the drawing up of new borders in areas with mixed populations, the defence of ethnic minorities, sea access for landlocked countries, the Balkan question, the Irish problem, and so on. All these issues would find easy solution in the European Federation, just as small states in the past solved their corresponding problems when they became part of a vaster national unity, exchanging their bitterness for problems of inter-provincial relations.

Moreover, the end of the sense of security produced by the impregnability of Great Britain, with the British being advised to aspire to "splendid isolation", the dissolution of the French army and the disintegration of the Republic itself after the first serious clash with the German forces (a state of affairs which, one

would hope, will dampen the chauvinistic attitude of absolute Gallic superiority), and above all the awareness of the risk of total submission are all circumstances that will favour the constitution of a federal regime, bringing the current anarchy to an end. It must also be said that since Britain has accepted the principle of Indian independence and since France has potentially lost its whole empire by admitting defeat, it will be easier to find a basis of agreement for a European solution over colonial possessions.

On top of all this there is the disappearance of some of the most important dynasties, and the basic fragility on which the surviving dynasties are built. It is important to remember that these dynasties, supported by powerful interests and considering the various countries as their own traditional prerogative, represented a serious obstacle to the rational organization of the United States of Europe, that can only be based on the republican constitution of all the federated countries. Once the demarcation of the Old Continent is superseded, and all of humanity is united in one common design, it will become increasingly obvious that the European Federation is the only conceivable guarantee for peaceful cooperation in American-Asian relations, awaiting a more distant future when global political unity might become a reality.

Therefore, the dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer coincides with the formal lines indicating a more or less advanced democracy, a more or less developed form of socialism, but rather with a very new, substantial line: on one side are those who see the old objective of struggle, in other words the conquest of national political power, and who will, albeit involuntarily, play into the hands of the reactionary forces, by allowing the incandescent lava of popular passions to set in the old moulds with past absurdities resurfacing, while on the other side are those who see their main duty as the creation of a solid international state, who will direct popular forces towards this goal, and who, even if they gain national power, will use it above all as an instrument to bring about international unity.

Through propaganda and action, all the while seeking to establish all possible agreements and links among the individual movements which are doubtless being formed in the various countries, now is the time to put down the foundations for a movement capable of mobilizing all forces to build the new organism which will be the grandest, most innovative creation in Europe for centuries; capable of setting up a solid federal state, with a European armed service at its disposal rather than national armies; capable of crushing economic autarchies, the backbone of totalitarian regimes; that will have sufficient institutions and means for its deliberations on the maintenance of common order to be executed in the individual federal states, while allowing each state to retain the necessary autonomy for a plastic organization and development of

political activity according to the specific characteristics of the various populations.

If a sufficient number of people in the main European countries understand this, then victory will soon be theirs, for both circumstances and public opinion will be on their side. They will be faced with parties and factions discredited by the disastrous experience of the last twenty years. Since it will be time for new action, it will also be time for new men: from the MOVEMENT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE.

### **III. Post-war Tasks. The Reform of Society**

A free and united Europe is the prerequisite for the development of modern civilization, with a totalitarian era representing a setback. As soon as this era comes to an end, the age-old battle against social inequalities and privileges will be fully restored. All the old conservative institutions that stood in its way will either have collapsed or will be crumbling and their critical condition will have to be exploited bravely and with conviction.

To meet our needs, the European revolution must be socialist in nature, in other words, its goal must be the emancipation of the working classes and the guarantee of a decent quality of life for them. Guidance cannot come, however, from the purely doctrinaire principle whereby private ownership of the material means of production must be abolished as a rule and tolerated only temporarily for as long as it is impossible to eliminate it entirely. When the working classes first had their utopian dream of freedom from the yoke of capitalism, it took the form of the wholesale nationalization of the economy. But once this dream is achieved, it does not produce the longed for results but rather leads to a regime where the entire population is ruled over by the restricted group of bureaucrats running the economy.

The truly fundamental principle of socialism (and not its hurried and erroneous interpretation as general collectivization) is that economic forces, rather than dominating man, should be ruled over by him, like the forces of nature, guided and controlled by him as rationally as possible, so that the general population does not fall victim to them. The immense forces of progress, born of individual interests, must not be spent in the backwaters of routine only to find ourselves faced with same insoluble problem of having to rekindle the spirit of initiative using salary differentials and other similar tactics. The forces of progress must be extolled and extended, with more opportunity for development and employment and, at the same time, we must strengthen and improve the banks through which these forces are channelled towards the most advantageous objectives for the whole of society.

Private property must be abolished, limited, revised, or extended analysing each case individually and not according to any dogmatic principle. This directive is a natural consequence of the development of a European economic situation freed from the nightmares of militarism or national red tape. Rational solutions must prevail over irrational ones for everyone, including the working class. Wanting to outline the content of this directive in greater detail, while realising that the benefits and practicalities of every point in the programme will now always be evaluated in relation to the inevitable premise of European unity, we wish to highlight the following points:

a) Companies operating an enforced monopoly and, therefore, in a position to exploit consumers, cannot be left to private ownership: for example, energy companies or industries that while providing collective benefits also require protective duties, subsidies, preferential orders etc. to survive (at present, the best example of this kind of industry in Italy is the steel and iron industry); and companies which, because of the large amount of capital invested, the high numbers of employees, or because of their dominant role in the sector can blackmail national institutions, imposing the policies most beneficial to themselves (for example, the mining industries, large banks, large arms manufacturers). Nationalization will definitely have to be introduced on a vast scale in these areas, regardless of acquired rights.

b) In the past, certain elements of the legislation governing private property and inheritance led to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, privileged members of society. In a revolutionary crisis it would be as well to redistribute this wealth more equally, thereby eliminating the parasitic classes and giving the workers the means of production they need to improve their economic situation and achieve greater independence. We are thus proposing an agrarian reform which will greatly increase the number of landowners by handing over the land to those who actually farm it together with an industrial reform which will extend workers' share ownership in non-nationalized sectors, through cooperative enterprise, employee profit-sharing, and so on.

c) The young should be given all necessary assistance to reduce to a minimum the gap between the different starting positions in the struggle to survive. State schools, in particular, should provide realistic opportunities of being able to study beyond the compulsory leaving age for the most worthy students rather than for the richest. The number of students trained in each discipline, with a view to their proceeding to learn different trades or qualify in liberal and scientific professions, should be in line with market demand, so that average salaries are roughly equivalent across all professional categories, regardless of each category's internal pay-scale based on individual skills.

d) The near limitless potential of modern technology to mass produce essential goods now guarantees, with relatively low social costs, that everyone can have food, housing, clothes and that basic level of comfort that helps maintain human dignity. Human solidarity towards those who succumb in the economic struggle must not, therefore, take on the humiliating form of charity that produces the very same evils it seeks to erase but should consist in a series of measures to guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone, unconditionally, whether they can work or not, but without affecting the stimulus to work and save. In this way, people will no longer be forced to accept oppressive work contracts through poverty.

e) The freedom of the working classes can only be achieved once the conditions described above have been met. They must not be abandoned once again to the economic policies of monopolistic trade unions who simply transfer the oppressive methods usually used in high-capital environments to the factories. The workers must return to being free to choose their own representatives so as to negotiate collectively the conditions under which they will work, and the state must provide the legal means to guarantee the implementation of the terms negotiated. But it will be possible to successfully challenge all monopolistic tendencies once these social changes have been brought about.

These changes are needed both to create widespread support among all classes of citizens interested in the welfare of the new institutional system and for politics to be strongly influenced by the ideal of freedom and a firm sense of social solidarity. With this premise, political freedom will have substance as well as form for all because the vast majority of citizens will have sufficient independence and education to be able to exert continuous and effective control over the ruling class.

At this stage, it would be superfluous to dwell at length on the constitutional institutions, as we cannot yet foresee the circumstances under which they will be set up and run and thus can only repeat what everyone already knows about the need for representative bodies, the law-making process, the independence of the judiciary, with the substitution of its members to safeguard the impartial application of new legislation and freedom of the press and right of assembly to guarantee enlightened public opinion and the opportunity for all citizens to take an active part in the life of the state. There are two questions, however, that need to be considered more carefully because of their particular significance to our country at the present time: the relationship between church and state and the system of political representation.

a) The Treaty that sealed the end of the Vatican's alliance with Fascism in Italy will no doubt be abolished in favour of a totally secular state where the supremacy of that state in all civil matters will be unequivocally established. All religious faiths will receive equal respect, while the state will no longer finance the various religious denominations.

b) The straw house built by Fascist corporatism will be blown away along with the other elements of the totalitarian state. There are those who believe that something can be salvaged from the present construction and put to use in the new constitutional order. We do not agree. In totalitarian states, the corporative chambers are the final insult of police control over the workers. Even if the corporative chambers were an honest expression of the will of the various categories of production, the representative bodies of the various professional categories would never be qualified to negotiate issues of general policy and, where more specifically economic questions are concerned, they would become oppressive bodies within the categories with the most powerful trade unions. The unions will cooperate extensively with those state bodies appointed to resolve any problems directly involving the workers, but they will have absolutely no legislative power, as this would lead first to feudal anarchy within the economic system, and ultimately to renewed political despotism. Many of those who were naively seduced by the lure of corporatism, can and should be seduced by the renovation programme. But they must realize the absurdity of the solution suggested by their confused daydreaming. Corporatism can only really exist in the form given by totalitarian states, to regiment the workers under the control of officials who monitor their every move in the interests of the ruling class.

The revolutionary party cannot be improvised amateurishly at the decisive moment, but must start developing at least its main political framework, with its general guidelines and the first directives for action. It must not be a miscellaneous collection of factions, temporarily united only in their dissent, in other words united by their anti-Fascist past and simply waiting for the fall of the totalitarian regime, each ready to go their own separate way once this goal is reached. The revolutionary party, on the other hand, knows that only then will its real work begin. It must therefore be made up of men who agree on the main issues for the future.

Wherever there are people oppressed by the present regime, it must intervene with methodical propaganda. With whatever problem is the most pressing for individuals and classes as its starting point, it must demonstrate how this problem is linked to others, and indicate its true solution. But from this gradually increasing circle of sympathizers, it must single out and recruit into the movement only those who have chosen the European revolution as the

main goal of their lives, those who put in the necessary work with determination, day after day, carefully monitoring its ongoing, effective results, even in the most desperate illegal situations and who will, ultimately, be the solid network that will act as a bedrock to the more fleeting ranks of sympathizers.

Although no opportunity or context should be neglected in its efforts to spread the word, the revolutionary party must be active first and foremost in those environments best suited for the spreading of ideas and the recruitment of combative men and specifically among the two most sensitive social groups of the current panorama, who will be decisive for the future: in other words, the working class and the intellectuals. The former are those who bowed the least under the totalitarian rod and will be best prepared to reorganize their ranks. The latter, and the younger intellectuals in particular, are those who feel most spiritually suffocated and disgusted with the present despotism. Inevitably, other social groups will gradually be seduced by the general movement.

Any movement which fails to form an alliance between these two forces, is condemned to sterility. For, if the movement is made up solely of intellectuals, it will lack the mass strength to crush reactionary resistance and it will distrust and be distrusted by the working class: despite being inspired by democratic sentiment, in the face of difficulties, it will be inclined to drift towards a position of mobilisation of all the other classes against the workers and therefore a return to Fascism. If, on the other hand, the movement is supported only by the proletariat, it will lack the clarity of thought that only intellectuals can bring and that is fundamental in identifying new goals and new solutions: the movement would be held to ransom by the old class system, viewing everyone as a potential enemy, and would slip and fall on the doctrinaire communist solution.

During the revolutionary crisis, it is up to this movement to organise and guide the progressive forces, using all the popular bodies which form spontaneously as incandescent melting pots in which to mix the revolutionary masses, not to organise plebiscites, but rather to await guidance. It derives its vision and certainty of what is to be done not from some pre-emptive form of as yet non-existent popular consensus, but rather from the knowledge that it represents the deep-rooted needs of modern society. In this way it draws up the basic guidelines of the new order, the first social discipline for the undefined masses. The new state is formed through this dictatorship of the revolutionary party, allowing a new, true democracy to take shape around it.

There is no need to fear that such a revolutionary regime will automatically lead to renewed despotism. This only comes about if the movement has shaped a submissive society. But if the revolutionary party

proceeds with a firm hand from the very beginning in creating the conditions for freedom, whereby every citizen can truly participate in the life of the state, then it will evolve, despite possible secondary political crises, towards a progressive universal understanding and acceptance of the new order and, therefore, with a greater likelihood of working effectively and having free political institutions.

The time has now come to recognise that we must rid ourselves of the cumbersome burdens of the past and be ready to face whatever the future might bring, however different it is to what we expected. We must get rid of the incompetent among the old and stimulate new energy among the young. As they begin to lay the foundations of the future, those who have perceived the reasons for the current crisis in European civilization and have therefore inherited the legacy of all movements dedicated to promoting human dignity - movements shipwrecked either on their lack of a common goal or their lack of means by which to achieve it - these people are now seeking each other out and are meeting together.

The road ahead is neither smooth nor certain. But we must follow it and so we shall!

Altiero Spinelli - Ernesto Rossi