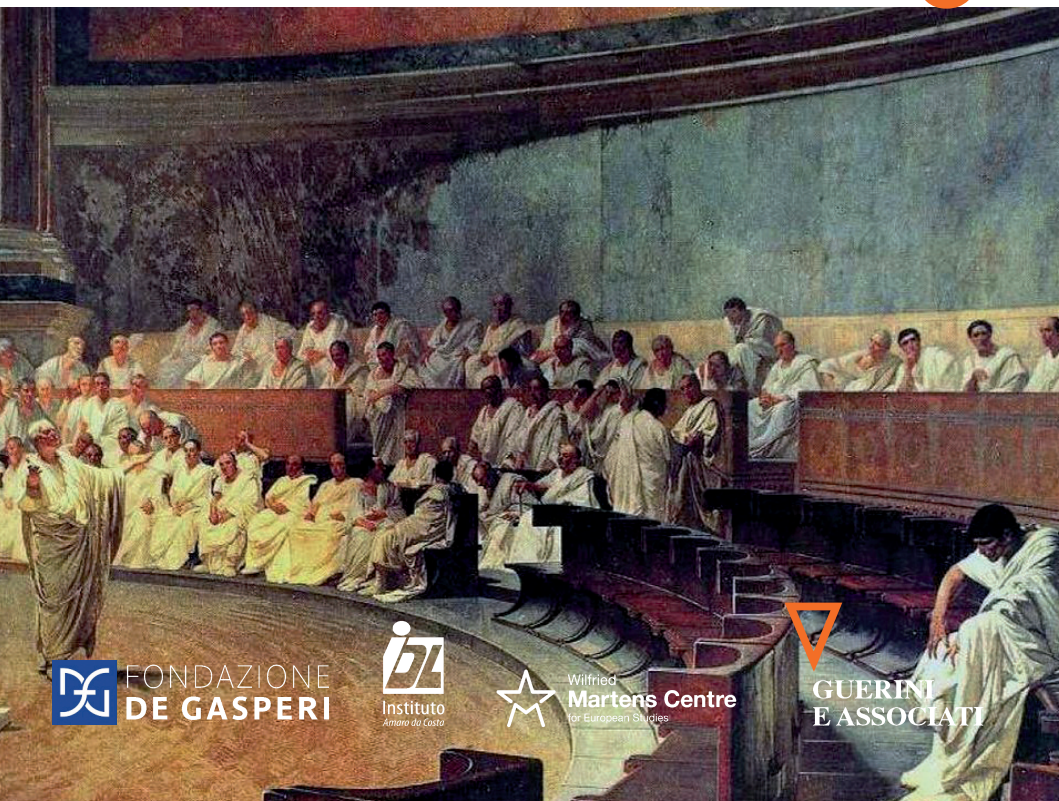


The Art of Politics

YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING FORWARD
TO THE FUTURE

THE SEMINARS

3



FONDAZIONE
DE GASPERI



Istituto
Amintore Costa



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies



GUERINI
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THE ART OF POLITICS
YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING FORWARD
TO THE FUTURE

School of Political Education, First Edition

Fondazione De Gasperi
Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
Istituto Amaro da Costa

GUERINI
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Introduction

School of Political Education

Lorenzo Malagola

*Secretary General,
De Gasperi Foundation*

The reasons for supporting a school of political education, and doing so in the light of the values incarnated by the philosophy and example of Alcide de Gasperi, are part of that sense of responsibility towards oneself and one's own national community that each new generation needs to express. It is, unfortunately, an urge which is increasingly limited to a minority, an isolated group of people who, over and above their direct commitment to political representation, are keenly aware that their own destiny is linked to that of their fellow human beings.

This school was therefore set up to train, or rather to educate, people to a sense of having a common destiny, an essential requirement to serve a community of people. Politics cannot be reduced to technicalities or procedures but instead needs the wide horizon of idealism. And our ideal is the Christian one, which De Gasperi was able to interpret so fully without ever succumbing to sectarian impulses or reducing its original form, with the result that he was recognized as a servant of God along with two other political giants of the twentieth century, Schumann and Adenauer.

The non-rhetorical question to be asked is, therefore, whether this ideal is still relevant. We believe the answer is yes, because wherever it has been followed it has been able to gen-

erate community and culture. We have to start from there to build a new humanism and restore the values which are at the heart of the Italian republic and a united Europe. Unfortunately, many of these values are being hollowed out in people's experience and this creates confusion. Think, for example, of freedom, and its original relationship with the category of truth, which was so clear at the time of De Gasperi. Today it has lost consensus and freedom has become synonymous with relativism. Our school of education, therefore, wants to go back to the fundamentals, calling upon participants to bring their own personal experience into play to arrive at a new political vision which does not betray the tradition that has created us.

More specifically, the school is the fruit of cooperation with the Martens Centre for European Studies in Brussels and the Amaro da Costa Institute in Lisbon to bring together young people who are from different geographical backgrounds but who have in common a single cultural affiliation. The school is structured around three sessions – in Rivarolo Canavese (TO), Lisbon and Rome – and some of the most interesting speeches have been collected here. The school has been planned to be residential in order to facilitate the development of friendship and exchange of ideas and is the starting point for work which will continue over the course of the coming months and in preparation for its next edition.

I

**NATURE, HUMAN EXPERIENCE,
POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Rivarolo Canavese, October 23rd-25th 2015

The Energy Question and Political Responsibility: Cases and Problem Areas

Lapo Pistelli

Senior Deputy President of ENI

The subject that I have been given is so vast that, to tackle it in a simple way, I have identified four key issues to examine over the course of the talk.

But, before starting, I would like to offer you a preamble in «fantasy» style, a stroll through history, a leap back in time.

If we leave aside motivations based more on human nature, such as ambition and the desire for power and dominance, conflicts and wars from the very beginning of human society have always been for the possession of food, territory, water, lines of communication and sources of energy. At school we studied how the great civilizations were born on rivers – the Egyptians on the Nile, the Assyrians and Babylonians in Mesopotamia, the fertile lands between the Tigris and Euphrates, sadly in the news again today as the place where the caliphate is rooted. Our cities too have the same origin: Florence and the Arno, Rome and the Tiber. Water is central to people's lives, both where it is abundant and where it is missing. Nomadic tribes fight over the few oases of the desert. In our own time, the conflict in Darfur, although charged with political-religious and tribal motives, is primarily a conflict between nomadic herdsmen and settled farmers over scarce water resources. The Trojan War did not break out, alas, over Helen's beauty but for

control over the Dardanelles Strait, a major trade route of the time. The United States and China are competing for control and security over the seas and straits to the south of China, which have become the main transit point for routes to the Pacific. The American fifth fleet is moored in Bahrein, in the Strait of Hormuz, where every day 30-35% of the oil traded on the world's sea routes passes by. Somali pirates, for their part, made their attacks in the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, the access route for the Suez Canal. Water is a channel of communication: Russia today is returning to Syria to support the regime of its «friend» Assad, but also because through Syria it has historically always had access to the Mediterranean Sea, where it has its own base at Tartus. Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait in 1991 to gain his own access to the sea.

The question was brought into focus 150 years ago in one of the first debates on geopolitics, when the Englishman Mackinder urged his compatriots to look beyond the syndrome of the British Empire's splendid isolation, through its dominance over the world's seas, by pointing out that the fundamental dominion was that of the Heartland, the continental mass of Eurasia centred upon Russia and continental Europe. Water, always water: the discovery of America, and then the circumnavigation of the world around the Cape of Good Hope by Bartolomeo Diaz, cast a shadow over the Mediterranean, which had been fundamental for so many centuries and where so many civilizations had flourished with so much wealth. Today the centrality of the Mediterranean has been rediscovered, first with the opening of the Suez Canal and, more recently, with new traffic between Asia and Europe through the logistics platform of the Gulf. Yesterday evening you were discussing climate change: Roald Amundsen in 1906 was the first to complete the so-called North West passage, taking advantage of a few crucial weeks in the year to find a route linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Canadian Arctic archipelago. Nowadays, as a result of climate change, that route is open for several weeks of the year and there are even plans to profit

from environmental disaster by stabilising the route in order to shorten the time required for commercial traffic.

When we were organized in tribes, we fought and raided over herds of animals. Animals for working and transportation were the first form of energy to spark conflict. Perhaps there are people who still believe that the First World War broke out because of the pistol shots fired at the Archduke of Austria in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, as in the cover illustration of *Domenica del Corriere*. In reality, this was the first modern world conflict over energy, undertaken for possession of the coal and iron deposits of the Ruhr between France and Germany. It is no accident that the European Parliament is located in Strasbourg, not to encourage tourism among parliamentarians, but to place the heart of European democracy at the heart of the twentieth century battlefields between France and Germany. Nor is it by chance that the first step on the path to European integration was taken by bringing together coal and steel, the resources over which nations had fought transformed into things to be shared. Lenin himself defined communism as «soviets plus the power of electrification», a very poetic definition, I must say. In short, during the last forty years no African or Middle-Eastern conflict has been justified or explained, rightly or wrongly, in educational conferences or pamphlets or newspaper articles, as having originated over the possession of energy resources.

End of the «fantasy» preamble. Energy, in my opinion, is an important crossroads in relations between nations, a potential dividing line between war and peace, a basic factor in development models, a key to distinguishing between fairness and inequality over access to resources: in a word, it is a prism through which to see and interpret the reality that surrounds us.

The first question I would like to try to answer is both simple and complex, at the same time: how much energy is there in the world and how much do we need?

I will begin with a personal reflection which, for reasons of age, will be understood only by the adults present. When I was a child, in the early 1970s, there was popular intellectual debate around certain books which focussed for the first time on the subject of «limits to development»: Aurelio Peccei and the Club di Roma, a work by Jacques Servan Schreiber, the Brandt Report on North South relations. What was the thinking behind these early books? Basically it was to call into question the benefit of a linear model of development, based on permanent growth and infinite resources. It warned of the risk of a «demographic timebomb» – a subject already found in *Populorum progressio* by Pope John XXIII. It also criticised excessive rates of consumption of finite resources and challenged the inequality of access to the resources available. Regardless of whether these ideas were right or wrong in absolute terms – many of the forecasts about the exhaustion of resources proved to be mistaken, whereas the demographic bomb really did explode – it was important to question the single-mindedness of the development model. «Positive thinkers» responded to these criticisms with two basic arguments: resources are, to all intents and purposes, infinite and – thanks to the so-called premise of technological replaceability – even when they are not infinite, an innovation will anyway come along to enable us to exploit better the few existing resources or to move on to resources which previously were not considered to be such.

I began with this adolescent memory to respond to the question on energy availability with the same criteria. On the one hand, certain factors might lead us to say that energy demand can be contained, that it is not necessarily bound to grow: greater attention to energy saving, a growing use of renewables, a new awareness of efficiency. On the other hand, there are also factors pushing in the opposite direction. According to the United Nations, between now and 2050 world population will reach over 9 billion before finally stabilising. Every year hundreds of millions of additional people will join the developed world and this

will counterbalance any hypothesis of «saving» because schools, hospitals, transport and communications depend on growth and access to energy. The right to energy opens up a different lifestyle and new reasons for consumption.

The demographic data are, in my opinion, the most interesting. 115 years ago, at the start of the 1900s, world population was one billion inhabitants. Human beings took five thousand years to become one billion and then, in little more than a century, we have become 8 billion, a rhythm matching the incredible pace of progress. 115 years ago we didn't fly, we thought the atom was the smallest particle, there were no antibiotics, no plastic, no zips, no frozen food or electrical appliances, not to mention the digital revolution. 50% of this demographic increase will take place in just five countries: China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria. Relationships between continents are changing: in 1950 Europe's population was double that of Africa, in 2050 Europe will have a third of Africa's population. So, all in all, the demand for energy is going to continue to grow.

Are there enough resources? Over the last hundred years a debate has taken place at least five times over so-called peak oil: have we reached the top of the curve and are we now destined to sink down to the bottom? In fact, so far, these forecasts have been disproved, corroborating the «positive» prognoses mentioned above: firstly, enormous new deposits have been found where they were not thought to be and, secondly, technology has improved the utilisation of existing deposits and has begun to exploit materials that were not previously considered to be resources.

Today's energy world tends to be «apolar»: energy can be found almost everywhere, at varying costs, varying depths and of varying types. No region of the planet has such a disproportionate advantage that it can hold the rest of the world to ransom. Even OPEC, which once had 60% of the market and is now reduced to about 30%, is unable to exercise autonomous control over a much more volatile market. Certainly, cost is an

important factor: extracting gas and oil in deep and ultradeep water is very expensive and so a low price per barrel inhibits the use of those resources. However, in situations of scarcity and price increase, potential resources to extract would soon become available. And then there are the new resources: shale gas and shale oil, hydrocarbons trapped in rocks which are «squeezed» through hydraulic fracturing and other techniques.

There are technological innovations which have enabled us to make better use of existing deposits. These are simple techniques so easy to visualise that they may even sound banal: perforation is no longer only done vertically since there are now new methods for horizontal drilling, functioning like straws that can curve and bend at certain points and thus tap deposits more effectively. Then we must not forget the great gas revolution: at one time gas was not considered a resource unless it could be channelled immediately into pipes and used within a short distance. In all other cases it was seen as «gas risk»: you were looking for oil but you found gas, what a pity! Gas was difficult to transport without becoming dispersed. The ENI logo itself is based on a very common image in some of the great Middle-Eastern oilfields: gas burning like a torch, known as «flaring». Then we learned how to liquify gas, to reduce it through temperature control to one six-hundredth of its volume, to put it on a ship, to transport it and to regasify it where it is needed. And so gas has become an extraordinary resource, the first revolution in hydrocarbons in recent times and the handiest solution for a clean energy model.

ENI is one of the great champions in the field of discovery. The ENI dog symbol has its six legs firmly planted in Italy but its head is all over the world, in eighty-three countries. We are the world's leading company in this sector in Africa, where we operate in sixteen countries. We are responsible *de facto* for energy supplies in Italy. In many other countries we carry out research, produce and sell on the local market without going through Italy.

Second question: what energy do we need and what is the most desirable model?

This is surely the most ideologically tricky part of the debate. From what Gianluca Galletti said yesterday there emerged the conventional wisdom that renewable is good in itself and other models, in so far as they are not renewable, are symmetrically opposite and therefore bad. Hydrocarbons by definition equal pollution and other ideas of this kind. My aim here is not to contradict this thesis on principle but rather to make it more nuanced.

Hydrocarbons are going to play a central role for a long time. If we look at the energy model as a whole – private consumers and households, industry, transportation, manufactured materials – hydrocarbons still make up 75% of the global energy pie. 20% comes from coal, which I consider the main enemy of the environment. 5% is split between nuclear and renewables of various types. Thus we are still a very long way from the model that we are yearning for and so, in any case, any desire for change in the firms within the sector will require decades of work. Besides oil remains fundamental and not only because of the major products derived directly from it: lubricants, petrol, diesel and so on. It goes much further: in the car that you sit in, in the clothes that you wear, in the wall tiles in this room there is much more oil than you can imagine. Through a variety of chemical processes, oil gives rise to an impressive range of products. Oil is still essential for the transportation industry, not only movement by air and sea but also, obviously, private transport by road. Around the world there is a total stock of about one billion motor vehicles; every year about a hundred million new vehicles are added to it; of these hundred million new vehicles, hybrids represent approximately 4%. Just think how long it will take us to make a transition. In the meantime, however, research work continues on forms of petrol which are much less polluting than some alternative energy sources were considered to be until a short time ago.

We believe that gas is in some ways a bridging point between present and future, a basically clean resource that we have available today. Since the 1970s Italy has already taken enormous steps to convert cities to methane: many cities have gradually converted old oil-burning furnaces, particularly smelly and polluting, to much cleaner gas. Obviously gas is not free from risk and the major companies are themselves taking responsibility for reducing CO₂ emissions, beginning with gas flaring. Just in the last four years ENI has cut emissions by 27%, amounting to sixteen million tons less CO₂ in the atmosphere, and has set the very ambitious target of zero flaring by 2030. Gas is today also the main energy source feeding electric power stations – apart from hydroelectric stations in Italy, which I will come back to later. So when we are talking about electric cars, for example, and the power points to supply them, shouldn't we ask who has produced this electricity? What has fed the power station to produce the electric energy? In many cases it is gas. It is essential to keep the complete energy cycle in mind: we get this energy in a certain form at the end, but how is it produced at source? Gas is not only useful for heating, or for forms of transport which are still marginal, it is also fundamental as the source supplying the power stations to produce electric energy.

The «enemy» – to put it in highly simplified terms – is coal. Coal costs very little nowadays but pollutes a lot. So if the choice of the best resource to produce energy is left to the market, the market will turn spontaneously towards coal. Yet 1% more use of coal, on an aggregate scale, cancels out 10% greater use of renewables. This is why – in view of the Paris summit – I say that the political powers must find the strength to set binding objectives, not ethical targets. Otherwise, by simply giving in to the market, coal will win.

Let's play a little game to appreciate just how complicated this battle is in terms of interests. If I ask you to tell me the names of the leading oil & gas companies, in a few seconds all the important names will come out: Gazprom, Shell, BP, Exxon-Mobil, Total, Repsol, Statoil. But if I ask you for the name of a

multinational coal company? The response is silence. oil & gas is always in the firing line. But nobody even knows who the coal producers are.

Then there is nuclear. Italy has its own well-known history over nuclear power: a bit of a mess, then a referendum, an attempted comeback and then the endgame after Fukushima. Other European countries have made different choices, I'm thinking of France in particular. With nuclear power the difference between safety and danger depends on technology, but – unlike any other source of energy – a mistake with nuclear is irreversible and methods of decommissioning are also still extremely complicated and expensive. This is true for power stations in normal operation but even more so in the case of accidents, whether involuntary or deliberate: we are still having to deal with the consequences of abandoned waste material following the Israeli bombardment of the Osirak plant in Iraq in 1981. And it is true, even if the technology itself is safe, when Nature intervenes: we all remember the consequences of the earthquake and tsunami which ravaged Japan and the Fukushima power plant.

Renewable forms of energy – wind, sun, biomass, geothermal, hydro – should be used whenever and wherever they are. However, we cannot pretend to find them where they don't exist: this is ultimately the only limit to ideological commitments. Italy has one of the highest shares of renewables in Europe in its energy basket. Our activity in renewables dates back a long time: to our hydroelectric power stations fed by waters captured in the Alps. However, Italy is not a place where wind and solar work everywhere. The sun is not shining 365 days a year, as in Algeria or the Gulf, and the degree of inclination of its rays is not always the most advantageous.

Renewables have a powerful educational influence, demonstrating that energy is not free and that useless consumption is a waste. At the same time they encourage intelligent self-production (for example with the installation of rooftop solar panels) even though large energy saving does not come

from household use but from the productive system and large infrastructure.

Renewables are part of Africa's great destiny. Africa has oil, gas, biomass, wind, sun and also geothermal; it has everything but it also has enormous distances and enormous infrastructure gaps. Close your eyes and think of the night-time images of Europe and Africa: the former is a permanent Christmas tree, with networks, light spots, cities, infrastructure and links; the latter has flickers of light and then a great darkness, a darkness that can last for hours on a plane flight, because in some areas over 80% of the population has no stable access to energy. What would be the best solution? To join up the points through infrastructure – in some cases we are talking about thousands of kilometres? Who is going to put in this investment? Or else to turn to the solutions that today's technology can offer, offgrid solutions, renewables able to switch on the Christmas lights without having a tree. If a village is given a good solar plant, it can be used to power a clinic, a refrigerated dispensary for vaccines, a school. Renewables can spark a minirevolution making it possible to avoid, or at least limit, the dramatic phenomenon in Africa of gigantic megalopolises with a luxury downtown area surrounded by immense shantytowns on the outskirts.

A third quick question: what is energy security in Italy and Europe?

By energy security we mean the guarantee of a stable supply for a long period at a reasonable price. Reliability is a very important concept for a country like ours which imports a large part of its energy needs. Security is based, in the first place, on the technical security of the networks, on the resilience of the networks in the face of energy shocks. Behind the security of a network there is a huge amount of work of which people are often unaware. Perhaps we read about blackouts in California and only then realize that here this phenomenon does not

happen. Then there is also economic security, concerning the supply that should be delivered. Finally, there is also «social» security: access for the poor, which we will look at later, in the last point that I want to touch on. Although it is obviously not the case here, throughout Africa and the Middle-East energy is subsidised by the State. This is clearly not an easy time because price shocks have increased out of all proportion the volatility of the market both for oil and for gas, which has an oil linked market component. For consumers low priced raw material is obviously an advantage. On the other hand, for companies and industry operators, the need to balance the books, taking into account programmed investments and renegotiation of long term contracts based on a different and higher price, represents a daily challenge.

Italy imports its energy resources from various suppliers: Russia, Norway, Libya and Algeria as well as other spot suppliers who deliver to our refineries and power stations. It is obvious that if Russia comes under the effects of sanctions over the situation in Ukraine and there are weaknesses on the southern front, then our energy supplies may feel the repercussions. The strategic choice is therefore to diversify energy sources and at the same time to diversify the suppliers of those sources so as not to be overdependent on anyone or anything.

Each European country has its own energy pie: ours, as I have said, contains a lot of oil and gas but also has a significant share of renewables. Other countries, especially in Eastern Europe, still depend a lot on coal; others again, like France, continue to back nuclear. So it is difficult to talk about European energy security since individual national options remain very diversified. Given this situation, combined with the need for environmental sustainability, ENI has called upon Europe to exercise greater coherence: we have to be very strict on carbon pricing, discouraging the use of coal, however much cheaper it may seem. We must also look upon gas as a bridging solution for several more years, completing the infrastructure network connecting countries (France and Spain are not linked and so

African gas which arrives in Spain stops at the Pyrenees) and ensuring reverse flow, in other words enabling gas to move in both directions according to need.

A final question: is having abundant supplies of fossil fuels a blessing or a curse?

The Saudis call oil «Allah's gift». In an interview after a concert given in Turin on September 4th, Bono from U2 said that when an oilfield is discovered in Africa some people celebrate but for many others it is a curse. The Vice-President of the Emirates often says that his aim is to make plans for the first generation that will wake up one day without a drop of oil.

In economic modelling it is said that, when a resource becomes the central element within a development model, there is a risk of so-called «Dutch disease», recalling what happened after the discovery of the first gas deposits in the North Sea. With all efforts concentrated on this resource, the local currency increases in value, the country's other industries and products become less competitive, exports fall, imports rise and the economic system – with the exception of the key resource – goes into decline.

Complicated traps lay in wait for a country that becomes a «rentier economy». In the Gulf, and other regions too, many economies only export hydrocarbon products and gain almost their entire earnings from that, having effectively eliminated even personal income tax. They also provide every citizen with important services, from energy to housing, completely free. This choice has significant political implications in the current period. The American Revolution began with the slogan «No taxation without representation», the basis of fiscal citizenship: civil and political rights in exchange for taxes. The oil-monarchies of the Gulf have turned this principle upside down, changing it to «No taxation, therefore no representation»: we don't make you pay taxes and we subsidise everything so we

don't give you political rights. In the years of plenty the oil-monarchies stashed away immense reserves in their Sovereign Funds and in special Reserve Funds: over 800 billion dollars both for Saudi Arabia and for the Emirates. To maintain this model of entirely subsidised social spending, these countries need an oil price of between 90 and 130 dollars per barrel, depending on each particular case. This period of low prices is thus seriously eroding their national budgets: they must either draw massively on their reserves or radically reform their expenditure commitments. Finally, it has to be borne in mind that some of these countries have rates of demographic growth and consumption which are rapidly changing their circumstances. Despite its daily production of almost 11 million barrels, over the next fifteen years Saudi Arabia could become an importer of energy as a result of its young and growing population, high level of social spending and escalating demand for energy (in part because of an upsurge in water desalination plants). In Africa, apart from the group of Arab nations which follow a similar model, although in a more impoverished form, there are emerging countries like Mozambique, Angola and the countries of the Gulf of Guinea. In these nations the key decision will be how to distribute wealth better and, above all, how to diversify the destination of proceeds in order to give the country a solid economic base.

I would like to conclude with a brief reflection on ENI.

I am very proud to work for this company. It is the leading firm in our country, employs 84,000 people, operates in 83 countries around the world and is the leading operator in Africa. However it is not just a question of numbers, but rather the idea that ENI has of itself in the world. You know the story of Mattei and his dream, his ambition to make Italy one of the great countries in the discovery and production of energy. Also his sometimes aggressive method of imposing himself among the Seven Sisters and finding a new way to engage with the countries of the South at the time of decolonisation. Today we

still call that way of co-existing with partner countries «dual flag», our flag and their flag. ENI is a metaphor for a young country, defeated in the war and in some ways fragile, which becomes a protagonist among nations. ENI is a company which capitalises on an immense wealth of knowledge and technology, which makes discoveries where others cannot because it is able to think in a different way and which engages with local communities in a spirit of equality.

Too often in Italy we are unable to see things in the right perspective: there are times when we feel like the giants of our dreams – we are the champions of the world, better than anybody else – and then there are times when we are like dwarves in our worst nightmares; we are like Calimero, nothing goes right for us. If we stop swinging between extremes and instead find our own rhythm in the world and are able to maintain it consistently, we will see that Italy enjoys «goodwill» through having an image that is truly without equal. It is an image of culture, beauty and quality of life, certainly, but also of competence, innovation and technology. I am happy to be part of one of those companies which we can show to the world as an essential component of this Italian pride.

The Greek Crisis: Economic & Political Implications

Anthony Ioannidis

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For twelve years I have been a member of the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy (KKID), a non-profit organization which was founded in Athens in 1998. It is named after Konstantinos Karamanlis, a former Prime Minister and President of the Greek Republic, who, in 1974 founded the New Democracy Party, of which our Institute is the official think-tank. KKID is also a founding member of the Martens Centre for European Studies, which is part of the European Network of Political Foundations. KKID cooperates with numerous international organizations, organizes public events and conferences, political seminars and research projects.

The subject which I have been asked to talk about is the crisis in Greece, in particular its economic and political implications. I would point out that this crisis has hit not only Greece but the whole of Europe, although media attention was focused on our situation.

In recent years conditions in our country, always regarded as fortunate for the beauty of its landscape and for its rich cultural heritage, have seriously deteriorated. At first we thought that the crisis which began in the USA with the collapse of financial institutions would not affect Greece, but one year later we realized that we too were exposed to this international risk. At

that moment our financial institutions were in difficulty and the political system was incapable of offering solutions. Discontent spread through the population and the concern was not just over the financial situation but all its repercussions on daily life. This has led to six elections in the last five years and, unfortunately, I fear that there will be others very soon.

Although there is a lot of discussion about Grexit – Greece leaving the euro – the majority of our people remain in favour of Europe, with very few taking the opposite view. Among these, unfortunately, there are several officials from the ruling party.

Turning to more specific matters, I would like to talk about the recent elections, and also reflect briefly on the referendum, before going on to describe the present situation and give my forecast for the coming years.

It is unavoidable that the political alliance which emerged victorious from the last election will put into effect the new 86 billion euro bailout deal. The big question remains whether the Prime Minister has the will and the competence to go ahead, otherwise his victory could soon turn into a disaster. His previous government collapsed because of its ambiguous electoral promises which led to conflict within the different factions of his party. Questions over Greece's political future appear to have been answered for now, but economic questions still remain. The new government looks more ideologically cohesive, made more so because this time he campaigned on a clear promise to respect the terms of the bailout program.

Clearly attention today is specifically on the economy. At the end of October the government will have to review the budget for 2015 and present a budget for 2016 that includes substantial spending cuts. To comply with its bailout terms, the government will also have to introduce new tax hikes for farmers, introduce reforms in the labour market, and continue with the privatization plan, all before the end of 2015. The government will additionally have to work with its lenders to reform the Greek banking sector and create the framework to recapitalize the

nation's banks, four banks, while also trying to progressively lift the capital controls that were introduced last June.

With regard to recapitalisation of the banks, this is a race against time. To accomplish it over the next months various steps will need to be taken, such as for the ECB to finish its stress tests to decide how much capital the banks require. The four systemically important banks then need to see if private investors will participate in this recapitalisation. The ECB has already performed an «asset quality review», which indicated that some 15 to 25 billion euros may be needed. Greece is the only Western nation which functions without banks and this has already become a case study in recent years.

The priority of the current government is to avoid having depositors participate in a bailout by sacrificing some of their savings. Over the coming weeks government negotiations with its lenders will focus on two issues: the pace of reform and the disbursement of bailout money, and second, the country's debt relief. This new demanding bailout programme with constant performance reviews could create multiple occasions for the government to clash with its creditors, while, at the same time, the introduction of austerity measures could well erode popular support, thus slowing the pace of reform. The economy could grow very slowly, reducing the likelihood that Greece will simply grow out of its debt any time soon. Greece's debt could remain unsustainable and, although the threat of Grexit has been temporarily averted, it has not been completely eliminated.

As for the referendum in July 2015, in effect almost two out of three Greeks voted against the terms that the country's creditors demanded in exchange for additional funding. There are three reasons for this miscalculation. The first is that the coalition of the radical left party which forms the government has a very clear understanding of the Greek «mood», people's state of mind. The second reason is that the continual contempt which European leadership showed for the Prime Minister convinced Greeks not only that the contempt was understood to be for

them but also that whoever was so despised by European leadership could not really be in such a disastrous situation. The third reason is that the European leadership put Greek electors in a position where they thought they had nothing to lose.

With regard to the previous period, following the ratification of the first rescue programme of May 2010, Greece underwent an unprecedented series of macroeconomic adjustments: we lost about 25% of our gross national product and unemployment rose to 26%. Creditors believe that the third bailout programme will lead to a 3.5% reduction in GDP, thus reaching an overall reduction of 30% in GDP over five years.

As far as Greece's economic situation today is concerned, the general borrowing requirements of the government, over a three year period from 2015 to August 2018, are estimated to rise to 91 billion euros. 85% of this sum would come from financial backers and 6.2 billion euros from privatisation. To achieve 6.2 billion it is necessary in the near future to make our debt and its sustainability more manageable. Economic growth is the only way to restore Greece's fiscal sustainability. Based on today's levels, I would say that for every 1% rise in our GDP, the debt and GDP ratio will go down by 2% and vice versa.

With regard to the Greek government's negotiations over activities with Russia, the Russians had expressed some real interest in energy-related projects, but this happened in the recent past, during the Kostas Karamanlis period.

The funds involved in the first two rescue programmes were quite large, amounting to 226 billion euros, of which 194.8 billion came from Europe and 32 billion from the International Monetary Fund. According to the amortization programme we must repay these loans by the end of 2057: thus over the next 40 years. If Greece returned to the drachma, the debt would be ten times higher. With regard to the national debt, most of it is not regulated by Greek courts and so it is under foreign, not national jurisdiction: 85% of the debt involves foreign legal bodies.

If we wish to single out the main protagonists of this Greek drama, we need to point, in the first place, to the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), which has recently declared that Greece cannot repay its debts and cannot escape from its economic nightmare without substantial restructuring, or alternatively a multi-decade extension of the loan period. This means a very, very long repayment period (50 or 60 years). So, instead of paying back the debt in 40 years, this could become 50, 60 or 70 years and instead of paying back 400 billion euros, we should repay about half of that, something which is obviously impossible. The IMF has clarified that this greater austerity, apart from imposing an enormous burden on the Greeks, will have the effect of delaying Greek recovery or even debt repayment. No other European country finds itself in such a terrible state as Greece, however a number of countries, especially in Southern Europe, have a very heavy national debt which they might wish to renegotiate and Italy is clearly one of these countries. The problem with debt restructuring is that once you do it for one country, for example Greece, the others will want to do the same. The European Union had absolutely no wish to create any precedents which might then affect other possible future crises or other anti-EU governments.

The second actor in this scenario is Germany, which is looking very carefully at the future of the European Union. In the view of many Europeans, however, Germany is much less worried about Greece or the euro than it is about the free trade area which absorbs an enormous share of its huge exports. With credit controls and default, Greece would represent a loss of only a tiny market for Germany, since it makes up less than 2% of European GDP, and the last thing that Germany wants is that this should spread across Southern Europe or that it should be obliged to pay for the privilege of these other countries being rescued. This is why attention should now shift from Greece to Germany, which is at the heart of European leadership.

The third player is Greece. Greece has a formula which has been miscalculated: traditional wisdom says that an internal debt amounting to 175% is unsustainable, but this is not true.

More careful analysis shows that the solution is growth, not the zeroing of the debt. The problem is that currently there is no economic freedom in Greece. As far as the deficit is concerned, the only thing that counts is growth. It would clearly be worth incurring whatever additional debt is necessary in the short term, in order to fund supply-side tax cuts that would increase real GDP growth. The question is: is there any hope for Greece? Yes, there is hope, in the sense that real GDP growth of over 1.5% would make its current debt of 175% sustainable. In practical terms, it would be a matter of achieving GDP growth of 1.5% every year over the coming years. However, I believe that this could be extremely difficult or even impossible, given that average European GDP growth rate estimates are much lower than this.

The answer to the above question, therefore, may be no, in the sense that even this tiny growth is probably not achievable without transformational supply-side reforms, such as greater economic freedom, including much lower taxes on savings and investments, which are just about the last thing in the world that we could expect from the radical leftist PM Tsipras.

Conclusions: there were elections, but no exit from the crisis. The Greek government soon realized – once it had obtained its victory in January 2015 – that it could not deliver on mutually exclusive election pledges: the first was to bring an end to austerity; the second to put the economy on the road to recovery and the third to stay in the euro. It managed only to stay in the euro, but at a high price. This new dose of deflationary measures in the 86 billion euro bailout programme will deepen the depression. The Greek economy has contracted by 29% since 2009 and is still shrinking after months of financial turmoil. The European project itself could be at stake. Without greater confidence in a future for Greece within a currency union, co-existing with enough pro growth policies to support better employment opportunities, the odds of failure remain as likely as the possibility of success. For all these reasons, Greece's hypothetical break from the Eurozone, not to

mention from the European Union itself, could bring about a historic weakening of Europe at a time when solidarity is absolutely essential, and this is an outcome that nobody should wish for. Regardless of the outcome of the coming months for Greece, Europe must not be allowed to self-destruct.

This outcome can be prevented by a combination of competence, fairness and leadership and there are signs that the recovery is having success. I think that there are new politicians in Greece trying to put forward their views and to convince people that the formula being followed, imposed by Europe, is the wrong one. I am rather optimistic about the future of Greece.

Turning to the pension system, the problem is that there are 2 million people unemployed and only 3.5 million working citizens to support the pension and social security system of a country of 10.5 million citizens, and this is not sufficient. In the past the national debt rose precisely in order to finance the welfare state. Today we can no longer afford it and I do not know how this new government will be able to find the funds for the pension system. Their aim is to create a basic state pension of 350 euros per person, with all additional benefits coming from contributory pensions funded by people during their working lives.

There is a question mark over European Union solidarity because the stakes are high: Greece only accounts for 3% but there are bigger countries, such as Italy and Spain, which are not immune from these problems. I do not think that the Germans either could, or would want to, take on heavier burdens and so I am not very optimistic about their handling of European problems. What is needed is a big round table discussion on this subject involving European leaders, including Germany and all of us, the countries of Southern Europe.

II

THE ART OF POLITICS

Lisbon, November 21st-22nd 2015

Political Representatives: Historical Perspectives and Up to Date Problems

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1. Historical terms and theorists of political representation

Europe has recently been through a tremendous crisis, which is not only financial, but also, especially for some aspects, mainly political as well as social. A crisis leading both institutions and citizens to reconsider many fundamental elements of the whole process of European integration, started after the Second World War. Among such critical elements, there is the democratic system of political representation, showing its different shapes: political instability, non-governability, electoral absenteeism, protesting antagonist movements, governments increasingly overwhelmed by technical and bureaucratic elements and expressing people's will less and less.

The reasons of such crisis are varied and not all of them can be known or knowable. The aim of this short dialogue is to try, on the one hand, to go through the historical and juridical elements of the political representation (especially in Europe), and on the other, to try to highlight and understand which could be the problematic elements lately affecting the model of political representation as conceived by the main European institutions.

The historical part is not only didactics or recap oriented, this is why – as confirmed by one of the most important con-

temporary jurists, Paolo Grossi (currently judge in the Italian Constitutional Court) – the historical method, along with the prescriptive-juridical method serves as a «critical conscience, disclosing as complex what could appear simple, turning absolute certainties into relative ones».

Scientific literature does not provide a true univocal definition of political representation. By and large, one can say that political representation is a juridical element (for some aspects, even administrative) allowing some people to decide and act in favour of a wider and more organized or anyway legally defined social group (for example, residents in the same city or citizens of the same State).

Different, and not to be confused, is juridical representation, an essentially private law institute, disciplined by different national law codes.

A precise definition of political representation is not easy to provide. Countless have been – in fact – the attempts to define in a clear way, contents and characteristics, trying to define what mechanisms are at the basis of the relationship between representatives and represented. Rousseau, deemed true representation impossible, since «sovereignty cannot be represented» and considered as «against the natural order of things, the existence of a ruling majority and a ruled minority». The only practicable way is therefore through «technical» representation, where the selected ones are linked by a total identical condition to the people, being their only revocable spokespeople in any moment¹. Montesquieu's approach is very different, considering political representation as the only practicable

¹ This statement refers to the following: «Sovereignty cannot be represented, for the same reason that cannot be alienated; it consists essentially in the general will, and the will is not represented; it is the same or different; there is no middle ground. The deputies of the people, therefore, are not and cannot be their representatives; they are merely their stewards: they cannot conclude anything definitively. Every law the people has not ratified in person is void, it is not a law», J.J. Rousseau, *Il contratto sociale*, Italian translation by M. Garin, Laterza, Rome 2000, p. 102.

way; as the direct representation of all citizens is impossible. For Kelsen – and more recently for Popper – political representation is a necessary fiction, whereas for Orlando it is the choice of those with greater capacities; Schmitt instead defines it as «general will» and not as a «will shared by everybody»².

These two concepts, general will and everybody's will, appear very similar, though referring to different realities: everybody's will is the sum of each individual's will and therefore it could be equal to the number of people represented; the general will – on the other hand – is not the sum of all wills but its synthesis. Representing general will is possible, representing everybody's will is –actually– impossible.

In this passage the first fundamental and recurring element concerning representation is outlined: its foundations basically lie on approximation, and the real objective of representation is to start from everybody's indistinct will (the above mentioned «will of everybody») and to proceed in a – potentially infinite – series of approximations to get as close as possible to general will.

In a way – and here as well, with a good portion of approximation and imagination – we could say that representation is to juridical science what π is for maths: as π is used in maths to reach the closest number to the circle area, political representation is used in constitutional law to comply as much as possible with everybody's interests.

Then, which should be the basis of an effective democratic system? «The concern of democracy is translated into the concern for a democratic government, which is not the people's government, and not even the government of the arithmetic majority of the people. Anyway that government is the one where the greatest identification between rulers and ruled people lies, along with the least possible condition of oppression of the rulers on the ruled people».

² A. Barbera, «Rappresentanza e istituti di democrazia diretta nell'eredità della rivoluzione francese», *Pol. dir.*, 1989, pp. 541-546.

Such short theoretical hints, namely the reference to some jurists and philosophers who were among the first theorists of the modern concept of political representation, show us how complex it may be to elaborate a specific definition of the concept of political representation and, above all, to solve the knots and the apparent contradictions due to its conceptual versatility.

We should start from some fundamental questions: what is political representation? Which evidences do historical events highlight? Which are the tools that could be offered today so that the relationship between representatives and represented can be physiological and not pathological?

Political representation is mainly a social fact: as old as man, it is expressed as an association based reality, as the real need of every community, even the tiniest: in each human community, *many* people tend to put in the hand of *few* people their requests³. This offers a first fundamental element: political representation existed before the State, its organs and its law; it existed before democracy and its procedures.

Thus, how does the law consider the social phenomenon of political representation? It can certainly provide some tools by which this concept can be expressed in the best way possible⁴, elaborating models to «promote the coincidence between winning political representation and political power, so that it could coincide with the representation relationship as it is in reality»⁵.

³ See D. Nocilla, «Crisi della rappresentanza politica e partiti politici», *Giur. cost.*, 1989, p. 531. Or just think of the ever-present tendency to establish new collective movements for the protection of new or different interests or new or re-aggregated social groups: see G. Pasquino, *Crisi dei partiti e governabilità*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1980, pp. 128 ss.

⁴ This approach is the opposite of the organicist and abstract vision of political representation, where you end up, in fact, to consider the State (the Nation) as a body operating its sovereignty, while the people is the bearer of a bare right, incapable of exercising it. See G.U. Rescigno, «Alcune note sulla rappresentanza politica», *Pol. dir.*, 1995, pp. 549 ss.

⁵ G.U. Rescigno, «Alcune note sulla rappresentanza politica», cit., p. 556.

However the law cannot – and perhaps it must not – establish the concept of political representation in one only definition, as it «operates by itself, as a fact of political life, regardless of the law»⁶. Therefore the law allows its «birth, development, death as per the modes the community considers useful and necessary (the electoral law, the rights of freedom, starting from the freedom of association and thought, and so on), but the law cannot be included in political representation as such»⁷.

Where is then the starting point for a problem analysis? Which can be the elements offering the best way to understand the terms of political representation? Political representation as a multi-purpose concept is definitely tied to other subjects, first to popular sovereignty⁸. Therefore, it is clear that representation as a social fact becomes political representation *tout court* only where sovereignty belongs to the people; the law tends to search those instruments making such affiliation more effective. For this very reason a profile of theoretical bases where the concept of popular sovereignty lies, must be outlined.

1.1. *The People, a real subject*

From all of this clearly emerges how it is necessary to go back to the bases of representation, reflecting about what are the pillars upon which it rests. Any model of representation cannot renounce to the «preservation of a bond, of a connection between representatives and represented»⁹. These are not only

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 557.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 560.

⁸ This is even more fundamental in our legal system, as it is the Constitution itself which in its first article, paragraph 2, defines the people as the entity with regard to whom falls the sovereignty of the people: «Sovereignty belongs to the people and is exercised in the manner and within the limits of the Constitution».

⁹ *Ibidem*.

more or less innovating forms of direct participation (referendum, primary elections, political workshops, unstable parties etc.)¹⁰, but *relationships*, connections, affiliations, existing prior to the State; relationships whose meaning often frightens those who insistently look for an absolute *neutrality* which is humanly impossible to achieve. Of course, the reference is to those natural social coagulations, typical of any human community, we do not question the fundamental juridical concepts of neutrality and impartiality, which should never disappear.

As term of comparison, it should be kept a real subject, the people, and not its suspected representations as nation, general will, and general interest. This serves not only to re-establish the physiological dynamics of political representation, but mainly because the abstract construction of representation is at the origin of several risks. Recent history has shown how short was the transition from the theoretical concepts of nation (general will, general interests etc.) to the concept of Sovereign State, going through totalitarian States. As a matter of fact, by using fictions, the ownership of sovereignty and consequent representation power was moved from the people to the people-State, therefore reaching a sovereign ethical and totalitarian State¹¹. Leaving space to fictions or abstractions – in some cases forcing reality – it is then much harder to recognize the boundaries where such fictions or abstractions act.

This domain also includes a big part of the concerns connected with European parliamentarism. In fact, national parliaments (and in part the one in Strasbourg as well) are affected today by the abstractness of some original concepts at the basis of their creation. This can explain the slow but progressive, marginalization of the elected chambers, which are

¹⁰ Just liquidity has been by some pointed as the model to follow in the modern systems of representation: see Z. Bauman, *Modernità liquida*, Italian translation by S. Minucci, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2002.

¹¹ See E. Colarullo, *Rappresentanza politica e gruppi delle assemblee elettive*, cit.; see also M. Fioravanti, «Costituzione e Stato di diritto», in *Filosofia politica*, n. 2, 1991.

those organs expressing at their best, a bond with popular representation, in favour of a reinforcement of the prerogatives of the decision making organs, governments and (national and international) judicial authorities. If the model of representation is poorly designed, the first (and maybe the only) institutional victim is the Parliament.

2. Modern political representation and parliamentarism

When can we place the origin of the modern system of political representation? The transition that made possible the birth of modern parliaments is marked from the moment the representatives consider themselves able to make decisions independently. This can only happen in a system based on the prohibition of imperative mandate, which arises «as a necessary condition – although certainly not sufficient – to affirm the sovereignty of the assembly»¹².

«With the conquest of the sovereignty by the bourgeois parliament, the ruler no longer decides, but the elected»¹³, that is to say, the task of drafting a summary of the various individual instances is no longer attributed to the sovereign, but to the elected. This differs from the medieval model founded on a binding mandate, which requires a third mediating party, who ultimately decides. Thanks to the progressive transformation and subsequent weakening of a binding mandate, in fact, representatives are freer to mediate, to shape their positions. Briefly, it can be argued that the birth of modern parliamentarism stems precisely from the transformation of political representation: the ability of representatives to decide for themselves is the essential element through which you can

¹² G. Azzariti, *Cittadini, partiti e gruppi parlamentari: esiste ancora il divieto di mandato imperativo?*, Giappichelli, Turin 2002.

¹³ S. Curreri, *Democrazia e rappresentanza politica. Dal divieto di mandato al mandato di partito*, Florence University Press, Florence 2004, p. 40.

get to oust the sovereign and his sovereignty completely, to transfer it to the people, to the representatives. This is where you can probably track down another shade of the original abstractness of representation: it is not sovereignty to shift from the sovereign to the people, but it is where changes occur.

2.1. *Traditional models compared*

In England, the model of bound representation (medieval) did not have an abrupt interruption – as it happened in the continent following the Revolution – but merged and evolved with the modern concept of free representation. From this point of view, the evolution of the British parliamentary system is very illustrative: there has been a gradual shift to a free political representation, without binding mandate. It did not erase, but rather enhanced the capacity of the Parliament to represent social pluralism, turning it into political unity¹⁴. In this sense, a key to its interpretation is offered not only by the traditional British «pragmatism», but also – and mainly – by a notion of national sovereignty which is not abstract, where no attempt is made to represent the «political and spiritual entity fictitiously and forcibly, to trace it to a unit». In other words, in the English experience, unlike in the French one, free representation has been built, starting from an historical consolidated experience and not making a social «tabula rasa», thus developing an unreal concept of representation, impossible indeed, in which, from formal equality, a «national sovereignty»¹⁵ is created with several unique individuals. A French nation (later on European) thoroughly chopped at the beginning, and reassembled later on only within the boundaries dictated by

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁵ D. Nocilla, «Crisi della rappresentanza e partiti politici», cit., p. 529.

State procedures: «From real subject the people turns into a socially undifferentiated artificial object»¹⁶.

To sum up what in England was a natural evolutionary step due to political divisions and greater social complexity, in France was a more forced and rigid form of time evolution.

However, it is important to highlight that the British model (which is not perfect and subject to a representation void) is not a system, in some way, slavishly portable and adaptable to other contexts. In fact, the British political system in the course of three centuries has gradually but effectively solved three major issues of constitutional and social politics: relationship with the Church and its prerogatives; relationship between the aristocracy-emerging middle class and the Crown; relationship between the elites and the masses. The British political system was able to nip the problem at its very roots: in the case of the relationship between the Church and the State, both functions merged; in the case of relationship with the Crown, absolutistic drifts were immediately dashed. They also managed to avoid the radicalization of social conflicts, implementing careful inclusive policies, as in the case of the claims of workers, effectively brought back within the bounds of the Labor Party, avoiding the onset of any revolutionary or antagonistic option. In other national contexts, however, some of these issues suffer from the effects of a long path of adjustment, which is still, somehow, in the course. The long transitions are an element typifying the legal and social changes in Italy, often accompanied by sudden interruptions or accelerations, which exacerbate the elements of uncertainty and instability.

From this point of view, a reconstruction that welcomes a greater autonomy of the elect is tottering, based on a majoritarian model – as the one built in Italy. In fact, because of decades of strong party influence it would create a more virtuous system, that «brings the voter to escape from the influence of the

¹⁶ S. Curreri, *Democrazia e rappresentanza politica. Dal divieto di mandato al mandato di partito*, cit., p. 47.

party, to vote according to his personal trust in the candidate; this latter, in turn, would be led to refer not to his party but to his electorate»¹⁷.

3. Political parties between mediation of interests and national representation

There have been long discussions on the steady reduction of the parliament's prerogatives in favor of the government, less of a performer and more of a legislator. The global crisis of the political representation models is not, however, a chronic and irreversible crisis. Surely there is a profound difficulty to make relatively fast and clear decisions, as much as possible shared and above all certain to and above all certain for the achievement of the general interest. This aspect is felt particularly in the social, political and economic domains; for these reasons the tendency to rely on strongly legitimated leaders, able to take decisions quickly and effectively, is increasing¹⁸. The model of representation based on party mediation is a recent phenomenon. Leibholz was among the first to identify as the central point of political representation, the synthesis between general and individual interests.

In fact, the parties' mediation model allows citizens to choose what they consider the general interest of the country, while taking into account their own particular and concrete interests¹⁹; in essence, parties «ensure that the people may appear in the political sphere as a really active unit»²⁰.

¹⁷ L. Cavalli, *La personalizzazione della politica*, in AA.VV., *Lo stato delle istituzioni italiane. Problemi e prospettive*, Atti del convegno organizzato dall'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei svoltosi a Roma dal 30 giugno al 2 luglio 1993, Giuffrè, Milan 1994, pp. 103-112.

¹⁸ D. Nocilla, «Crisi della rappresentanza e partiti politici», cit., p. 561.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

²⁰ See G. Leibholz, *La rappresentazione nella democrazia*, Giuffrè, Milan 1989.

This ambivalence makes sheds light on how the party mediation shifts the problem of democracy and representation from the State external system to an internal party system. In fact, if parties become the only mediators between the State and the people, then they will reproduce internally, a democratic system, comparable – in terms of effectiveness – to the one guaranteed by the State order²¹.

By analyzing the relationship between elected and voter, it is impossible not to consider the role of parties. The connection of the parties with society has been much reduced compared to the past, but the prerogatives of political parties did not follow the same path. You could say that, in some cases, we are dealing with a «party bubble», in which the parties have an impact on the administration of the State much more than their level of representation of collective interests. What are the ways to restore the balance so that the activities of the representatives correspond to the reality actually represented?

The direct result of this structure of relations has an immediate impact on the functioning of the State, its political organs and its administrative apparatus. A real democracy inside political parties is not, in fact, an end in itself, but an essential requirement for democracy within the whole representation system²². Today, this aspect is perhaps one of the most undervalued elements, because the focus is increasingly shifting on decision-making speed and on pragmatism rather than on the inner content of responsibility and visible democratic procedures.

All the above, cannot be explained only based on the common ground observation of the «bureaucratic mass party, with a uniform social base and strongly ideological» crisis. In fact, an association, an institution, falls into a crisis, not only when it no longer responds to the needs of its members, but since they

²¹ P. Ridola, *Rappresentanza e associazionismo*, in AA.VV., *Rappresentanza e democrazia*, G. Pasquino (Ed.), Laterza, Bari 1988, p. 114.

²² *Ibidem*.

have, in some way, reorganized the safeguard of their interests and have already found (or are refining) tools and models to meet those same – or changed – needs. Do not confuse evolution and reorganization with reduction and debasement.

For the analysis of the issue, it might be useful to change the setting, to understand better also that political representation cannot always be traced back to precise rules. In fact, in introducing the rules the system would be open to some distortions. For example: if the party could revoke the dissident parliamentarian, the whole notion of representation and parliament would be emptied; if citizens could call back their elected definitively (the so-called recall, in use, for example, in some American States), you might run the risk of a populist and demagogic drift, less attentive to the common good.

4. New models of parliamentarism: accountability and responsibility

We pointed out, at the beginning, that a fundamental starting point is a reasonable reconstruction of the concept of political representation, freed from theoretical abstractions and theoretical simplifications. A number of assumptions were also put forward, about which avenues could be covered to rebuild the relationship between the elected (parliaments) and the voters (people/citizens) and the consequent need for a new definition of political party (a mediating subject that allows citizens to be elected). We need to find feasible paths through which the parliament as a body can take back some of its prerogatives. Allowing a part of that power that «migrated» to government/courts/bureaucracies to come back into the stream of popular representation, if necessary even with new ways and different functions (think of new technologies).

The latest events clearly show that the parliament is no longer at the center of the institutional system; it has lost its role of being the place of representation to become the «normative

workshop available to governments»²³. Gradually but steadily, it lost its central position, owned until the first half of the nineties of the last century. This process does not seem reversible in the short term; however, «it may be constitutionally guided and limited, so that it does not simply translate into a drastic reduction of the quality of democracy»²⁴.

From this point of view, an important role could be played by the functions of inspection and control of Parliaments, through their enhancement and an update of the latest technologies. In other words, one could fill the representation gap by strengthening the instruments of inspection and control. If I as parliament, cannot (or can no longer succeed) to decide as much as I used to do, at least I should be in a position to control in detail those governments, European institutions and technical and bureaucratic apparatus that make decisions for me.

Now, none of this is on the horizon. Moreover, along with the ongoing systemic crisis of the political representation, we observe an increasingly exacerbating cultural crisis. We do not only see the political and legal systems no longer working properly, but also the same fundamental design of the legal system that is no longer clear (i.e., it becomes increasingly difficult to perceive the significance – in legal terms *the rationale* – of the institutions and, therefore, of the statutory provisions enacted). In this context it is not enough just to study constitutional law to rebuild a performing system of political representation, but it takes a real experience of social representation to remind us that the need for representation (interests focused on common good) is above all a human dimension and not only a technical and legal construction.

²³ G. Filippetta, «Governance plurale, controllo parlamentare e rappresentanza politica al tempo della globalizzazione», in *Dir. pub. comp. eu.*, 2005, p. 794.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 791.

III

FREE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL TIES

Rome, December 11th-12th 2015

Religion, Secularisation and the European Centre-Right

Vít Novotný

*Senior Research Officer,
Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*

I would like to welcome you to this conference on behalf of the Martens Centre, the Political Foundation of the European People's Party.

I would like this to be a discussion rather than a lecture, so allow me just to present several remarks to start us off.

I want to address the continuing trend of secularisation of European societies and discuss possible responses of political parties of the centre-right.

1. Secularisation

I would like to begin by stating that secularisation is a fact. Across many European societies, censuses and polls show a steady decrease in church attendance. Across many European countries churches are being turned into furniture warehouses and discotheques with a gothic twist, to the joy of young generation, such as yourselves.

This concerns most European countries but not all. European countries are easily among the most secular in Europe: With Estonia and Czechia being on the top of the list. The secularisation trend is also clear in Italy.

However, the trend is not necessarily replicated in all European countries. Romania, Poland and Ukraine are examples of new churches being built on a large scale. However, at least in Poland, you will see a strange paradox of new churches being erected and declining church attendance.

Also in the US and in many African countries, there is no such discernible trend.

There is a continuing debate on whether secularisation is a problem. How do we reconcile modernity with traditional convictions.

Former pope Josef Ratzinger stated that there is a symbiosis between two cultures, traditional Christian one and secularist one. They need each other, to keep each other in check.

If there are any legislative measures, they are taken at the national level. It is up to national parliaments to legislate on religious matters. The EU has no formal competence to legislate on religious issues.

Islam is forcing us to ask who we are:

- Islam as a religion of the devout, although this is also a stereotype. In France for example, the vast majority of people with a Muslim background are secular.
- Fear of Islam: in Belgium, there are 6% percent of Muslims in the population. When asked in polls, people think there are some 25%.
- There are some catastrophic scenarios, including on the centre-right, according to which the pious Muslim who live in Europe have stronger values then we and will somehow annihilate, over time, our European civilisation.

2. Debate on the centre-right

There is a debate on the centre-right, on whether the continuing secularisation of European societies is a problem. There are no clear answers to that question.

There are some attempts on the centre-right to design a value system that corresponds to the changing society. The challenge for the centre-right: a movement that is rooted in the Christian tradition but remains open to a changing society, accommodates different beliefs. I would like to refer here to a recent Martens Centre paper *Ethics and Religion* by Jos van Gennip.

The solution that the European People's Party has chosen has been two-fold.

Firstly, the EPP has progressively accepted new members. The original core of the EPP was clearly Christian Democratic, with parties from the Benelux, Germany and Italy being the founders in 1976. Gradually the EPP merged with other centre-right groupings with conservative and liberal leanings, namely with the European Democratic Union in 2002. It also accepted a number of conservative liberal parties, especially after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Today, the Christian Democrats are in a minority in the EPP. Most parties are conservative, liberal, liberal conservative, there are Christian social ones, humanist ones, it is a wide spectrum.

Secondly, the EPP has periodically re-examined its values. The last such reassessment happened at the EPP congress in Bucharest, which resulted in a new party platform.

The Platform affirmed six values:

1. the dignity of human life;
2. freedom and responsibility;
3. equality and justice;
4. truth;
5. subsidiarity;
6. solidarity.

These values are inspired by the Christian Democratic philosophy but their interpretation is broader than it used to be. Some member parties do not attach a Christian Democratic meaning to these values.

According to the Platform, the EPP presents itself as a party of the centre-right, without confessional bindings.

We are a people's party, of the people, and we cannot deny that society is changing.

3. Individual centre-right party political responses

The above principles do not necessarily give answers to everyday political problems.

In practical centre-right politics in Europe, answers differ significantly.

We can agree on these abstract values from the Platform. Beyond them, some things are not subject compromise, especially when personal convictions are involved.

Perhaps the continuing secularisation of society is less an issue for those parties which are not Christian Democratic. For those that are, they are dealing with secularisation in a different manner:

- the German CDU is a broad big tent mass party;
- the Czech KDU-ČSL a centre party that does not refer to religion in its programmes and campaigns;
- the Belgian CDH renamed itself a humanist party;
- the Slovak KDH continues appealing to the core Christian voters.

Drifting to Sectarianism and Polarisation in the Middle East Today

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1. Structural instability?

For decades the Gulf region has been marked by a precarious stability, based on historical antagonism between the two shores of the Gulf and the presence of an external guarantee provider (first Great Britain during the so-called Pax Britannica and then, after 1957, the United States). Its structural political fragility was magnified by the long period of «quarantine» of Iraq under the rule of Saddam Hussein, by the catastrophic effects of the Anglo-American invasion of 2003 and by the growing sectarian polarisation between Sunnis and Shiites, the fruit of the struggle for regional political supremacy between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran¹.

Nevertheless, in the history of the region there have long been important factors which have limited this instability.

1. The above mentioned presence of an external guarantor, which ensured an «unstable stability»: the Ottoman Empire,

¹ K. Coates Ulrichsen, «Internal and External Security in the Arab Gulf States», *Middle East Policy Council*, xvi, 2009, n. 2. Cf. also G.G. Sick and L.G. Potter (Eds.), *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium: Essays in Politics, Economy, Security and Religion*, Macmillan, London 1997.

then the British Empire, followed by the USA with the Eisenhower doctrine.

2. The clash between the two blocs, Soviet and American, which effectively «encapsulated» the Middle East for decades.
3. After the Cold War, the rise of a sort of dichotomy between stability and democracy, according to which Western countries have long supported and financed oppressive authoritarian regimes which, nevertheless, in some way guaranteed economic partnership and stability, putting a brake on radical elements in society.

Today these conditions no longer exist and the perception of a decline (at least in terms of interest) of the United States, combined with the agitation of the Arab Spring and state-political fragmentation, have aggravated traditional political, social and «identity» divisions in the region. The result is that today the Gulf appears more divided and fragmented than ever before, with a multitude of flashpoints which threaten the architecture of the State and favour the disintegration of the old political order. Never before has Islam been more divided internally, not only polarised between the Sunni and Shiite worlds, but split within Sunni Islam itself between secular currents, the political Islam of the Muslim Brothers and the growth of Salafi dogmatism. Never before have the numerous Middle-Eastern minorities been the target of a persecution aimed at their annihilation, in the name of a deviant and distorted vision of religion that denies the tradition of multiple identities which has always characterised the Middle East and the Levant in particular².

Against this precarious background, the pace of events and changes taking place throughout the region make it extremely difficult to «stand back» from a simple analysis of events in order to identify certain systemic features of the region. How-

² M.Y. Abu-Munshar, «In the Shadow of the 'Arab Spring': The Fate of Non-Muslims under Islamist Rule», *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 23, 2012, n. 4, pp. 487-503.

ever, it is clear that a number of long-term aspects of the policies adopted by the leading regional players provide a useful indication of geopolitical trends.

2. Sunni sectarian polarisation in the Levant

The situation of great instability, sectarian polarisation and fragmentation in the Levant, and throughout the whole Middle East, obviously results from a number of causes and from mistakes on the part of many regional and international players. Undoubtedly, however Saudi Arabia and Qatar (and other emirates to a lesser extent) stand out: a role which has been underestimated and ignored for too many years. There are many reasons for this: the Arab monarchies of the Gulf were, and are, fundamental «allies» of the West, a bastion against the geopolitical menace of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which Washington and some European States continue to see as the primary regional threat (not to mention Israel which considers it the principal existential threat). The special relationship between the Gulf State emirs and Washington has often shielded them from the negative consequences of their political decisions. Added to this, the economic crisis has made Western countries more cautious, and above all more accommodating, towards countries with rich liquid assets whose sovereign funds made them welcome guests to be flattered. Finally the protests of the Arab Spring have created further room for manoeuvre for GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries. Despite declarations made for cosmetic purposes, these countries have acted in a random, even openly contradictory, manner.

As is well known, Saudi Arabia has for decades been engaged in continual political efforts and religious propaganda, accompanied by an almost inexhaustible stream of money, to combat those whom it considers to be its two deadliest enemies: Persian Shiite Iran, on the one hand, and the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood on the other. In order to oppose expanding

Iranian regional geopolitical influence, Riyadh has not hesitated to finance extremist Sunni movements which are profoundly anti-Shiite and to incite rebellion among Sunni communities in Iraq and Syria, contributing to the polarisation and fragmentation of the Levant. Its attempt to «export» its own interpretation of Islam (the most dogmatic and rigid of all, linked to Wahhabism and the Hanbali school of religious law) has encouraged the rise of Salafi movements, deeply intolerant of any deviation from their own interpretation of Islam, which they consider to be the purest but which is only a mixture of extremist Islamic practices and tribal traditions, accompanied by a distorted interpretation of sharaitic principles³.

Salafi movements have been used not only against Shiites and liberal Muslims but also against the model of political engagement of the Muslim Brothers, regarded as a deadly threat to the Saudi royal family. Fear of an internal revolution aiming at the creation of an Islamic republic pushed the country to support the actions of the military in Egypt against the failing government of the Islamist President Morsi, to interfere massively in Yemen and even to threaten neighbouring Qatar, a great supporter of political Islam (as we will see in the following paragraph). But its actions have also ended up encouraging the spread of extremely violent groups. The agreement on nuclear power signed by Iran and the so-called P5+1 in the summer of 2015 has not led to any improvement of the situation in the region because it was carried out against the wishes of the major regional international-political players: headed by Saudi Arabia and Israel. By concluding the agreement the Americans have, in fact, stoked up tensions and to some extent the «obsession» of the Arabian Gulf monarchies with the Iranians. These countries have a kind of paranoia about the potential expansion of the geopolitical role of Iran in the region. From this point of view the new Saudi administration is even

³ M. al-Rasheed, «Saudi Arabia: Local and Regional Challenges», *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 6, 2013, n. 1, pp. 28-40.

more closed-minded than its predecessors and, ignoring the factual evidence (history, culture, economics and demographics are clearly on the side of Iran), the Saudis demonstrate a lack of clear-sightedness refusing to acknowledge Iran as an integral part of the regional system.

The multiple internal fractures within the Middle East have been exacerbated by the outbreak of civil war in Syria during the initial phases of the Arab Spring. This has led to the spread of a new «glocal» (global and local) Jihadism worsening the problems of the whole region. In addition to the traditional political rivalries between States and the socio-economic pressures destabilising many MENA countries, the tensions and upheavals of recent years are undermining consolidated State structures. The Syrian civil war has destabilized countries like Iraq and Lebanon which were already fragile and torn apart internally, further contributing to the collapse of what remained of the Middle East security complex. A situation demonstrated by the concerns over internal security in Saudi Arabia (which has to face the Yemeni crisis along its southern borders), over Jordan (trapped in «the eye of the storm» of sectarian conflicts) as well as over Turkey (facing the daunting prospect of a neighbourhood permanently destabilized) and Egypt (struggling to regain control of the Sinai). To the west, the failure of transition in Libya has thrown that country into an abyss of anarchy and chaos. The continuing clash between opposing militias, the spread of Jihadist movements and the explosive rise of illicit trafficking all add to the security crisis permeating the entire band of Sub-Saharan Africa. In this case too, the collapse of the Libyan State has enormous repercussions on all neighbouring countries (among them Egypt and Tunisia) as well as threatening the security of Southern Europe, and Italy in particular.

3. A slow and inadequate response

The international community responded slowly and in a fragmentary manner to this self-sustaining spiral of violence and instability. It was only with the outbreak of the Daesh phenomenon in the summer of 2014 – and the use of media-amplified terror by the movement of the «Caliph» al-Baghdadi – that the United States tried to coordinate a political and military reaction (initiated at the Paris summit in September 2014), encouraging the setting up of an informal coalition intended to fight Jihadist movements and to reinforce macro-regional stability. However, as in the past, internal divisions, boycotts and preventive exclusions continue to reign over this improbable coalition, exacerbated by weak European cohesion, tensions between Shiite and Sunni blocs, the ambiguous ambitions of Erdogan's Turkey and the renewed activism of Putin's Russia. The failure to cause a rapid demise of the Assad regime (a strategy strongly supported both by the main Sunni regional players and by the West) transformed the Syrian conflict into a proxy war and into an unbearable humanitarian catastrophe. This has enabled the rise of Daesh and the proclamation of an improbable Jihadist caliphate.

4. The threat from Daesh

The rise of Daesh and the humanitarian crisis of refugees from the Levant have transformed the international security scenario, forcing us to look again at our strategies and to act more decisively to bring Syria under control. The media storm that followed ISIS attacks in Europe does not help in understanding a phenomenon as complex and multi-faceted as religiously motivated terrorism. Yet it is precisely in times like these that clear thinking is essential to analyse the threats.

On one level we have the nucleus of the Islamic State, which presents itself as a global Jihadist movement and at the same time as a State. The self-proclaimed caliphate is a priority secu-

rity issue to be confronted both through military means and international political initiatives. We must defeat its troops and end the civil war in Syria and Iraq which is feeding sectarianism and ethnic polarisation. Thus far regional rivalries and western short-sightedness have prevented the adoption of a coherent strategy. Nevertheless, although weakened by ambiguities, contradictions and duplicity, military action against Daesh has become more incisive. Yet it would be a mistake to regard it as sufficient because the military option on its own is incapable of building a sustainable political project.

Then there is a second level, consisting of the «metastases» of Daesh, spread both across the west and – above all – in the Muslim world: organized cells inspired by al-Baghdadi and built by fighters returned from Syria and Iraq. They represent a threat which is all the greater as the capacity of a state to control its territory is reduced. It is no accident they flourish most forcefully in Libya, the Sahel, Afghanistan, Sinai and Yemen while also demonstrating their deadly efficiency in other settings, from Beirut to Ankara, Paris and Brussels. To counter them and forestall their attacks, the work of intelligence is fundamental. But even more crucial would be, finally, the adoption of European policies of counter-radicalisation (which exist and have shown themselves to be useful) to oppose the drift towards violent militancy of individuals and groups alike. In order to be adopted, however, they need to create clear relationships and cooperative links with Islamic communities. To achieve this we must avoid both the rhetoric of the «do-gooders» and justifiers of Islamophile narratives (who turn a blind eye to much of the ambiguity within these communities) and the demonisation of Muslim communities by populist and Islamophobe movements.

Finally, there is the most peripheral level, composed of «lone wolves». These are individuals, like the couple that carried out the massacre at San Bernardino in the United States in the autumn of 2015, who become radicalised quickly, do not participate in active cells and are difficult to identify in time. Their actions lack the sophisticated organization of the first two categories but, from the point of view of public opinion, they have

an even worse effect because they encourage the demonisation of every Muslim, seen as a potential threat. It is difficult to put into effect policies aimed specifically at countering them. Yet it is clear that certain types of media attention are facilitating their spread. In particular, emphasising the «Islamist danger» triggers a copycat effect, pushing borderline subjects into action, almost as in millenarian movements which believe that «the time has come»⁴. In addition, the shameful campaigns against Muslim communities by certain groups and media create an extremely dangerous climate of alienation and marginalisation.

In conclusion, in this situation of great confusion and regional fragmentation it is obvious that more decisive action must be taken against Daesh. Nevertheless, it must be clear that, to resolve the Middle-East crisis, the military component is indispensable but obviously not enough in itself. It is indispensable because hitting ISIS hard means undermining the basis of its system for creating consensus. ISIS is successful because it projects itself as a winning model and we must show that it is not. However, the military element is only a prerequisite for genuine political action. Without drawing up a political strategy it is not possible to offer credible prospects, acceptable to all the opposing parties involved, to resolve the problem. But to achieve this, first of all an international agreement is needed. Such an agreement must include, firstly, the expulsion of Assad but at the same time it should take into account both regional and international actors' interests and perceptions of insecurity, offering at the same time real protections to all the ethno-cultural minorities of the area. Reaching such an agreement is obviously not easy but nor is it impossible. What will be fundamental is an understanding – on the part of the leading players – that a compromise which displeases everyone to some extent, but without humiliating anyone, is the best response to the worst security and humanitarian crisis of the Middle East today.

⁴ J.-P. Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, University of California Press, London 2011.

The Drama of Liberty in the Age of Nation State Crisis

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Constituted politically by Greek culture, freedom enters into the fullness of its drama and its different possibilities of interpretation with Christianity. A new level, the ontological, penetrates the conceptual panorama, in a non-pacific way. Christian freedom is, at the same time, personal, ontological and positive. It is not the freedom of the *polis*, it is not only a freedom from someone, from an oppressor inside or outside the *polis* itself. Freedom is now the very character of the human essence, the distinctive feature of being of each person – regardless of the formulation of public power – and cannot be understood as the search for fulfilled and ultimate happiness (different from that sought by schools of Hellenistic thought) or for salvation, in other words adherence to the Good which is the aim of this search. In conclusion, one is truly free when one adheres to Good and, only temporarily, in this existence marked by a mysterious original weakness, the ability to adhere to good manifests itself as freedom of choice, a sign of the personal nature of freedom. This double connotation of freedom – adherence and choice – is necessary to describe the complex experience of being free. We would find this description missing in some way if it did not contemplate both the desire to find what is being sought or to do what is desired and the choice, namely

the link between realization and ourselves. These are the two meanings contained within the term «freedom» or – according to the Latin root – «liberty». The Latin root helps us to see that the two meanings are both coming from the Indo-European root *lib-*, or «pleasure»: pleasure includes both adherence to good or satisfaction and the power to choose what I want to adhere to. A search which did not lead to that which satisfies would not be liberating just as an imposed conclusion would not be. The drama which stems with Christianity is the discovery of this duplicity because the word liberty must indicate at the same time the individuality of the person and the relationship of original adherence to the Creator and the Saviour.

Such duplicity reverberates on every level and in every description of the phenomenon of liberty, including the political. The two liberties, of adherence and choice, *maior* and *minor*, thus run throughout history with various names and descriptions – «of» and «from», positive and negative – which, although not completely overlapping, re-propose the fundamental attitude and the tension, finding rare moments of balance and very varied, if not alternative, solutions¹.

While it is true that, by analogy, adherence to good could easily be translated at the political level as adherence to society and – according to an ontological conception – even as respect for the ruling power («all authority comes from God», says Saint Paul in the Letter to the Romans²), the singularity of the value of the person requires also that happiness should no longer depend on public power but on another level where adherence is to God and not to the city or the empire. And yet here too the personal and the public levels have to be reconciled, an effort which occupied a large part of the medieval age, as

¹ For a summary of the theme and bibliographical references, see C. Esposito, G. Maddalena, P. Ponzio and M. Savini, *Il potere della libertà*, Edizioni Di Pagina, Bari 2007.

² Romans 13, 1.

Berti explains in his *Il bene di chi? Bene pubblico e bene privato nella storia*³. Among the options for reconciliation indicated by Berti, the most intriguing is perhaps Dante's doctrine of the two suns: the sun of the Good, which the Church represents and to which adherence is needed for the happiness of the soul, and the sun of the good that the Empire pursues as social life, which must be free from control directly descending from faith⁴. This was the idea of the White Guelphs to which Dante belonged.

It was a solution for loose-knit reconciliation totally unpursued since the end of the Middle Ages, since the assertion of the modern State and since its contemporary post-French-Revolution version. The assertion of the modern State as nation state – a structure which assumed its final version with the French Revolution – reveals itself as a form of asymmetrical relationship between the two meanings of freedom, which find the ratification of two absolutes in the various ideas of contract: on the one hand, absolute autonomy and, on the other hand, absolute social dominion. For sure, the forms of realization of this enforced reconciliation are extremely different but, in the end, they all rest on a mechanical tightening of the two meanings of freedom.

It is a solution against which Berti poses the concept of the common good as the goal to be freely achieved in a political society, according to a conception derived from Maritain and which the Paduan philosopher considers as the true innovative opening of this moment⁵. Positive liberty asserts itself as tension not constrained towards the future good of society as a whole. It is, obviously, a problematic attempt coinciding for Berti with the end of modern reconciliation which had assigned to the nation State the role of Bene-factor and absolute judge. Globalisation

³ E. Berti, *Il bene di chi? Bene pubblico e bene privato nella storia*, Edited by G. Maddalena and A. DiChiro, Marietti, Genoa 2014, pp. 28-33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

and the economic crisis are the end point of this route⁶. It has exhausted itself and is no longer able to guarantee that realization of individual citizens for which it demanded, in exchange, the sacrifice of renouncing some of the prerogatives of *libertas minor*: the «private» individual being «deprived» of arms⁷.

In my opinion, the failure and the opening that Berti describes in profound and elegant tones are due to the double nature of freedom and the almost unbearable tension that their reconciliation creates. The mechanism of the two absolutes of liberty invented by the nation State masks the paradox of this human experience. When asserted in an absolute manner, both natures of freedom lead to violence and the ideological justification of the killing of others.

This tragic conclusion is obvious and has been argued many times with regard to positive freedom, which is born from adherence to Good and which, taken to its extreme consequences, accepts the totalitarian displays that the 20th century has presented us with. Good is transformed into justification of violence against the individual. This latter cannot and must not hinder the necessary affirmation of the principle to which the whole of society must conform. In order to adhere to the Good one can eliminate the annoying presence of the individual, as certain passages from Hegel may imply. In the end, human history is studded with examples of sacrifices of individuals accepted and justified in the name of the overall good, even when this good has not involved the attempt to control every aspect of life and thought typical of totalitarianism.

On the other hand, negative liberty, so dear to liberalism, also follows a complicated course which – as we see in our Western societies – can lead to outcomes which are not so different from those of positive freedom. The course involves the

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

necessary passage from the prevalence of the Good to that of the Just⁸. When «freedom from» – from the impositions of tradition, from the control of others, from authority, from whatever antecedent considered as dangerous – is pursued as the supreme Good, the problem of power is that of eliminating influences, of leaving the citizen with his spontaneous patrimony. However, in order to eliminate and keep away influences, a new force is needed, as Rousseau had understood: that of the law and, above all, a legalistic mentality. Legalism thus becomes the necessary for the assertion of «freedom from» or negative liberty as absolute. The free citizen, naked citizen, has the law of the State as only partner. It is certainly a paradoxical outcome which takes us a long way from the original *habeas corpus*, the medieval expression of negative liberty. In philosophical terms, the absolute affirmation of this type of negative liberty is described by the figurative Hegelian image according to which, in the end, the individual, so exalted in his independence from the rest of society and from any previous content, remains empty and can be eliminated in the most cold-blooded manner like cutting «a head of cabbage» or «drinking a sip of water»⁹. This is the typically modern passage from a conception of law as being bound to justice to a notion of justice as being bound – in a statist manner – to positive law, regardless of any consideration of worth or of content¹⁰, a passage which is perfectly matched with individualism.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9, Edited by W. Bonsiepen and R. Heede, Hamburg 1980; Italian translation by E. De Negri, *Fenomenologia dello Spirito*, La Nuova Italia, Florence 1960, vol. II, pp. 125-126.

¹⁰ P. Grossi, *Mitologie giuridiche della modernità*, Giuffrè, Turin 2005, p. 137. Grossi deals specifically with this modern passage to judicial enlightenment in which «the social-political-judicial universe is reduced to two protagonists, State and individual, with almost total cancellation of its complex articulation». On the paradox of the relationship between liberalism and French Revolution, see also P. Manent, *Storia intellettuale del liberalismo*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (cz) 2010, pp. 137-142.

It is a paradox which applies also to our liberal Western culture, as the dissidents of the Soviet regime often reminded us between the 1960s and 1980s. Isolated liberal individuals, theoretically not influenced by anything, are easily manipulated. Hannah Arendt applied this observation to individuals in the Weimar Republic but it has come dramatically to the fore in the globalised world. Precisely because isolated citizens are empty, lacking in positive values to hold on to for the preservation of their own identity, over the short or long term, when they leave no room for new forms of positive totalitarianism, they become prey to the anonymous power of the economic interests which tend to determine all forms of cultural fashion. The validation of thought, the transformation of every need into a right, the dictatorship of the law and of legalism, the inability to regard democracy as a system of government which necessarily leaves needs unsatisfied and the consequent violence are all a reflection of this overturning of autonomy characteristic of the unilateral accentuation of minor liberty in the political sense in Western liberal-democratic societies.

Certainly, the different types of violence are not comparable in every sense and we need to be very cautious about facile generalisations. Nevertheless these are reflections which occur to anyone who studies the difficult passage from the problem of the Good to that of the Just which has taken place over the last two centuries.

Freedom, negative and positive, *minor* and *maior*, must therefore be interwoven in a way which is proportional and organic, given that the absolute prevalence of one or the other or the mechanism of overthrowal of one by the other generate violence and become unsustainable.

What form of interweaving is just or adequate or better?

As mentioned above, Berti proposes Maritain's idea: an open political society able to work cooperatively for the common good, understood as an end to be determined along the

way while each person works at the level of his own salvation or satisfaction, in which public power cannot and must not intervene¹¹. From this perspective there is also validity in the argument that, as in the view of Aristotle, nature is the end of an entity and therefore, in a certain sense human nature is «culture». This is a significant change to jusnaturalism and an original perspective within the Catholic world and the debate stimulated by new ethical problems. The problem is to understand what is the end towards which this is orientated and, on this point, a dialogue can be started which is more open, more prudent and less ideological.

Other suggestions in the recent history of thought are even more complicated and paradoxical, as evidenced by the long series of writings on this theme from Levinas to Derrida, from Dewey to Taylor, and from Horkheimer and Adorno to Habermas. In my intervention I would like to point to the solution given by a writer who is not a philosopher, Vasily Grossman, because his suggestion serves as a final methodological observation¹².

Grossman, not surprisingly admired by Levinas, devotes a long chapter of his masterpiece *Life and Fate* to explain his political idea: the Good always becomes an ideology which in the end justifies the sacrifice of the individual¹³. The author also introduces religions into this vision and, in particular, Christianity and, in the end, includes within it also Nature itself, which acts on the same principle when it sacrifices the individual element, the individual tree, for the realization and survival of the species, the wood. Paradoxically it could be said that for Grossman even Nature, like the human being, tends to be ideological.

For Grossman, therefore, it is not the good which should be the starting point of human freedom, but rather those gestures

¹¹ E. Berti, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹³ V. Grossman, *Zizn i sud'ba Knižnaja palata*, Moskow 1988; Italian translation by C. Zonghetti, *Vita e destino*, Adelphi, Milan 2008, part II, ch. 16.

of concrete goodness which interrupt the life of man almost irrationally, regardless of the ideological risks of rationality and reflection. The woman who cares for the wounded Nazi from the platoon which has arrested her and will kill her husband¹⁴, the colonel who sacrifices his career to save the lives of his men by disobeying Stalin's order¹⁵, the old Russian woman who gives a piece of bread to the German soldier that she would have liked to kill¹⁶. These gestures of goodness, understood as an alternative to the ideology of Good, are Grossman's solution to save the unique and unitary experience of *maior* and *minor* liberty.

Grossman's solution is paradoxical: to carry out a good gesture it is necessary to depart from the Good. However, ultimately, all solutions to this interweaving which have been put forward recently have within them a paradoxical element: either the Good sacrifices itself, in order to respect the choice, the negative freedom of the individual, or the individual element sacrifices itself spontaneously and freely for the whole. These are figures which can be referred to in various ways at the political level: solidarity, subsidiarity, and responsibility are among the names given to these attitudes which require the acceptance of a paradox.

Limiting myself here to pointing out this antinomic and paradoxical root of the drama of the two aspects of freedom, I would like to conclude with a methodological observation based on what Grossman has said. Whatever the solution of the paradox may be, it does not have a rationalist character, it cannot be found in a single line of thought and it needs to be verified and tested historically in concrete acts. The notion to be elaborated in this sense is that of the gesture, understood as an act which incarnates a vague ideal in order to determine an

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 388-9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 766.

ever re-formable meaning. Solutions for the paradox of freedom can be seen only in such a gesture which, in its execution, realizes and at the same time better understands the ideal that it is intended to incarnate. The notion of gesture thus understood and studied from a phenomenological and semiotic point of view can thus show, make understand and propose to others the vague ideal of private good/public good which it is intended to realize.

The gesture, which can be called «complete» if it has all the phenomenal and semiotic characters, would thus be a classifiable and analysable version of the syntheticity of the «practices» already expounded by MacIntyre¹⁷, but with a clearer openness to public verification: truth is an ideal that any gesture has to achieve, even though we know we can only approximate it. And like the Scottish-American philosopher in his first book, *After Virtue*, unfortunately amended in subsequent more rationalist efforts, I would notice that we find ourselves facing a situation which can only be compared with something as dramatic as the Fall of the Roman Empire, when the dilemma of freedom, not by chance, flared up. As at that time, we have to say here that, whatever form the future may take – and it will probably be one without nation States – the solution will come from completed gestures which will indicate new meanings¹⁸. MacIntyre said in *After Virtue* that we are waiting not for Godot but for a new Saint Benedict, surely very different from his predecessor¹⁹. This is like saying that the solution will happen through completed gestures of a historical character and not through speculative philosophies. The hope is that speculative philosophy will always have that openness full of desire for truth and enquiry to recognize the coming of the dawn of a new beginning.

¹⁷ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame (IN) 1981; Italian translation by P. Capriolo, *Dopo la virtù*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1988.

¹⁸ For a study of the «gesture», see G. Maddalena, *The philosophy of Gesture*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal 2015.

¹⁹ A. MacIntyre, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

Political Catholicism in the 21st Century: Europe and Democracy at Risk?

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Reconciling Catholicism with democracy and liberalism took two centuries, several Conciliums and two World Wars. In the post-war era, through practice and doctrinal developments, Catholicism has found its way of intervention in politics and gave a crucial contribution to the consolidation of democracy, the development of the social state, as well as to the foundation of European institutions guaranteeing peace and the reconciliation of the continent. This movement created a widespread consensus among the several political actors that Catholicism, in its political fashion, was part of the European core.

Almost 60 years after the Concilium Vatican II, however, both the European project and the undeniable reconciliation of Catholicism with liberal democracy face serious challenges, mainly originating in nationalist forces unwilling to abide by the rules built in the post-war political order. Most obviously, but not exclusively, nationalists in the Polish and Hungarian governments have brought to fore rhetoric and actions that shatter the consensus built in the post-war European States. And as these anti-liberal and anti-European measures are dressed by their authors in the clothes of Catholicism, it is the post-war legacy of Catholic political doctrine that is at stake.

1. Overcoming the legacy of the confessional state

The Church intervention in political life in the modern era has been deeply influenced by the drive to establish confessional states, during the 16th and the 18th centuries. Confessional states were characterized by a congruence between religious beliefs and the political communities. The project was effective, so much so, that nowadays still more than 75% of the populations in mono-confessional states declare themselves Catholics. Then, the Church and the State were united by faith, and together formed a legal apparatus privileging the established Church, while punishing religious dissent.

The rise of nationalism and liberalism in the late 18th century broke the harmony between the Church and the State. Tensions emerged. The drive to create national States collided with the universal character of the Roman Catholic Church, and the resistance that Catholicism posed to the prevalence of nationalism as a source of political authority created strong conflicts. The second major strain came with the liberal revolution, when the Church refused to shed its privileges in favour of liberal ideas. The Catholic resistance to liberal ideas, however, came as much from it sticking to customary privilege as from a refusal to merely become a private cult and lose its influence over society at large.

The attack it suffered from liberal forces led the Church, in some countries, to mobilise Catholics into forming political parties to defend its position. In the late 19th century we see the formation of the first wave of Christian Democratic parties in Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium and Holland. These first parties were, however, in many cases, still unreconciled with the liberal state. With the rise of the Christian Democratic parties, the political relevance of the Church social doctrine grew, and the doctrine of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* launched the basis of the modern Catholic political doctrine. This doctrine established the primacy of the Catholic identity, which meant that despite differences in attitudes towards

regimes, Catholics should join other Catholics in their political fight. Thus, citizens of monarchic, republican, nationalist or internationalist persuasion should join and vote for the Catholic parties, which became the first «catch-all» mass parties. The right-wing spectrum in these countries was transformed from conservative to Catholic. It was conservative in the political and social issues but its economic doctrine (following *Rerum Novarum*) predicated a middle way between capitalism and communism, in the form of corporatism. In the long run, this meant that Christian democrats promoted the social state, although, unlike social democrats, without aiming at transforming the market.

In the devastated panorama of post-war Europe where conservative parties were in many cases tainted by nationalism and association with fascism, Christian Democracy internationalism and political centrism emerged as the suitable ideological replacement for the centre right. In particular, political Catholicism's internationalism, which had been problematic during the golden age of the national state, became a major source of support for the European movement, forging the first supranational institutions: the European Coal and Steel Communities (1950) and the European Economic Communities (1957). However, it was only in the Vatican Council II (1962-65), after two World Wars and a major doctrinal revision that the Catholic Church declared its doctrinal *aggiornamento* with demo-liberalism. This reformulation was based on the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, which set religious freedom as the basis of the Church recognition of democracy as a compatible political regime, as well as with the *Gaudium et Spes*, which established that the «Church and State cooperate on the basis of the autonomy and independence of each in its own sphere». The *Gaudium et Spes* Constitution also declared that priests and the hierarchy should stay away from direct involvement in politics, leaving to the laity the task of intervening and participating in the political arena.

Summing up, the Vatican Council II and post-war Christian Democratic parties transformed, to a great extent, the legacy

of the confessional state. Despite the remaining controversy between the conservative and liberal interpretations of the Vatican Council II doctrine, Catholicism successfully upheld Alfred Stepan's «twin tolerations» between religion and politics, i.e., «the minimal boundaries of freedom of action that must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-a-vis religious authorities, and for religious individuals and groups vis-a-vis political institutions». Political Catholicism thus became part and parcel of the European post-war order.

2. And the Third «Catholic» wave of democracies

The Catholic *aggiornamento* with democracy was equally a decisive condition for the Third Wave of transition to democracy starting in the 25 of April 1974 in Lisbon, spreading to Latin America in the 1980s and freeing Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. By the end of the 1960s, we see the emergence of a convergence between Catholic and leftist political groups in democratic opposition to the dictatorships. In some countries, the Church hierarchy stopped supporting the conservative authoritarian regimes, thus becoming part of the revolutionary mix in such diverse scenarios as communist Warsaw or Francoist Spain.

The contribution of political Catholicism to the spreading of democracy in Europe was, again, significant. However, in some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the Church was repressed during the communist regime, national hierarchies attempted to restore authority over society and, in some cases, politics, in ways that went beyond the precepts of the Vatican Council II formula. In Poland, the temptation of restoring a Catholic State drove the Church to try to establish authority in key aspects of politics, such as education, thus allowing clerics to interfere in key aspects of policy making. Also, the aspiration to influence the new political order made the Church a supporter of National Catholic political

groups, a political force coming to maturity in 2005 with the victory of the party of brothers Kaczynski, the Law and Justice (PiS), in the parliamentary and presidential elections. Catholicism in Poland then became linked to nationalist Euroscepticism, with defiant attitudes towards Germany and policies threatening key civic freedoms. As such, the 2000's have been a turning point in the role of the Church in some countries of Eastern Europe. After being a building block of the European construction, now it is a possible road block on the EU development.

Concluding, we may see the failure to establish Christian Democratic parties in the new democracies of Eastern Central Europe, in particular in Poland and Hungary, to have strengthened nationalist forces, both on its own and within conservative parties. These forces put the European liberal-democratic model under stress. Having been such an important constructive actor in the recent past, Political Catholicism should thus reiterate its support to internationalism, liberal democracy and the social state, as key elements underpinning the post-war order it so helped to shape.

