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**-summary-**

# **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROJECTS IN THE II<sup>nd</sup> WORLD WAR RESISTANCE**

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**Key words:** Europe, World War II, totalitarianism, nationalism, Antifascist Resistance, European unification projects, supranational institutions, post war order, federalization.

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Inspiration for what shall be experienced as with forming of the first European community and with the birth of political institutions on a continental level comes due to visionary elaborations of a number of thinkers, centuries away from us. Much closer to our time, during the years of Nazi occupation of the European nations, political points of view of the ones opposing the conducted national – socialist ideology, were targeted also to this area, of continental unification, following the inter – war tradition. The present work is dedicated to the analysis of their elaboration in this sense.

The study consists of four chapters and conclusions. In the first chapter I identified the Resistance movements in Western Europe. The main movements are indicated here, the resorts that activated them and their organization. Not a detail analysis was intended but only a familiarization with the generality elements and the ones that have generated the notoriety of Resistance. For their importance, I have selected two Eastern countries as well: Poland and Yugoslavia.

In the second chapter I determined and substantiated the international relations objectives of the different groups.

In the third chapter I moved to the analysis of more than one hundred primary texts related to overcoming Europe's organizational stage to a national states level. The study material constitutes of political programs, programmatic documents of some groups, articles, manifestos, flyers, epistles, various attitude stands. The texts in relation to European unity of the Resistance movements can be allotted in two major categories: ones offering practical solutions, unification and institutional projects and levers for their forming and ones sustaining argumentatively the idea of the need for continental unity. In the present chapter the research is dedicated to the latter.

The fourth part is a more technical one. Here I approached the options of the main thinkers or of the Resistance movements concerned by European unification, their projects and their detailed plans for an international superstructure. The projects foresee institutions and details in respect to their operation. Italy is the country with the most projects proposed and a prestigious Europeanist activity.

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Whilst inter-war period, prophetic warnings were issued by intellectualists with Europeanist visions, in respect to the fact that in lack of unity duly gained, national states egotism will push Europe into a new war. Europe's geographical position, in between two expansive empires of continental sizes, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, was granting a quite short action time. Once with commencement of the war their advancement to the core of Europe was sensed altogether with the temporary dissipation of the chance for unity. Midst war the threats became real and unity was brutally challenged. First World War was carried along the national boundaries without leading to a total collapse of the states (except the Habsburg Empire). Consequently, its continentally leveled effect was sensed by a limited group of intellectuals. On the other hand, the six years of World War II formed into a rather hard to overcome experience for the whole population and caused the collapse of most European states. The experience of the inter-war years showed that states are too small to solve modern economical issues by own means and eruption of the Great War in 1939 only showed the failure of the efforts carried as with World War I, namely to organize a collective peace preservation system.<sup>1</sup> As with 1940 entire Europe was the victim of these situations consequences.

Resistance movements configured as a reaction to the Nazi totalitarian attempt to reorganize and unite Europe on racial foundations, by force, ignoring any international law rule and without any regard to individual rights. Antifascist Resistance took multiple forms, the one we base our study on is the intellectual one. For various reasons, Resistance movements were not mass phenomena at the beginning of war, but as true reasons of the Nazi regime showed, they shall extend continentally, outline political programs and carry actual actions against occupants.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Lipgens, *A history of European Integration*, vol. I, 1945-1947: *The Formation of the European Unity Movement*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982, pp. 44-45.

During the sixties and the eighties of the twentieth century, research of the Resistance movements during World War II aroused a significant interest. During this time two congresses of wide scope undertook and most of the existing literature was issued. In the eighties the interest began to fade. The subject stirs up interest to the present days but scientific editions are rare. Given all the academic interest shown to Resistance, research is extremely thin in relation to its preoccupation for international relations. Lack of references related to foreign politics preoccupation of the movements has generated a lack of the ones related to the desideratum for European unification. The study on the works of Resistance members on the post war organization of the continent is placed somehow at the bounds of the interest shown by researchers of European history and may represent, to this days yet, an unhackneyed element to many of them. Usually the term of “resistance” is assimilated to armed resistance, sabotage, espionage and disinformation run by civilians or the military in the fascist occupied countries. Without diminishing the importance of this sector, we indicate that intellectual resistance played an at least equal role.

Along few years Resistance was represented by writings. The contents of political writings were gravitating around three major subjects, equally important and interlinked: 1. rejecting totalitarianism, 2. rejecting nationalism and 3. finding an adequate form to insure peace at war’s end.

The main objective of the Resistance movements was the abolishment of the Nazi domination but, alternatively, elaboration of a solution to constitute a new Europe was needed. This had to assemble conditions to hinder a reemergence and development of any kind of totalitarian force. In Eastern Europe, Resistance started with the prerequisite that nation and national independence are preconditions for a better society, once the enemy was removed. In the West, the opposing actions followed the guideline drawn by the Law and the individual rights. Resistance was a widespread fact all along the continent, proving the existence of a European common opposition against Nazism.<sup>2</sup>

In respect to Europe’s future, the approaches of different movements did not converge. Different options were raised in relation to re-establishing the post war order, from keeping

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<sup>2</sup> Michael L. Smith, Peter M. R. Stirk, *European Unity and the Second World War*, Pinter Publishers, London, New York, 1990, pp. 7-8.

the national states system to the development of a confederative formula of the whole continent on issues related to economical, social or cultural cooperation, within the wider frame of an Independent Nations Society. Bold voices supported the establishment of a European Federation to balance politically and economically against the two superpowers of the time: the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The main points of view affirmed by the movements, on our area of interest, were:

- a relapse to the sovereign states system;
- forming a strong European federation;
- forming a continental body to stand in as an intermediate in between the local and global authorities.

Few factions spoke in favor of post-war national state system. French Resistance grouped around general de Gaulle, factions of Dutch Resistance or the Communist Resistance all along the continent are the most well known examples for embracing this organizing option.

The solution of a continental federative structure was widely embraced by European Resistance movements. The fundamental idea of federative organization is based on overcoming the sovereign national states system, considered as an anachronistic and conflict generating one. The best argumentation in this sense is based on the inter-war experience, when national states were not able to efficiently politically manage the given situation, what led to development of totalitarian tendencies, with German Nazism representing a spearhead, which eventually bent the entire Europe.

Plans to avoid similar situations in the future consider a limitation of state competence, decentralization, supporting local economies and internationally, voluntarily union of peoples in a democratic federation, with a super state taking over attributions related to peace and war, armed forces and economy. In some of the movements plans integration of the continental structure into a worldwide peace organization is foreseen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ladislau Gyemant, *Preistoria construcției europene/Prehistory of the European Construction*, EFES, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 195.

Quasi-common solution of the continental unity favorable projects is limitation of national sovereignty, formation of a supranational federal government, elected through direct vote, with attributions in fields as foreign affairs, defense and economy. The proposal of decentralization and increase of the role played by the local administration bodies in the regions, provinces and local communities is advanced within states. The role of states central institutions remains less important, in some cases even their suppression is proposed, when they lose all their attributions. Economically, build up of a common market is proposed, determined by international interdependences in production and exchange, and by globalization of transport and communications. Finally, European unification is seen as a warranty for safeguarding of its own civilization specific features, while worldwide super powers tend to minimize its role.<sup>4</sup>

Fundamental writings of Resistance, such as the “Ventotene Manifesto” or Count von Moltke’s Memorandum “Initial Situation, Aims, and Tasks”, written basically at the same time, by people of different nationalities and in different places, expressed essentially the same idea, that national states have subdued the principles of freedom and human dignity to favor their own interest. This form of social organization could no longer be perceived as the most appropriate to develop human society. State becomes preoccupied solely by its own existence and development, regardless of devastation this may cause to the ones around.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, the Kreisau Circle, demanded decentralization within national states, with more power to the controlled sized local communities.

Most of the continental reorganization projects were elaborated declaratively, at a level of general option, of denying an ongoing process and expression of an attitude. Applicative solutions were offered by only few projects. In this respect, the most important project is the “Ventotene Manifesto”, which has actually welcomed more notoriety than the others, without diminishing their intellectual importance. The first federalist group constituted on Italian grounds and probably the most well known European wide wrote the manifesto. The group was founded on the prison – island Ventotene by Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colomi. They were all democrat-socialists. Rossi, a World War I veteran, supported printing of the first Italian antifascist journal, *Non Mollare*. Later on, he

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, „Ventotene Manifesto”, aug. 1941, in Walter Lipgens, *Documents on the history of European Integration*, vol. I, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1985, pp. 473-484.



becomes a conspirator, affiliated to the *Giustizia e Libertà* movement, until he is captured by the oppressive regime. Spinelli was part of the Communist Party since his youth, being attracted by Trotsky's and Lenin's internationalism. He explained that in embracing the federalist ideals he was significantly influenced by British spread ideas of implementing the American experience in Europe. Colomi was a central pivot of the Socialist Party up until being captured by fascists.

Fervent federalists, Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli will offer in August 1941, by the "Ventotene Manifesto", European Federation as an absolute priority, even more important than internal reform. The history of previous decades offered researchers and observers the possibility to conclude that restoration of democracy within national states will not suffice to, also, preserve it. In order to eradicate the risk for totalitarianism and war, international anarchy must have also been regulated.<sup>6</sup>

Spinelli affirmed that war has discredited old nationalist politicians. Executive, Legislative and judiciary organs should be controlled by the European citizens rather than by the state. We quote him with the observation stating that:

a federalist orientation excludes any form of totalitarianism and excludes also those forms of unity that are either hegemonic or only superficially federalist and really subject to the iron control of totalitarian bodies of whatever type.<sup>7</sup>

As a topic, the degree of national sovereignty did not determine ground of univocal expression within the Resistance factions. Smaller groups, such as OCM in Paris or the Beck-Goerdeler's in Berlin, spoke for keeping amongst the state attributions of some foreign affairs levers, resulting more into a European Confederation rather than a Federation. They were pleading for a European Directorate, in order to avoid war, and an European Economic Council invested with "police power" and with means to apply the adopted decisions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Charles F. Delzell, „The European Federalist Movement in Italy: first phase, 1918-1947” in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 32, no. 3, sep. 1960, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> *L'Unità europea*, no. 5, iul.-aug. 1944, p. 1, apud. Delzell, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Lipgens, „European Federation in the Political Thought of Resistance Movements during World War II”, in *Central European History*, vol. 1, no. 1, mar. 1968, p. 11.

The negative experience of the League of Nations in 1919 had to be avoided in future. An opinion unanimously embraced by different movements shows that League's failure was determined by its lack of autonomy and independence from the states that were parts of it. The lack of political authority or material power, necessary to determine materialization of the adopted decisions, worked to its end. Given the historical reality and the context at the time, the Resistance members hoped for a future trial that should not have the success chances diminished from start, in prospective of recent developments at that date. Italian Resistance goes as far as to condemn any simple union as being meant to fail, by comparison with the 1776 North American Confederation, which concluded after thirteen years of existence that peace and economic prosperity can not be reached in such way, resulting in the formation of an effective federation in 1789.<sup>9</sup> However, to compare the American eighteenth century situation to European twentieth century realities is uplifted and inappropriate. Starting premises for a war-engaged Europe were totally different from the ones the American colonies were in at the time.

Agreement of independence for the last European colonies and inclusion of once formed European Federation, altogether with other regional federations into a world peace organization, was sustained by some more cosmopolitan ideas. Nevertheless, this step was not meant for a near future, having in mind the United States and Soviet Union reserves to be part of such a global body. Forming a European federal government was, tough, envisioned as an essential progress. Nations were to become federate states of the European super state that was to be formed by representatives chosen by the people. Perhaps the most important aspect related to the existence of an European state, such as imagined by the conservatory German aristocracy for instance, aside of foreign policy prerogatives, defense and economic competences, was the one to reconcile any conflict that may have started from internal nationalist outbursts.

However, many of the concepts then forwarded, during the war, perceived as idealist at the time, were applied in the coming decades: the Common Market, direct elections for the European Assembly, suppression of the boundaries and customs barriers for goods and people, adopting a common currency. Solutions were already offered for aspects that could be easily overseen, later on found as applied in European construction, such as establishing

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<sup>9</sup> Luigi Einaudi, „For a economic federation of Europe”, 1 sept. 1943, in Lipgens, *Documents on, op. cit.*, pp. 520-525.

a community to control coal and steel production, offering an determined existential duration for it, the consultative role for the Parliament of the European federative structure (at Vincent Auriol), even the European Union slogan “Unity in diversity”, expressed in several writings, of various origins. The motivation for a determined duration of the European Coal and Steel Community treaty at 50 years may be sustained by the article “Germany will be beaten – and what then?”, published within the Dutch magazine *Vrij Nederland*, by an unknown author. More texts, of different origins may be quoted for the free circulation zone within European Union.

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Reality did not offer a chance to apply any project of European unification elaborated by Resistance. Resisters’ feeling in relation to the lack of understanding from Allies for their aspirations was fully legitimate. The Allies’ reactions were not favoring the elaborated or suggested plans. Soviet leaders clearly expressed rejecting positions for any form of European unification. Stalin has even required a comeback to the status quo agreed with Hitler in 1939, meaning an inclusion of Estonia, Latvia, the Eastern half of Poland, Bessarabia plus Lithuania and the Eastern part of Finland to the Soviet Union. For the other European countries he proposed reconstruction based on sovereignty. As with the spring of 1942, the Soviets adopted a firm position in relation to a federation of European states, described as a “bourgeoisie movement, pointed to the Soviet Union.” After the Stalingrad victory, in January 1943, Stalin proceeded to a diplomatic offensive in order to articulate his point of view as acutely as possible. Thus, he broke relations with the Polish government, exiled in London, whom affirmed support for the project of a continental federalization; he threatened to sign a separate peace agreement with Hitler and has withdrawn his ambassadors in London and Washington. Any attempt to discuss this subject was regarded as a threat against the Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the United States of America was heading towards welcoming the Soviet options and accepted their position. President Roosevelt remained tributary to the idea of a “superpowers” and was protecting the global order where four rangers represented by USA, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic, Great Britain and China

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<sup>10</sup> Lipgens, „European federation...”, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

dominated the stage. The American – Soviet cooperation was to ensure the skeleton for the future peace to build on.

The decisions adopted at the Teheran Conference, in November 1943, prefiguring the realities of the peace conferences to follow, were in no way influenced by the Resistance elaborations. The American concessions at that time continued into the future and resulted into a comeback to the old order and a coup to the exchange expectations of the Europeans.

Towards the end of war, it became obvious that the programs of the Resistance were not considered of value as long as they did not coincide with the ones of the Allies. The voice of the resisters became the carrier of some ideas that did not correspond anymore with the foreseen realities. The disappointment put the followers of the federalist solution back into the position of resisters, after war ending.<sup>11</sup>

The needs of the European society determined the reasons that substantiated the resisters actions and their theoretical elaborations. Continental unification was not idly required. Extreme nationalism has determined two wide scoped wars within 25 years. Traditional solutions, of punishments assertion for the proven guilty have finally proven useless exercises, determining a spiral of vindictive violence. Resistance was looking to break from the past and build the future on new pillars. From their programs, articles and their positions we can deduce their hope for a peaceful future, where the threat of a new conflict shall be completely alienated. Aside from economical, political, administrative or social - cultural benefits, European unification made the most wanted desiderate come true, the one of a lasting peace.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.