



The Federalist Debate

Papers on Federalism
in Europe and the World

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Political Unity of Europe: If Not Now, Then When?

Roberto Castaldi

The post-war world order is collapsing. Its material basis has failed: in 1945 the US accounted for 50 percent of the world's GDP, in 1973 the G7 accounted for 50 percent, in 2023 the G7 were at 31 percent and the BRICS 32 percent. In this situation, to keep up the hegemonic clash with China, the US can no longer afford to devote resources to providing public goods globally, but on the contrary needs to drain resources from the rest of the world.

Therefore, the US took an essentially imperialist stance – threatening Panama, Greenland and Canada - and has split the West. They have launched a trade war against the rest of the world and theorized the need for the world to pay - by financing the US - in order to use the dollar as an international currency. They then called for a reversal of the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which should no longer be fighting climate change as one of their goals and should instead invest heavily in fossil fuels.

Europe has lost its strategic value for the US, which does not want to waste resources in this region. So Donald Trump spoke to Putin and showed Ukraine and Europe the door. He will negotiate directly with Putin and Europeans and Ukrainians will suffer the consequences of this negotiation. Europeans will then be presented with the outcome and the bill. This is proof that Trump has an imperialist stance and sees the world dominated only by the big powers, who decide and impose their will on the small ones. It is a return to Thucydides'

realism «the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must». European nation-states count for nothing. Only if united politically, with a foreign policy and defense, can Europe count and defend its values and interests. If not now, when?

The problem is that Europe today is weak because it is divided. The vagaries of national leaders protesting and demanding that Europe be admitted to the negotiating table count for nothing. The truth is that they needed to develop a European defense and foreign policy managed by a European federal government a long time ago. The American “pivot to the Pacific” was announced by Obama, now 16 years ago. But the Europeans preferred not to start building a European defense for fear of hastening the end of the America's role as guarantor for European security.

At least since Trump's first term and with the clear risk of a second, discussions about European strategic autonomy have been wasted. There has been a lack of political will and concrete action. Not even the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the return of war in Europe have roused national leaderships. They have thrown away these 3 years of war without doing what was needed to make Europe a protagonist instead of a spectator and the playing field.

Putin's response to Trump's openness and marginalization of the Europeans was to bomb Chernobyl and threaten Europe with a new attack which would complete the destruction

of the radiation protection shield at the No. 4 reactor of the plant that exploded in the 1980s.

All the while, Trump demands that European states spend 5 percent on defense (despite Americans being at 3.5 percent), and do everything he says, as otherwise the US will not offer them any protection. He adds that it will be up to the Europeans to ensure Ukraine's security based on the agreement he will negotiate. But that European troops in Ukraine will not be covered by NATO Article 5 and therefore, will not be able to rely on the US helping in the event of a Russian attack. «We Play You Pay»: the Americans play on the negotiating table and decide, but then the Europeans will have to pay for the reconstruction and defense of Ukraine.

Europe stands alone in a dangerous world where traditional alliances no longer exist, where the US president deals with enemies like Putin and Xi Jinping and threatens and bullies those who should be his allies, be it Canada, Mexico, Greenland and Denmark, or the Europeans. In the face of all this there is only one serious answer: the political unity of Europe! The rest is idle chatter and whining that only shows the complete impotence of European national governments. The first European Council meetings dedicated

to European defense were held in February and March, with disappointing results. The heads of state and government of member states talked mainly about industrial cooperation and how to succeed in decoupling national military spending from the Stability and Growth Pact. But they do not address the crucial issues: what European defense we want, what model, how to finance it, and with what governance. The geopolitical and geoeconomic context demands a political union of Europe. Instead, our national heads of state and government talk and don't decide.

Europeans together today spend almost 2 percent of GDP on defense as proposed by NATO, so double the EU budget which is 1 percent. They spend about 30 percent of the US with 10 percent capacity, that is, two-thirds of our military spending produces nothing. The problem is not that Europeans spend little, but that they spend divided. We need to create a European defense as the European pillar of NATO. The world is burning all around us, but our national leaders count for nothing and fail to make the decisions that Europeans need. We are thirty years behind in a world that is moving rapidly forward. What else needs to happen? It is time to unite Europe. If not now when?

Europe Between Two Empires

Alessandro Cavalli

Sovereignist parties are on the rise throughout Europe. The trend is clearly across the board: most pronounced in the so-called right-wing alignments, but it is not absent in the so-called left-wing either. In Italy, sovereignists are in government even if, in order to govern, they have had to moderate or conceal their sovereignist leanings. The interdependence between European societies-states is now too strong to break the bonds that unite them. Giorgia Meloni's path, from Italexit slogans to de facto support for Ursula von der Leyen as president of the European Commission, is exemplary of the fact that one can obstruct completion; however, it is impossible to demolish the European structure totally. However, even in Portugal, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Hungary the sovereignists seem firmly in the saddle and in Poland and Romania are in key positions. In France, Spain and Germany they stand a good chance of success by upcoming elections. They have a strong representation in the European Parliament, on both the right and the left.

Many commentators portray them as being nostalgic for times past. I rather fear that they are the forerunners of possible, and undesirable, times to come. The sovereignists are the allies of the empires that want to keep Europe divided.

Let us look to the West. Faced with the threat of Soviet Russian expansion, the Americans first substantially supported the European drive toward greater unification of the continent. After the death of Stalin and the establishment of a stable bipolar balance, American support for any attempts to unify Europe waned

considerably. The French immediately took advantage of this, causing the attempt to form a European Defense Community in 1954 to fail because of an alliance formed between the Gaullists and social communists. In the unipolar phase that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some influential American powerhouses began to see the European Union, and especially the single currency, as a potential competitor. The euro could have undermined the dollar as the dominant currency of international trade and reduced its ability to finance US public debt.

Today, with the advent of the Trump presidency, the European Union is not perceived as a reliable interlocutor (and indeed, EU representatives were not even invited to the inauguration ceremony and are de facto excluded from the negotiations about Ukraine's future). The announced battle over import-export duties has yet begun. But the new president prefers to deal with individual countries, which means establishing a colonial-type relationship with each of them. The support given to the sovereignists by the shadow president, Elon Musk, is a clear sign of this. Someone (a few) was shocked to see this highly influential figure openly support the Brexit supporters and the (neo-Nazi?) AfD extremists in Germany. In short, we will see, it is not NATO that is in question, but the meaning and content of the alliance.

Let us look to the East. The invasion of Ukraine, despite Russian propaganda stunts, is a clear sign of hostility against the EU's tendency to expand peacefully to the East.

The territorial enlargement of the Union happened by voluntary accession without firing a cannon. It may be that Putin wants to renew the imperial aspirations of Tsarist Russia and Soviet Russia. What is certain is that he perceives the model of coexistence represented by the European Union, and the force of attraction it exerts, as a threat to the stability of the autocratic-oligarchical power he has established in Russia. The real goal of the Ukraine war (“special military operation”) is not in the first instance the conquest of Crimea and the territories bordering the Black Sea, but stopping the eastward enlargement of the EU and, if possibly, to reverse it.

This explains the more or less covert funding of sovereignist forces (such as Salvini’s League in Italy), the support given and received by Orbán, the events in Moldova and Georgia, as well as other signs, such as the sympathy from and for Sahra Wagenknecht’s neo-movement party in Germany. A clear example of the sovereignist left approaching the sovereignist right.

So, it must be recognized that, as things stand at the moment, objectively Trump’s America and Putin’s Russia have a common interest in keeping Europe divided. The sovereignist parties are, in fact, defending an emptied sovereignty, to the advantage of new forms of colonial domination. Beyond the definitions of legal doctrines, sovereignty is the ability of a people to co-determine their own future. In a relationship of imperial dependence, one’s future is in the hands of others. Europe is faced with this dilemma: either assert its sovereignty or put itself under the protective wings of an empire. The various formally sovereign states will not even be able to choose which empire to serve, because this will depend on the power relations between the empires in play.

There does not seem to me to be an acute awareness that this is what is at stake in these months. Take, for example, the Ukrainian issue. Trump seems willing to concede a substantial part of Ukrainian territory to Russia and, more importantly, he does not see Ukraine as a vital interest in his design. His idea is that Putin’s victory in Ukraine is not a defeat of America but, if anything, of Europe, and it is therefore Europe that must get its act together and secure its borders.

Today, it must be acknowledged, it is not easy to convince a large enough section of public opinion in the various European countries that it is necessary to defend the eastern border, *whatever it takes*, and to reorganize its military engagement not so much and not only in terms of resources, but above all in terms of strategy, efficiency and, above all, political leadership. With what institutions, how and why, the issue of defense must be at the center of the political debate in the months that lie ahead. It has been comfortable to remain under the protective American umbrella for eighty long years.

Today, Europe must respond to the Trump’s challenge if it does not want to be destined in the future to be a collection of colonies serving the empires that will carve up the domination of the world among themselves. If it responds to this challenge by strengthening its own institutions and its own security, it will then be able to play a role in the concert of the great powers and perhaps invite them all around a table to decide, together, to dismantle armies and allocate the resources saved to fight hunger, achieve the energy transition and lay the groundwork for sustainable development on all continents. Otherwise, it cannot even choose which master to serve.

Gaza's Descent Into Catastrophe Tests Europe's Conscience

Josep Borrell

On 18 March, Benjamin Netanyahu broke a truce established in Gaza days before Donald Trump's inauguration. Within hours, bombings had killed more than 400 people. He was thus ensuring his political survival; continuing the war was the condition Bezael Smotrich, his far-right partner, set for not overthrowing the government coalition.

Since then, thousands more Palestinian civilians, predominantly women and children, have been killed, and the lives of the surviving hostages have been put in peril. A total blockade and widespread famine have catastrophically worsened an already dire humanitarian situation. Most buildings and infrastructure have been destroyed. The last water desalination plant is no longer operational.

The assessment is universally grim. The United Nations has warned that the situation in Gaza has deteriorated to its worst point since the start of the war. The aid organisation Médecins Sans Frontières has described Gaza as a mass grave for thousands of Gazans but "also for those trying to help them". Twelve of the largest international aid organisations have just launched a joint, desperate appeal. Yet, the pleas seem to go unanswered. Israel's Defence Minister, Israel Katz, has reiterated in recent days that "no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza".

Meanwhile, Bezael Smotrich echoed this sentiment, confirming that maximum pressure was being exerted to "evacuate people to the south and implement President Trump's voluntary migration plan for the inhabitants

of Gaza". This plan, Israel Katz had already presented to the EU Council in early 2024 when he was foreign minister. The Israeli army has seized half of the territory and placed two-thirds of Gaza under evacuation orders, effectively designating them as "no-go zones", including the border town of Rafah.

The aim, it appears, is to create the conditions for what would be the largest ethnic cleansing operation since the end of the Second World War. To claim that "not a single grain of wheat will enter Gaza" is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. It is impossible not to see this as an intent to exterminate, which the International Criminal Court had already taken into consideration when issuing arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister. It is no less serious than that found in the past by international justice in Srebrenica and Rwanda.

Simultaneously, in the West Bank, the army is conducting its largest offensive in decades. More than 40,000 Palestinians have already been forcibly displaced from the north of the territory, in apparent preparation for plans pushed by far-right lawmakers to expand new settlements, which are illegal under international law. On 23 March, the government nevertheless granted legitimacy to 13 of these settlements. The fundamentalist far right hopes that Donald Trump will support its plans to annex part or all of the West Bank, a move that would effectively extinguish any remaining possibility of creating a Palestinian state.

In much of Europe, attention has recently been focused primarily on the customs duties Donald Trump is threatening. Talk of Gaza had largely faded. But a photograph of a Gazan child who had both arms amputated, which won an international award, and the death of photographer Fatima Hassouna, the central figure in a film selected for the upcoming Cannes Film Festival, have rekindled emotions. The scarcity of unfiltered images from Gaza in public discourse, some argue, contributes to a collective turning away: "Out of sight, out of mind".

Yet, the grim reality is that it is not merely one child, or a hundred, or even a thousand, but thousands of children who have died or been maimed in Gaza. And the conditions are harrowing. Gaza has become a war primarily against children. While a photograph of one child can bring many to tears, the overall scale of the tragedy often seems too vast to fully grasp or respond to. Meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu is being received with honours in Washington and Budapest, contrasting sharply with the International Criminal Court's move to seek arrest warrants against him.

Despite numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations and decisions by the International Criminal Court, during my tenure as High Representative of the Union, I found it impossible to compel the EU Council and Commission to act in response to the massive and repeated violations of international and humanitarian law by Benjamin Netanyahu's government; in stark contrast to the bloc's robust response to Vladimir Putin's aggression against Ukraine.

Throughout my term, I observed how significantly this double standard weakened

the EU's standing globally, not only in the Muslim world but also across Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Spain and a few other European nations have voiced concerns, asking the Commission to examine whether Israel's conduct aligns with its obligations under its association agreement with the EU. Their calls, however, have reportedly been met largely with silence.

For some European countries, historical guilt over the Holocaust has arguably been transformed into a "reason of state" that justifies unconditional support for Israel, risking engaging the EU in complicity with crimes against humanity. One horror cannot justify another. Unless the values the EU claims to uphold are to lose all credibility, the bloc cannot continue to passively observe the unfolding horror in Gaza and the "Gazaification" of the West Bank.

Contrary to common perception, and despite the apparent lack of empathy shown by some of its leaders, the EU holds significant leverage over the Israeli government. It is Israel's leading partner in terms of trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. The EU supplies at least a third of Israel's arms imports and has concluded its most comprehensive association agreement with the country which is, like all such agreements, conditional on respect for international law, particularly humanitarian law.

If the political will exists, the EU possesses the means to act. And the time for EU action is long overdue. Many Israelis, aware that Benjamin Netanyahu's current trajectory ultimately threatens Israel's own security and survival, would likely welcome such action.

Environment, Society, Institutions. Thinking the Totality to Understand and Change the World

Giampiero Bordino

The multiple crises we find ourselves, facing on a world-wide scale, which are environmental (the more or less recent pandemics for example), socio-economic, and political, offer particularly significant opportunities for reflection. Crises, as history repeatedly shows, guarantee nothing for the future. Just consider how wars, despite their inherently suicidal and murderous nature, have been mindlessly repeated over millennia.

In an interview published by *Le Monde* in April 2020, the French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin, known as the theorist of “complexity” as a figure of the contemporary world, denounces the prevalence of “disjunctive and reductive thinking” in European and Western culture. A mindset that too often does not adequately grasp the relationships that connect the different parts of reality to each other and, also emphasizes and celebrates the specialization and separation of knowledge. “Science”, Morin observes, “is devastated by hyper-specialization, which is the closure and compartmentalization of specialized knowledge instead of its communication”. Disjunctive thinking appears powerless to grasp, or at least attempt to grasp, totality. In this way, reality is evasive and cannot, literally, be “comprehended”.

In conclusion, according to Morin, “deficiencies in thinking, combined with the unquestionable dominance of a frenzied thirst

for profit, are responsible for countless human catastrophes, including those occurring now, since February 2020”.

But, concretely, what are some more significant “reductive disjunctions” that characterize the prevailing Western culture or, in other words, our prevailing, more widespread and introjected in the collective imagination “world view”?

To give just a few examples. *Body/mind or soul* (according to the Platonic, Christian, Cartesian tradition), *nature/culture* (that which has always been as it is, unchanging and, conversely, that which is instead cultivated, produced by man therefore changeable), *human/animal* (the conceptual pair at the origin, with others, of the environmental crisis and in particular the current pandemic), *human/dehuman* (as experience teaches, the inhuman is actually in-human, i.e., it is within man, and cannot be attributed to others or to anything else), *individual/collective* (conceptual pair underlying many different and conflicting political ideologies), *economic/political* (as if the economy were autonomous from society, ethics, and politics, and thus legitimized to impose its own logic and interests in people’s lives), *scientific/humanistic* (the basis of “scientism”, a view of science without humanism, thus unable to give meaning to what it does and to perceive the limits of what it does), *local/global* (at the root, along with other factors, of the crisis of democracy in globalization).

The prevalence of disjunctive and reductive thinking has two fundamental and serious consequences, which it is appropriate to already briefly point out.

On the cognitive level, it prevents one from comprehending (taking together) the complexity of the world, that is, from adequately grasping the multiple relationships that connect the parts to each other and to the whole, from seeking the totality and attempting to observe it, beyond separations and dualisms. The Covid-19 pandemic, for example, stems to a large extent from the failure to understand, generated also by interests and opportunism, the connections that bind the human world, the animal world and the plant world.

Second, on the level of praxis, it is essential to observe that the lack of global perception of reality results in a serious weakening of the sense of responsibility on the ethical and political levels. Each person feels responsible only for their own narrow role – what they see as “theirs” – whether scientist, politician, or citizen. This is a consequence of reductive, disjunctive thinking. Local/global for example: every man for himself, responsible only for his own house and for his own house, as if the different houses (sub-national, national, continental, global) were not increasingly connected to each other in a single community of destiny. One can therefore understand why democracies, in today’s world, appear increasingly powerless and endangered in the face of neo-nationalisms and identity populisms.

Totality, a complex totality constructed from a multiplicity of relations, must therefore be, if we are to be saved, the horizon of cognitive research and ethical and political praxis. Totality is of course, to put it in Kant’s language, a “concept-boundary”, a horizon to be pursued, a path that one never ceases to walk, because

inevitably, no matter how far one walks, there is always something “further” to reach. Totality, in other words, is not an “entity” that we can definitively appropriate, but a complex and changing system of relations, which it is therefore necessary to walk and explore on a daily basis.

Thinking about wholeness, in the world in which we live, is particularly necessary with respect to two major problems that challenge our capacities to know and act, that increasingly put at stake and at risk the very survival of the human species, and that have an increasingly evident global dimension. First, the environmental problem, relating to all the different contexts (geological, plant, animal, even cosmic) in which human life on earth has always been situated. Secondly, the social, political, institutional problem, relating to their coexistence, and to the ability to deal with and resolve common issues peacefully and through consensus, as far as possible not by force (which as we know inevitably produces murder and suicide).

On the environmental level, it is useful first of all to put back together, a first totality beginning to build, human history and geological history. The history of the earth is measured in billions of years, that of the plant world and living matter in millions of years, that of humans in hundreds of thousands of years, that more properly of human civilization in tens of thousands of years. These are, as we can see, entirely different units of measurement and timescales, which give an idea of the relativity and limits of human history and, at the same time, of the anthropocentric presumption that characterizes our dominant cultural tradition. In this very long span of time, millions of living species have appeared and then gone extinct.

The human species is placed in this context, like all others it has no guarantee of eternity.

And what is it doing, in fact, to ensure its own survival? First of all, it is useful to remember, in order to outline the big picture, that 97.3 percent of living matter (biomass) is made up of plants, 2.7 percent from the animal world and only 0.01 percent from the species “homo sapiens” to which we belong. Thus, it is evident that the role of the plant and animal worlds is crucial to the life and survival of the human species. It is, in fact, one of the main, decisive for human life, “political” problems they face. Another “reductive disjunction”, between problems of nature and politics, and between the related traditionally established knowledge, political and social sciences and nature sciences, that is urgently needed to be understood and overcome.

According to a recent report by WWF, the leading international nature conservation organization, 420 million hectares of land have been deforested worldwide over the past 30 years, roughly the area of the European Union. This is a process that destroys biodiversity, since an estimated 80 percent of plant and animal species live in forests, mostly in tropical areas. An average of 10 million hectares are deforested each year for the purpose of making pastures for livestock and meat production, soybean crops, palm oil, etc. predominantly required by the developed countries of the Western world. For example, 97 percent of soybean meal is destined for intensive animal farms. All of this, as is well known and is now recognized by all, is also one of the main factors of climate change, of *global warming*, taking place today. According to an FAO estimate, 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions depend on intensive livestock farming, only 13.59 percent on transportation.

All this also produces significant health consequences, which are increasingly evident and recognized. According to estimates, 73 percent of the world’s antibiotic production is

for animal husbandry, i.e., intensive livestock production, and thus enters the food cycle leading to the phenomenon of antibiotic resistance and the emergence of super-bacteria, a major and growing cause of death worldwide. With current trends, according to some predictions, by 2050 there will be 10 million deaths per year from these causes, compared with 8.2 million from cancer and 1.2 million from traffic accidents.

With this in mind, it is now possible to better understand the phenomenon of pandemics. The current Covid-19 one is the sixth since the “Spanish” flu of 1918. And it is unlikely to be the last, given that, according to analysis by the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Ipbes), the body established by the United Nations to monitor biodiversity and ecosystems, more than 1.7 million unknown viruses reside in mammals and birds alone, half of which may have the ability to leap between species. Deforestation, the progressive destruction of many ecosystems (including by large fires, arson and otherwise, such as those that devastated Australia and California during the 2020s) pushes entire animal species out of their habitats, brings them closer to inhabited human environments, and thus multiplies the opportunities for species-hopping in infectious processes, in an increasingly densely anthropized context. The world’s population today is about 7.8 billion people, 4.3 billion of whom are concentrated in urban agglomerations that are expected to grow further in future decades.

As the aforementioned WWF report notes, since the first industrial revolution in particular (thus since the late eighteenth century) humans have significantly altered three-quarters of the landmass and two-thirds of the oceans, giving rise to a new epoch called the “anthropocene”, which the French

scientist and botanist Gilles Clément recently renamed, ironically but not unfoundedly, the “stupidocene”. Stupidity, i.e., the ability to harm oneself without realizing it, is typical of the human species, and this determines, among other things, the need for politics, understood in short as the “art of governing”, to prevent and control its consequences, instead of using it for the purposes of power, as is too often the case today by populist and opportunistic leadership (Bolsonaro’s politics in Brazil, to take just one significant example). Many other phenomena, in addition to those outlined above, justify Clément’s definition of “stupidocene”: consumption patterns based on the waste of resources, the inability to give rise to new forms of “circular economy” capable of reducing this waste, and so on. However, it is unquestionable, to conclude on environmental issues, that the human species is by no means guaranteeing its own future and survival. This should be known and understood first and foremost by the generations to come, who will pay the consequences.

With regard to socio-economic, political and institutional problems, those relating to the coexistence of men and the art of government, it is equally necessary and decisive to think of them in their entirety. Given that hardly any man lives in isolation from the rest of the world anymore (Robinson and Friday on the desert island are only literary fiction) and given the technological revolution in communications and transportation and economic globalization (possibly in a new “archipelago” form characterized by the coexistence of large integrated continental areas), all relevant problems facing humanity now have a global character, and can therefore be thought of and addressed only from the point of view of the “totality” and the systems of relations that constitute it. Local and global are always interconnected (except for

Robinson’s nonexistent island), and no one can really be “master of his own house”, given the interconnectedness between houses. At any level, it is necessary to “think the world”, i.e., the totality, because everyone has, in various aspects and to varying degrees, “the world at home” (in the form of goods, capital, images, people, etc.). A minority, the globalized minority, small but always influential, is then also “at home in the world”. Having the world at home without being able to be at home in the world is an obviously unpleasant situation, also perceived as unfair, and is a contradiction at the root of many social, political and even cultural conflicts of our time. It can help to understand the roots and reasons for these conflicts. If we add to this the growing economic and social inequality, particularly of income and wealth and more generally of life opportunities, an overall picture emerges that explains the crisis of representative democracy and the emergence by contrast, worldwide, of neo-nationalist, populist and anti-elite movements.

On the political and institutional level, thinking as a means designing and building multilevel institutions and policies, from local and national to continental and global, which in a coordinated form with each other (thus guaranteed by “foedera” pacts, of a constitutional nature) make it possible to address common problems in the different dimensions and at the different levels at which they arise. In this direction, the thought and experience of federalism can make a relevant contribution, first and foremost with regard to solving the problem of peace among states, which is, to use Kantian language again, the “condition of possibility” of every other public value or good. Beyond the “disjunctive and reductive thinking” denounced by Morin, there is another possible horizon, which is worth trying to pursue together.

The International System After Trump II: A Federalist Analysis

Domènec Ruiz Devesa

Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine and the return of Donald Trump to the White House in January 2025 have put an end to the international order based on multilateralism and open economic relations created in 1945 and strengthened in 1989 after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The end of the Cold War meant the "victory" of liberal democracy and free markets in the ideological competition, but also the integration of the former Soviet bloc and China in the capitalist global economy, and in the international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation).

A key feature of the Bretton Woods system has remained since its inception: the role of the dollar as the informal international reserve currency. This has allowed the US to get indebted in its own, universally accepted, currency, and therefore at cheaper rates, attract foreign capital, and to develop the largest consumer economy in the world. At the same time, the strong dollar has over time damaged its manufacturing base and exports.

The 1989 democratic revolution in Central and Eastern Europe, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant *in primis* the spatial expansion of the multilateral order to the extent that Communist world was not part of some of its institutions, and its deepening, since the end of the bipolar competition paved for a more cooperative approach with

a renewed protagonism of the United Nations and its Security Council.

In fact, the 1945/1989 order started to (progressively) unravel with the end of the Cold War since it included, alongside the democratic and multilateral pillars, two unsustainable elements: overreliance in the US as guarantor of the international system and an unfettered financial and economic globalisation that increased social inequalities, migration flows to the First World, and ecological destruction.

A bipolar or multipolar international order is going to be based in balance of power dynamics. Two or more imperial or continental powers compete to maximize their perceived interests while minimizing the financial resources needed to this end. It is therefore inherently unstable, characterized by conflict and attempts at domination. It could lead to open wars with limiting factors such as nuclear's "equilibrium terror".

The liberal and democratic character of some of these powers can nuance their raw pursue of national interest, with some consideration for International Law and international organisations, including illegal use of force, Human Rights, and so on. In the end, international norms and institutions will be deployed by the key players to the extent that they perceive them as tools to advance their national interests. This is true also in regard to the hegemonic power in a unipolar international order.

In the unipolar order the hegemonic power must fulfil certain functions such as defending the international norms, and acting as global police, as far as they conform to their interests and, if it is a democratic power, values. The hegemon cannot possibly prioritise the interest of the international community over its own perceived national interest. Equally, the economic cost of underpinning the international order must be consistent with a profitable balance sheet. Payments to international organisations and financing of military bases and deployments around the world are to be factored in it.

In a unipolar world, one must hope that the imperial power is a liberal-democratic one and that most of the time the two interests will overlap. Still, this order is more stable than the others as far as no competitors or rivals emerge over time, and the imperial power acts as a benevolent hegemon because of its democratic nature and/or the benefits derived from the international order that it is underpinning.

After 1989 the US has been the hegemonic power of the international system. The 1990s were the apex of the unipolar moment. It was the unrivalled military and economic power. The Clinton administration considered that cooperation with the traditional allies and the former USSR, democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe, further European integration (Maastricht Treaty), trade liberalisation, and multilateralism were both good for the world and the US. These were the years of the creation of the NATO-Russia Council and US humanitarian interventions in different continents. The expansion of NATO to the East will become over time a contentious issue with the Russian Federation, but particularly after Putin's accession to power.

In fact, the unravelling of the post-Cold War era had to do more with the gradual

integration of China in the world economy, and the destruction of entire industrial areas in the US and the West, and the election of George W. Bush as president in 2000. The Bush administration was not particularly concerned about the flaws of unfettered globalisation, which were not so evident in the early 2000s.

It considered though that the US power, inherently good, should not be constrained by international law (rejection of the International Criminal Court), disarmament treaties (withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia), or its traditional allies (invasion of Iraq). The 9-11 terrorist attacks are typically considered as the key moment of the "unilateral" US foreign policy, but the ICC and ABM episodes took place before the collapse of the Twin Towers, the second one probably greatly eroding Putin's trust in the Americans. Indeed, the Al-Qaeda attacks ushered a global coalition in support of the US and its intervention in Afghanistan. The illegal and unjustified invasion of Iraq, inspired by a mix of democratic imperialism and a desire to control natural resources, constituted on the other hand a major disturbance of the international order, with the EU divided, Russia and China opposed to it, and the credibility of the UN and international law greatly damaged.

In 2009 the Obama administration had to deal with the financial collapse of the West, due to excessive private debt and banking deregulation, and continued and costly military interventions in Afghanistan in Iraq. By then the role of China in the global economy was clear. It had become the "factory of the world", running a huge trade surplus with the US. The excess savings were in turn channelled in US debt, fuelling its private consumption and government deficits. President Obama attempted to limit America's economic dependence from China and particularly to manage its rise as

a geopolitical power, while recommitting the US to the rules-based order after the Bush years. In the meantime, Russia had become a fully-fledged revisionist power, with its opposition to NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine in 2008, and its aggression to the second one in 2014.

Therefore, already in the first decade of the XXI Century one of the conditions needed for the stability of the unipolar order was already cracking: the benevolent character of the hegemon and its commitment to multilateralism (Bush years) and, in the second, it was the turn of the lack of geopolitical rivals willing to challenge the *statu quo* (Russia and China, in cooperation with Iran, North Korea, etcetera).

Already episodes such as Brexit and the election of Trump, both in 2016 reflected the deep malaise across the West with the global economic system: Asia as the industrial powerhouse and the US as consumer of last resort. The Euro-Atlantic area had become (mostly) a services-based economy fuelled by cheap migrant labour. Thus, the politics of class and the politics of identity mixed to power a strong right-wing populism current in US and Europe.

Trump shared (and shares) with Bush its belief in the unconstrained use of American's imperial power, even if he is considerably more willing to follow through in practice (the threats over Greenland and Canada are cases in point). For Bush, international organisations could be a political or legal constrain; for Trump they are also seen as a financial burden.

Trump disagreed with Bush on his democratic imperialism and willingness to undertake military interventions. In addition, Trump is attempting to alter the internal constitutional order, something Bush did not dream of doing.

Finally, Trump's understanding of the flawed international economic order appears more profound though than that of his predecessors, even if his team is not always consistent about policy. He is determined to reduce the US current account deficit, and some of his advisers believe that the dollar's role as *de facto* reserve currency is not in the US interest (Miran) while others would like to keep it and that of the US debt as the paramount safe asset (Bessent). The Trump team is united in wanting to reduce the financial burden of the US security guarantee to Europe, to redeploy resources in the Asia-Pacific against China.

The bottom line is that in 2025 the US is a non-benevolent hegemon that does not only consider that it should not be bound by international norms (the novelty here is the sheer scale of its disregard vis-à-vis previous Republican presidencies) but that also believes that the current global order is not benefitting it and could be ready to agree to divide the planet in spheres of influence with its challengers, Russia and China, in this second case provided that the trade deficit question is properly addressed. The fate of Ukraine and Europe are at best a minor consideration.

To conclude, the Trump example shows in the clearest fashion since 1989 that a peaceful and stable international order cannot be built around neither an imperial hegemon nor a competition of imperial powers. In the short term, the EU's urgency and that of other nations and regional blocs of the Global South is to forge a new alliance to reject the Trump-Putin-Jinping order and to preserve as much as possible the UN system and the international order.

However, a larger point emerges from this analysis and the traditional federalist thinking: the world remains in a state of nature, with nation-states competing for power and

influence, even if nuanced by the myriads of international organisations and regimes that have emerged. We know though that international treaties can be easily denounced or disrespected, and that the US, Russia, and China do not accept the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The civil society and political work towards a global federation, as an evolution of the United Nations, is now more apparent and necessary than ever.

The EU should complete its federalisation and make the establishment of a supranational global governance a fundamental part of its foreign policy: demanding the amendment of the UN Charter, the creation of the UN Parliamentary Assembly, and the reform of the Security Council. In parallel, Mercosur, African

Union, and ASEAN should become politically integrated to rebalance the international order alongside the EU, vis-à-vis the US, China, and Russia. This coalition of regional blocs should propose the creation of a global currency (the Special Drawing Rights of the International Monetary Fund) to be used for international trade transactions. All national and regional currencies will have a fixed exchange rate with the global currency, thus ensuring fair and balanced trade and erasing the US dollar "exorbitant burden". The creation of a new trade and monetary system is crucial to correct the social and economic inequalities created by unfettered globalisation. A new global social and ecologic contract must underpin the federalisation of global political governance.

Europe is at a Crucial Turning Point in its History

Sergio Mattarella

European administration and the increasingly integrated and extensive exercise of administrative roles by the European and national institutions have achieved important results of which, at times, there seems to be no awareness.

During the COVID 19 pandemic the Commission, acting on behalf of all the Member States, negotiated the supply of large quantities of vaccines and obtained them very quickly.

Everyone is familiar with the Commission-funded Erasmus project which gives an ever-increasing number of European students the chance of attending university even in other Member States. Over time, universities in the different Member States have forged ties and established forms of cooperation between them. The largest funding for university research currently comes from the European Commission.

Today our nutrition is much safer because the European Union has imposed strict food safety standards and ensures that widespread and stringent inspections are conducted.

We also trust our medicines and their testing because the medicine agencies of the Member States of the Union coordinate their work.

Intellectual property is safeguarded on a European level, thereby offering it greater protection.

We fly safely thanks to the rules laid down by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency. We can travel without passports and without incurring additional costs on phone calls thanks to the agreements reached within Europe.

Crime is being fought more effectively and our safety improved thanks to the stonger cooperation we have been able to achieve between the polices forces of the various Member States.

This, of course, does not mean that we do not see that European rules have some limitations. We must be aware of them and work to improve and overcome them. We must work harder to improve the functioning of the Union's institutions.

If we look at the current structure of the European administrative bodies and the principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, we can see that there is a move towards gradually aligning European and national rules.

This would appear to be due to the nature of the phenomena and issues which are emerging and on which administrative action is focussed.

Climate change, the energy crisis, the shortage of raw materials which are essential to the development of technology, migration, digital transition, defence, cybersecurity are not problems that can be resolved independently

by the individual nations; they require interaction between parliaments, governments and the civil service on a national, European and - where possible- supranational level.

Europe has moved towards a gradual intensification of this interaction, thereby proving that it operates an open and flexible system which can find new solutions, as well as introducing new organizational models and new procedures.

As of today- we could say out of necessity and for evident and unavoidable reasons- economic, social, health and environment policies of national importance have now become a European responsibility.

The tendency is to guarantee coherence, harmony and continuity between national and EU procedures and rights, with a view to transitioning towards new systems of a general nature but also specifically aimed at achieving unity. The Next Generation EU programme is probably the best achievement of this objective.

On the other hand, the administrative bodies of complex societies must take it upon themselves to evaluate any new risk caused by human activities, environmental hazards, public health and financial issues.

In this context only, the close coordination of national administration entities can guarantee efficient measures to contrast the various crises –whether related to the economy and finance, migration, public health or energy – and find adequate solutions for the challenges posed by globalization.

The evolution and current structure of the Fundamental Rights covering administrative procedures are principally interconnected to topics which are common to the

constitutional traditions of the Member States; these, as we know, form the corner stone of the European Constitution. A kind of virtuous circle has been forged between national traditions and the European Constitution which ensures that any further developments converge.

Nevertheless, the current configuration of European administration pays the price of the lack of a properly integrated European political forum, of truly European-level politicians and of a European public opinion that is not simply a concentration of different national sensitivities.

Within the individual nations too often the European Union is still seen as an entity that is separate to the Member States and not - as it is in reality- the result of interaction and cooperation between them, developed over time and based on decisions taken democratically and voluntarily by the national Parliaments and governments, as well as by the European institutions which were instituted and operate by the will and fundamental contribution of the individual nations.

The limited political self-awareness which characterizes the Union conditions its practical work and too often means it is not firm or timely enough in tackling the important challenges confronting the European states and their citizens.

However, the international situation, where harsh and even destructive conflicts prevail, highlights - by way of a contrast - the European States' shared values and principles. These show that the States are naturally similar and inevitably united when it comes to reaffirming the values represented by democracy, human dignity, liberty, social equity and peace.

It is said that the European Union was founded,

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and continues to be built, in times of crisis and emergencies. This is certainly partly true.

In recent times, the financial crisis and the pandemic provided the opportunity to make bold choices that transcended the shortsighted concepts of national identity and interests.

However, this approach is no longer acceptable. At this turning point in history, we need to draw some inevitable conclusions and realise that the individual European states on their own cannot find an adequate response to the challenges of this day and age.

In March 1927 we celebrated the signing of the original Treaties in Rome. On that occasion, when welcoming the Heads of State and Government, I took the liberty of saying that the Member States of the Union can be divided into two categories: the small countries and those who still haven't understood that they too are small.

It is only by being united that they can continue to guarantee their citizens a future of peace and widespread prosperity, such as the last seventy and more years have seen.

This comment has been extracted from the *Lectio doctoralis* given by the President of the Republic during the ceremony which conferred on him the *Honoris Causa* Doctorate Scienze delle Pubbliche Amministrazioni (Science of Public Administration), at the University of Messina 22/01/2025 (2nd term).

Stop This Horror

Moni Ovadia

In the post-Holocaust years, the West has long questioned whether anything could have been done to stop that horror. Of course, something could have been done, but it was not done.

We learn that Netanyahu has decided on ground troop action in Gaza and the deportation of Gazans. Where to?

We are at a point where, if the Israeli government decided to intern Palestinians in

concentration camps, it could do so amid the inertia of other governments – after which it could do whatever it wants with them, as indeed it is already doing.

At the end of all this – because sooner or later an end always comes – we will ask how this could have happened and whether anything could have been done to stop this horror.

Of course, something could have been done, but it was not done.

Why Global Governance Is Failing

Antara Haldar

Eight decades after the United Nations was established to prevent another world war and manage conflicts through diplomacy rather than violence, humanity finds itself paralyzed in the face of new planetary-scale disasters. Rising to the moment will require a fundamentally new kind of thinking.

The United Nations was established in 1945, succeeding the failed League of Nations, to pull humanity back from the brink of self-destruction. It was a bold experiment in collective security, designed to prevent another world war and manage conflicts through diplomacy rather than violence.

Yet, 80 years later, we find ourselves back on the precipice of disaster. Global temperatures have breached the 1.5°Celsius threshold that scientists see as a Rubicon for reining in climate change over the long term. Public trust in institutions – and in democracy – is critically low, and geopolitical tensions are rising. What happened?

The UN has, justifiably, drawn criticism for a variety of reasons. The composition of the Security Council is antiquated. Violent conflict, and even genocide, still occur with alarming frequency. And the organization has proven to be generally ineffectual, overly bureaucratic, and unfair in its treatment of the Global South.

But the inadequately diagnosed problem is that the UN is bringing a twentieth-century logic to bear on the twenty-first century's fundamentally planetary problems. Today's most urgent challenges – climate change, pandemics, AI regulation, financial contagion,

supply-chain disruptions – do not respect national borders, yet UN institutions remain stuck in a framework of nation-states jealously guarding their sovereignty. Our international institutions simply were not designed to address essentially systemic issues indifferent to national borders. The UN is not just slow; it is structurally incapable of tackling such problems at scale.

With even conventional governance structures faltering in the face of heightened tribalism and nationalism, any proposed new paradigm of planetary governance runs the risk of sounding utopian. Fortunately, the world already has a serviceable blueprint: the European Union, for all its flaws, has demonstrated that a supranational federation can work, allowing previously warring countries to pool sovereignty in exchange for economic and political stability. Nor is this such a radical idea. In a 1946 Gallup poll, 54 percent of Americans believed that “the UN should be strengthened to make it a world government with power to control the armed forces of all nations, including the United States”.

In 2024, by contrast, 58 percent per cent of Americans thought that the UN was doing a “poor job”. This description suggests that the UN needs to take a bolder approach. Big, planetary issues like global warming are what philosopher Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects”. They are “entities of such vast temporal and spatial dimension” as to require a fundamentally different kind of human reasoning. To change how we think about such problems calls for both an intellectual and a psychological shift – beyond

the nation-state, or what Benedict Anderson famously called “imagined communities”.

Intellectually, planetary thinking requires its own theoretical framework. This demand is not new. In the twentieth century, John Maynard Keynes saw a need for a global currency and proposed the “bancor” to replace the dollar-focused Bretton Woods institutions; Hannah Arendt advanced her own vision of planetary politics; and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin developed his concept of the “noosphere” (collective human consciousness). In more recent scholarship – from Johan Rockström’s work on “planetary boundaries” to Bruno Latour’s description of our ecological age – the intellectual elements of a new planetary paradigm are beginning to come together.

Psychologically, we need a new narrative. The historian Yuval Noah Harari argues that human civilization is built on shared myths: nationalism, religion, capitalism. If planetary governance is to succeed, it needs to tell a compelling new story, one that moves beyond outdated ideas about sovereign nation-states to acknowledge humanity’s interconnectedness.

Again, the impulse is not entirely novel. As the psychologist Ara Norenzayan has shown, many major world religions (the “Big Gods”) did exactly this. In the same vein, Joshua Greene’s work on “moral tribes”, Peter Singer’s views on “expanding the circle”, and Kwame Anthony Appiah’s insights into “how moral revolutions happen” have provided much of the scientific and philosophical arsenal that we

need. Equally important, imaginative works – from Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* to Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Ministry of the Future* – have offered narratives to convey the urgency of the challenge we confront.

To reach people where they are, rigorous planetary thinking must be accompanied by stronger local thinking. Improvements to our governance structures must look both “up” and “down”, as the Berggruen Institute’s Jonathan Blake and Nils Gilman have put it. Global governance cannot succeed without resilient, empowered local structures. The nation-state would remain one element, but cities, regions, and local networks would be given more attention and integrated into planetary decision-making. This kind of nested approach could offer an alternative to the outdated system of nation-states without requiring its wholesale dismantling.

The growing urgency of planetary crises – from the 2008 financial crash to pandemics and climate change – graphically illustrate the inadequacies of the UN in its current form. The UN itself emerged from the shell of the League of Nations, and now it is time to build anew. Governance must pivot from the nation-state-based logic of the Bretton Woods system to the planetary sensibilities of the bancor. Even if the United Nations had succeeded in uniting the world’s nations, its current design would be unequal to a moment defined by inherently planetary challenges. It’s time to imagine new communities centered on our planetary realities.

Economic Complexity and the North-South Dilemma

Pietro Terna

Unexpectedly, in Spring 2025, we are watching the mad scramble over tariffs initiated by US President Donald Trump's inconsistent and ill-conceived choices, whose consequences will have dangerous global effects. Let us try to analyze the situation and the related effects with the tools of economic knowledge, never forgetting the social sphere.

National economies are robust based on product value and production efficiency without neglecting social welfare. Let us look for a richer and more explanatory measure than the usual indicator of gross domestic product, GDP, which is the crude quantity of how much the product is in an area over a specific period.

Two interesting scholars, Ricardo Hausmann and César A. Hidalgo, presented in 2009 and then gradually developed the Economic Complexity Index: a ranking of countries based on the diversity and complexity of their export basket. We can find the formulas used for the calculations at <https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/glossary>. High-complexity countries have sophisticated and specialized capabilities and can produce a highly diversified set of products that incorporate great value. Two websites describe the World's economy in that way, with data, graphs, and maps: the Atlas of Economic Complexity, <https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/>, and the Observatory of Economic Complexity, <https://oec.world>. The second is aimed primarily at commercial applications. We will use the former, inviting everyone to explore it: it is entirely free.

All the maps we refer to are at <https://app.simplenote.com/publish/vFJ97k>.

Map 1, Country Complexity Rankings Map 1995, shows us the situation in 1995. The blue areas are those whose products show the most significant complexity and so rich labor contributions with the highest worker benefits; intermediate situations use intermediate colors; the gradually more negative ones are those with increasing intensity red: their products show the lowest complexity and therefore poor labor contributions with the poorest worker benefits. We easily detect the great weight of the United States and Europe. Russia and China are less relevant, with Africa in serious trouble.

Map 2, Country Complexity Rankings Map 2005, referring to 2005, shows very clearly the continued relevance of the United States and Europe, now accompanied by a tentative world balance by Russia and, even more, by China. The situation in Africa was always negative: Chinese, American, and Russian incursions were improving there. The Western South American area fails any improvements.

With the third map, Country Complexity Rankings Map 2021, we approach current events with the situation existing before the war brought by Russia to Ukraine. The position of the United States is still the same: stable that of Europe, with significant progress in China, slight improvement in India, serious regression in Russia, and severe deterioration in Latin America and Australia. Finally, the situation in Africa is burdensome. In short, it is a world in which the polarization of differences, as measured by the value content of products, increases and becomes extreme.

The fourth map, Country Complexity Rankings Map 2023, is close to the present, with the Russia vs. Ukraine war underway for one year. For the Russian economy, the disaster is evident, while Ukraine, which was closely linked to Russian performance, paradoxically, in 2023, has a slightly better situation. Look at the Global South: Africa, now described with more national data, is in a terrible situation, including South Africa. The problem is awful also in Latin America and Australia. China's situation is highly favorable, and India's is resilient in its slow positivity.

Why is all this so negative? Producing goods and services that are not very complex, in other words, poor, dooms the continuation of poverty in a world of inequality. The North-South divide is even more dramatic when considering import and export flows. The following maps are produced by the writer with a simulation model of the global economy, designed in collaboration with Prof. Mario Deaglio. The basis of the data is that of the Harvard Atlas cited above but reworked into flows that we can see in the maps.

The fifth map, Export Connections above 100 billion, shows the flow of exports greater than 100 billion per year, with the colors having the same previous meaning. Blue is for goods and services of complex content and rich labor, while red is for simple goods based on poorly paid labor. The map shows that the flows above 100 billion are practically all blue, except for the one concerning Australian exports. The South is left alone.

The sixth map, Export Connections above 10 billion, instead shows a larger volume of trade, with all flows greater than 10 billion, and here is the Global South appearing, sending its poor goods to the world's rich and buying technology goods from them at their prices. The reasoning that many make by saying that low wages correspond to a lower cost of living is fallacious because it condemns people to poverty. If poorly paid Indian programmers, even if working for the

rich North, need to buy a computer, they pay the same price, which is enormous for them, paid by a European and US colleague.

What is the World's possible response to this situation? First, there is a no to Trump's choices on customs barriers, and one can hope that his actions will soon be put under control by American conservatives themselves, following the terrible economic results he is causing. But much more is needed. Recall the goal of the World Trade Organization. According to their website, «the World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the World's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible».

So: (i) no conflicts among people with low incomes in the trade of poor goods and (ii) no colonialist settlements of big business in poor areas of the world, where they bring the least skilled activities.

WTO must transform tariffs barrier into agreements and concessions for high-complexity products to be produced in the South. Do the coalitions of the North positively react to the so-called BRICS countries? It would be helpful, but insufficient. We can hope for new horizons to overcome the Trump storm and Putin's tyrannical action.

The first step could be that of an enlarged Europe, including Russia. This is political reasoning! The big mistake after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was not to do everything to forge strong political ties with Russia. Let us not forget that in the early 1990s, there was an intense rapprochement between Russia and NATO, and the road was open. A road to go for peace and to overcome the immense inequalities in the World. The second and most crucial step is continuing, or returning, to look at to a united World as a unique, effective reply.

Europe According to Pope Francis

Henri Lastenouse

As the first non-European Pope in over a millennium, Francis hasn't been particularly sensible to the original specificity of the European project driven by the nations of the Old Continent that followed their shared experience of absolute evil during World War II, unlike his predecessors, who, since John XXIII, accompanied the European project, sometimes having close ties to some of Europe's founding fathers.

In the mind of the late Pope the attempt to pacify the European continent, by means of a common legal standard that applies to all and serves the emancipation of each individual, seems to have been reduced to the element of the Single European Market, seen in the view of the critic of a consumerist lifestyle, symbol of a decline in the forces of the spirit.

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis has thus avoided focusing his attention to the Old Continent too much... with one exception, that of the migration issue. As early as July 8, 2013, three months after being elected Pope, Francis chose Lampedusa as the destination for one of his first pastoral visits.

The 12 years of Francis' pontificate have been marked by a deep and continuous appeal to the European Union and its member states about the migration issue. Pope Francis has never ceased to remind European political leaders of their responsibilities towards those who are fleeing misery, persecution and war. "Cemetery" is an expression Pope Francis has used dozens of times to describe the Mediterranean. Since 2013, according to data from the International Organization for Migration, more than 25,000 people have died in the Mediterranean Sea, mainly on the central Mediterranean route.

On receiving the Charlemagne Prize, Pope Francis did confess his dream of a "*new European humanism*" in the face of a Europe that seems to many "*tired and aged, not fertile and vital, where great ideals seem to have lost their force of attraction*". In his letter dated November 2, 2020, Pope Francis reacted to the reactionary international that had, in the meantime, seized power in several Western countries. "*Europe, find yourself again! Rediscover your deep-rooted ideals. Be yourself! Don't be afraid of your thousand-year-old history, which is a window on the future rather than the past*".

Threatened by Populist Superpowers, Europe Too Needs a Dose of Patriotism*

Lorenzo Marsili

Squeezed between US oligarchy and Russian and Chinese autocracy, Europe's democracies stand out like a relic from a bygone age. The euphoria and sheepish groupthink on display at Donald Trump's inauguration last month may well herald either a new US "golden age" or a hubristic bubble bound to burst. It is possible that China will succeed in reshaping the world in its image, or it may succumb to demographic decline and economic stagnation. Europe is not alone in being at a historic crossroads, but it is exclusively mired in pessimism, dependency and self-doubt.

In 1492, as Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas and Spain embarked on its own *siglo de oro*, or golden age, Spanish troops were readying to take over large parts of Italy. Europe's highest concentration of wealth was to be found in cities such as Florence, Milan and Venice. Cities of beauty and civility, industry and trade; cities, above all, so mesmerised by their particular identities that they refused to form a unitary state. The eventual result was the partition of the Italian peninsula. There was no space for rival city states in a world of nations.

Clear parallels exist with Europe's fragmentation today. It is faced with a world in which so-called "civilisation states", organised around cultural tradition rather than politics, have taken over from nation states. And simply hoping that Russian military expansionism, Chinese industrial dumping, or US tariff threats will galvanise a resurgence of ambition within middle-size European countries won't cut it. Fear, on its own, is a paralysing factor.

EU leaders talk the talk about "robust responses"

to being targeted by Trump's latest tariff-war threat. But in reality, they have scarcely moved beyond self-flagellation, self-victimisation and awe of US and Chinese power. We need instead to recuperate audacity and hunger for the future, and relinquish some of our polite manners in a world that truly isn't polite.

Sure, we need to stay true to the moral preachings of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant and keep on believing that a rules-based world of equals will come one day. But in the meantime, and to keep that prospect alive, we need to recognise, celebrate and fight to defend our joint achievements.

As the US government readies to colonise Mars, it gives up all responsibility for ensuring the continued habitability of our warming planet. As Trump inflates his own meme coin, he boycotts global agreements on minimum corporate taxation. And as AI investment rockets, the US's streets of desperation are scarred by endemic drug addiction and poverty.

In all three accounts, Europe is ahead. The EU is a world leader in renewable energy, industrial efficiency and climate policy. It has crafted a unique social market economy that limits the excesses of unbridled capitalism. High levels of internal solidarity may not provide everyone with a home to live in, but they at least provide everyone with a safety net beneath which they won't fall.

True, difficulties also abound. Economic productivity is in decline, as Europe falls well behind China and the US in the technological race. Europe is unable to defend itself militarily.

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It is energy dependent. And yet, as for the Italian city states of old, all these apparently insurmountable problems would be solved with one step: greater unity.

Were the EU to leverage its gigantic but fragmented capital markets, it would have the resources to invest in its economic and technological relaunch – and to limit the impact of foreign-owned social media such as TikTok on democracy. If European governments coordinated their defence spending, they would have little to fear: EU member states spent €326bn (£270bn) in 2024 compared with Russia's €145bn (£121bn) for 2025. If they spoke with one voice, the EU would have the capacity, as recent agreements with South America's Mercosur bloc and Mexico show, to weave together deals that would make not only Europe but the world a better place.

Acting together, Europe's democracies would, for instance, be able to discuss coordinated climate action with China, and not merely run scared at the sight of a Chinese EV. We know that lack of access to capital is an extraordinary bottleneck preventing developing countries from engaging in the green transition. Couldn't a joint Sino-European financing plan help dot Vietnam and Indonesia, Kenya and Peru, with European wind turbines and Chinese battery systems – simultaneously greening the planet and utilising European and Chinese excess industrial capacity?

Europe would also be able to safeguard, in the US's absence, a longer-term investment in democracy, the rule of law and multilateralism. That would counter the dismissal of an insistence on democratic values as mere hypocritical western self-interest. Paradoxical as it may sound, making Europe a power in the world is the surest way of building a world that moves beyond great power competition.

Such aspirations are not a matter of left or

right, liberalism or populism. Nor are they a question of relinquishing national identity to a centralised Brussels bureaucracy. They are, rather, a matter of wanting to be a subject, not merely an object, of history.

Take Giorgia Meloni's attempt at becoming a Trump whisperer. This is well meant but amounts to the cunning of the servant who courts the king to dodge his wrath and win more of the crumbs from his table. Nationalism, Meloni's own tradition, should be exactly the opposite of servitude.

Ultimately, a type of European civic or democratic nationalism is what needs to be fostered if Europeans are to avoid turning into waiters for the world's powerful as they descend on our cities to admire our beautiful past. We need to see something that visionary leaders on the European continent have often aspired to but never achieved: pluralist societies cohering in a common European "nation".

A European nation need not be a superstate. Rather, it would be based on the idea that always eluded the Italian city states: uniting on what truly mattered for the preservation of their way of life. But whether we decide this should be in energy security, technology or foreign policy, and regardless of whether we see it happening through a deepening of the EU or through something new, nothing will change until we foster a common sense of European patriotism. If the recent experience of the EU has taught us one thing, it is that a common people does not emerge out of a common currency. We created a European currency. Now we need to create a European people.

This may all sound unrealistic. But is it any more so than the aspiration to colonise Mars? Building a new nation called Europe could be our Martian adventure and our best bet at fighting despondency and self-doubt, fear and pessimism, oligarchy and autocracy.

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Threatened by Populist Superpowers, The Italian Government Renamed “Space Bill” as “Musk Bill”

Emanuele Itta

Approved by the Italian Government Cabinet on June 20, 2024, and submitted to the Parliament by the Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni herself together with the Minister for Business and Made in Italy Adolfo Urso on September 10, 2024, the bill on space economy referred as “*Ddl Spazio*” is going to be back on the main political agenda soon. Deadlines for filing amendments have been made opportunely slip, and the ground for the parliamentary discussion has been laid. The text of the bill is designed to centralize decision-making powers in the hands of the Prime Minister, who will be appointed “*responsible authority*”, thus will be able to decide “*on the use of extra-atmospheric space, including the moon and other celestial bodies*”.

Article 23 of the bill is a perfect bridge for Elon Musk, as it deals with “*public-private partnerships*” between the state and specialized space economy operators. The whole section is publicised as a remedy to the Italian digital divide, problems concerning under-connected areas and satellite coverage, all in terms of complementarity and global connectivity.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) destined €1.5 billions to improve cable connectivity across the country. This found is the exact sum the Italian Government is reportedly negotiating with Musk for his services. Newly appointed Minister for the NRRP Tommaso Foti assured that in a

couple of months he would have been able to thoroughly assess this aspect of the European plan, since “*it is important to ensure the service and implement it with the forces available and put in places. Criminal is to not provide the service*”. The fate of the entire fund granted by the NRRP then would be entirely taken care by the “*American friend*” the Italian Government is working for.

This move would surely question what has already been done so far regarding the fund and its goals and could cause harm to operators who previously made commitments taking into account what was the original plan laid by the European Union, not anticipating Musk.

Article 25 of the bill introduce the concept of a “*national transmission capacity reserve*” intended to operate through satellite communications operated “*exclusively by entities belonging to the European Union or NATO*”. This wording brings the attention on the role of the USA, therefore Donald Trump and his relationship with Elon Musk.

The Italian Government is making no effort to hide the conflict of interests emerging between the bill at hand and the European project “*IRIS2*”: this is a €10 billion investment (€6 billion from public sources, €4 billion from private ones) with which the European Union aims to create an alternative to the Starlink system, meeting those goals that Musk’s

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companies are proved unable to guarantee. IRIS² is managed by the SpaceRise consortium formed by Eutelsat, Hispasat and Ses.

"Ddl Spazio" establishes a *"fund for the space economy"* aimed at financing the Italian space sector. Given its galactic ambitions, the endowment is minimal: €20 million for 2024, and €35 million for 2025. The goal chased by Giorgia Meloni's government is to take part into the great *"commercialisation of space"*, but with only €55 million it appears difficult to have a relevant role. However, with a strong alliance with Starlink and using NRRP's money perhaps it is possible, with all due respect to the European Union as long as everything remains, formally at least, on the communication sector.

Reality is different. The real stakes are others: it is the future of conflicts that will be in space.

The commercialization of space is the programmatic formulation of those who, using space as *"res nullius"* only want people to barely look at the finger, but certainly not at the moon!

The militarization of space has been underway for some time now, and it marks the new frontier of global conflicts. The United States of America, with their Space Force, are leading this transition. With countries such as Russia and China following closely, space is turning into a field of strategic and military competition.

Humankind's space age has begun, and it's not at its dawn anymore: the pervasiveness of extra atmospheric activities can be traced in everyday life, from GPS to weather forecasting, from satellite's role in military operation's conduction to satellite imagery for intelligence purposes, even if many would have the public believe that space is not the physical locus of the most advanced conflict. This is why, using the name *"commercialization"* and publicly

dealing only with communication purposes, the militarization of space as a concept is not publicly debated.

Each country makes its own law of space. Why? Each country makes its own law of the land. Why? Each country has its own law of the sea. Why? Is the sky the new frontier of colonization?

The universe as a *"nobody's thing"* fuels the cosmic delusion of Anthropocene capital, not so much as a commercialization of communication services, (which are bound to worsen for ordinary mortals with the anarchic and overcrowded space), but as an *"ultimate weapon"* for the enemy.

No communication. The masters of a *"global black-out"* can decide the end. Whoever comes first to control the space puts others in line, with the power of silence them.

Delirium, the one about space, which, in turn, fuels the sub-delirium about defence and weapons on Earth. It is increasingly clear how a part of existing weapon systems, if employed, would be enough to not give anyone on the planet a chance of survival. Anyone but the ones with the spaceship and the capability to go elsewhere! It is a duty of European Union to understand and expose those delusions.

In fact, if it does not want to end up dissolved (or find itself boiled like the frog, according to the metaphor), the European Union must achieve real common defence and realize the IRIS² project. Preliminary to that has to be the deal with two world problems on which the future stands:

- The issue of nuclear disarmament;
- The end of the concept of space as *"res nullius"*.

The first question, nuclear disarmament, is

sitting on a standstill, as the world's nuclear powers are failing to agree on new measures and many of the major nuclear arms control agreements signed in past years are not being renewed and allowed to expire, when not terminated early.

If the European Union does not take action on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, bringing together countries and institutions involved in order to encourage security-related policies and dialogue, who else will?

The same applies to space matters.

In the words of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas *"as far as space is concerned, in a broader sense I think it's something we really need to discuss and explore, because there are a lot of things happening in space that have an effect on our daily lives.*

[...] And it is not fully agreed in international law how the rules apply in space and also in cyberspace. I think we should discuss with like-minded countries about the development of international law so that the rights of countries are protected on a larger scale".

Quo vadis Missile Technology Control Regime II (MTCR II)? It is a question posed by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) as well. The current MTCR I include only 35 countries, and multilateral missile non-proliferation efforts are at a standstill.

In conclusion, if the European Union does not bring nuclear disarmament on the world's political agenda as a principle, as well as the issue of the space as *"res nullius"*, the space race will be a colonization race, and in the West soon there will be no more natives, nor anywhere else!

Eurobarometer: EU Approval Rate Reaches 74 Percent, A Record High Since 1983

Simone Cantarini

The European Union's approval rate reaches a record high since 1983, with 74 percent of citizens in all member states saying they believe their country has benefited from EU membership. This is according to a new Eurobarometer report by the European Parliament, which looks at a sample of the European population - consisting of 25,000 respondents - between January 9 and February 4, 2025.

In Italy, the figure reaches 67 percent, registering a four-point increase from the June-July 2024 survey. Consistent with the current context, respondents cite the EU's contribution to peacekeeping and strengthening security (35 percent) as the main reason why membership is considered beneficial.

The survey also shows that 62 percent of respondents would like to see a greater role for the European Parliament, while 66 percent would like to see a stronger Union on the protection front from global threats, with particularly high percentages among young people. Here, too, Italy, with 63 percent shows itself in line with the European trend.

An important figure from the EU Parliament survey concerns the top political priorities indicated by respondents with defense and security (36 percent) and economic and industrial competitiveness (32 percent), a figure that in Italy drops to 31 percent for defense and security while rising to 34

percent for competitiveness. 43 percent of European and Italian respondents believe it is the priority duty of the European Parliament to address inflation, rising prices and the cost of living.

Inflation, price increases and cost of living are the top priority in all age groups, with peaks in Portugal (57 percent), France (56 percent), Slovakia (56 percent), Croatia (54 percent) and Estonia (54 percent). For Italians, the priorities are inflation, price increases and cost of living (in the same percentage as the European average: 43 percent); supporting the economy and creating new jobs (37 percent); defending and securing the European Union; and fighting poverty and social exclusion (both 26 percent).

The Eurobarometer survey also shows that as many as nine out of ten citizens (89 percent) say EU member states should act more united to address current global challenges, a figure that stands at 88 percent in Italy.

According to the survey, moreover, among the values that European citizens would like to see defended by the European Parliament, peace (45 percent), democracy (32 percent) and the protection of human rights in the EU and around the world (22 percent) stand out. As the report points out, the results for this question remain stable, confirming the solid support of citizens for the values and founding principles of the European Union.

Two-thirds of citizens support a stronger role for the European Parliament

As historical trends show, in times of crisis, citizens look to the EU for decisive action and concrete solutions. When the Union is perceived as united and effective, indicators of support are high - as is the case now. Fifty percent of respondents have a positive opinion of the EU. In the past decade, this positive perception has been higher only once (at 52 percent), in spring 2022, immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The positive image of the European Parliament remains high and stable (41 percent for the European average, 46 percent in Italy). With only a few months to go before the start of the legislature, more than six in ten citizens (62 percent) would like the European Parliament to have a greater role, up six percentage points from February-March 2024, just before the June European elections. In Italy, 67 percent of

citizens who responded to the survey want it, up 11 points from June/July 2024.

«Two-thirds of Europeans want the EU to play a greater role in their protection», EU Parliament President Roberta Metsola stressed in a note. “This is a clear call to action, to which we will respond. Europe must be stronger so that our citizens feel safer. The European Parliament will ensure that any proposal is bold and ambitious enough to address the seriousness of the threats facing Europe. Europe must stand up today, or risk being trampled tomorrow,” he said.

The survey was conducted between January 9 and February 4, 2025 in all 27 EU member states. Interviews were conducted in person, with video interviews added in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Malta, the Netherlands, and Sweden. A total of 26,354 interviews were conducted. Overall results are weighted based on the population of each country.

European Budget: Are We in Danger of Going Off Track?

Antonio Padoa-Schioppa

The European Commission at the instigation of Ursula von der Leyen has placed at the center of its governance program for the 2025-2029 legislature the innovative proposals of the Draghi Report, which she herself commissioned, as well as those of the equally forward-looking Letta Report, entrusted to him by the European Council. In both documents the emphasis is on the need for major measures directed at making the Union globally competitive, thus autonomous and a guarantor for the future of its own development and security.

An indispensable condition for this is the strengthening of resources to finance those European public goods that individual EU member States, even the largest ones, are unable to provide with their national budgets. Draghi quantified the amount of these resources at as much as 800 billion annually, while making it clear that they will have to be found only to a lesser extent from public funds and for the rest from effective incentives for private investment, which has the potential to proceed but which needs such incentives in the start-up phase, as, moreover, has happened and still happens in the US. This is true in crucial sectors such as defense, next-generation satellites, new technologies, sustainable energy, and artificial intelligence.

The defense commitment as proposed by von der Leyen, now endorsed by the European Council, is divided into the two compartments of 650 billion in loans from the States and

150 billion provided by the Union. Therefore, individual States should be addressees of the largest share of the Union's budgetary new resources on European defense, even if based on priorities agreed with the Commission. The sum is remarkable, but a common European defense requires far greater resources, as we have seen.

There are however serious reasons to believe that this approach goes in a direction inconsistent with the expressed aims, which clearly indicate the purpose of strengthening the Union as such to deal with the security crises that we need to face. If the preponderant share of European resources is given to the States, the goal of building a common European defense will be severely undermined.

An effective remedy, if so, would be to stipulate that States transfer to the European defense budget a major share of the new resources established by the seven-year Plan for loans by the individual States. But this approach, even though congruent, will not be easy to reach at all. Moreover, it is likely that States burdened with high public debt will tend to shy away from taking out new loans to avoid rises in the market-determined spread. And this would give in the defense of the Union an unbalanced and excessive weight to Germany, which is exempt from such risk because its public debt is much lower. Moreover, in this way neither the economies of scale nor the rationalizations resulting from a single standard for European defense weapons will be achieved.

The remaining 150 billion will, it is true, be spent at the European level, which is very important. But here too a recent proposal by the Commission has been announced to give the sum to the States, even if aimed at achieving a common defense policy.

More recently, the Commission President made some preliminary proposals for the design of the next Multiannual Funding Framework of the Union (2028-2034), which is to be presented by July to the Council and to the European Parliament. It will take as much as two years to finalize. On this front, too, the idea put forward by Ursula von der Leyen would be to entrust the choice of uses of European resources largely to the States, reforming the current approach that reserves a predetermined share for a number of major compartments (agriculture, cohesion, social policies and others), which each State must deploy in a consistent and monitored manner within its respective compartment.

But even here the very serious risk is that this would remove the incentive to promote European investment in major cutting-edge projects that are too expensive to be undertaken by individual States. From satellites to artificial intelligence, from global computing platforms to nuclear fusion, from hydrogen as an energy source to investments in Africa, what is needed is a European dimension and not a sum of national initiatives, even if coordinated. For this purpose what is needed is a European

capital market, a completed banking union and a common corporate discipline, as Letta and Draghi have argued. Beside that, also a greater autonomy of Europe from the dominance of the dollar should be promoted, what could be done by promoting the Special Drawing Rights.

Finally, there is a further risk inherent in Ursula von der Leyen's recent proposals. They essentially provide for the use of new own resources of the Union. This is undoubtedly right and proper; indeed, it is crucial. However, the European challenges to be faced in the coming years are of such magnitude that this necessary instrument will certainly not be sufficient. It will need to be supplemented with resources derived from Union public debt securities aimed at European public goods. Again, in recent days both Olivier Blanchard (May 7), Mario Draghi (May 14) and Fabio Panetta (May 31) have been absolutely clear on this. The task is not easy, but it is possible as well as necessary, as they all have argued.

We must be aware that the serious risks we have evoked here will, if not corrected in time, undermine the future of the Union in a probably irreversible way. For defense as for development and competitiveness there is a need for the Union "to act as a State" and not only with agreements and inputs from individual member States.

Hic Rhodus hic salta. And the time became short.

Trump's Withdrawal From the Paris Accords and the Climate Club

Alberto Majocchi

A few hours after taking office in the White House, President Donald Trump signed an executive order initiating the process of withdrawing the United States from what he called the «'unfair and one-sided scam' of the Paris Climate Agreement". Not only does this decision exclude the United States from multilateral negotiations to advance the fight against climate change, with a view to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, but it also risks triggering similar behavior by other countries, thus seriously jeopardizing the goal set. It is therefore a matter, on the one hand, of taking note of this serious US decision, which is consistent with the guidelines of the new Trump presidency, and, on the other hand, of assessing what initiatives can be taken by large countries that emit carbon dioxide in significant quantities in order to respond effectively to the new policy that has been imposed in the United States. One point of reference for initiating this assessment is the analysis developed by William D. Nordhaus (2018 Nobel Laureate in Economics) in a celebrated article published in the *American Economic Review* in 2015, in which he observes how the difficulty of pursuing an adequate policy to combat climate change is linked to a strong incentive for free-riding implicit in current international climate agreements. Free-riding occurs when a country enjoys the benefits associated with the use of a public good without contributing to its costs. Specifically, in the case of measures to be taken to combat climate change, free riders have an incentive to take advantage of emission reductions resulting from actions

taken by other countries without having to commit to the costs of national policies to limit emissions. And this phenomenon explains the difficulty of concluding agreements at the multilateral level, based on the unanimous consent of participating states, for example in the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Nordhaus notes that many international agreements have been possible using the Club mechanism. A Club is a voluntarily formed group whose members benefit from sharing the costs of producing an activity that has characteristics of a public good. In doing so, it benefits all Club members to a sufficiently high degree that members pay dues and adhere to Club rules to enjoy the benefits. The idea of a Climate Club to manage climate change could be seen as a step toward initiating a solution to the free-riding problem that prevents the efficient provision of global public goods. In basic terms, according to Nordhaus, a Climate Club would be an agreement among participating countries to undertake harmonized emission reductions. The agreement should be based on the establishment of an "international target carbon price", and this target could be achieved using any mechanism: a tax on the carbon content of fossil fuels (carbon tax), a cap-and-trade system (European Emission Trading System) or other instruments, including regulation that has a similar effect on the price of emissions. A key part of the Club mechanism hypothesized by Nordhaus (and the main difference from all the proposals already in the field) is that non-

participants should be penalized, with a duty-with a uniform percentage tariff-that severe at the border on imports from countries not participating in the Club. Two important points emerge in this proposal by Nordhaus with reference to the current situation resulting from Trump's announced exit from the Paris Accords. First, a thesis is advanced here, taken up later in an IMF Note by Ian W.H. Parry, Simon Black and James Roaf, which envisions the adoption of a price floor for carbon decided jointly among the Great CO2 Emitters. In this case, the agreement would have to be reached among a limited number of countries with the highest amount of emissions. After Trump's decision, if we exclude the United States, which covers 12 percent of total emissions, by 2023 China (34 percent), India (7.6 percent), the European Union (6.4 percent) and Russia (5.3 percent) together account for 53.3 percent of total global CO2 emissions. These countries could form the core of a Club determined to address the climate change challenge, including by using different instruments and agreeing on a carbon price of a level that can be accepted by all Club members. The impetus for joining the Club is related to the fact that each country could benefit-at no additional cost-from emission reduction efforts by other Club members. The second element - the penalization of countries that do not agree to join the Club -, which appears to be in line with Trump's threats to introduce tariffs on US imports from the rest of the world, is related to the possibility of introducing at the Club level the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) instrument, already envisaged by the European Union, corresponding as a minimum level to the jointly set carbon price.

The application of CBAM should consider not only price instruments, but also alternative mitigation approaches, which governments outside the Union might prefer for different economic and social reasons. The Club should then initiate a policy to bring other countries with high emissions (e.g., Japan, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, Canada, Mexico) into the group, keeping in mind that the attitudes of these countries are bound to change profoundly as a result of the policy adopted by Trump. Ultimately, in the face of Trump's attempt to impose US hegemony on the world by destroying multilateral ties painstakingly built over time - starting with the abandonment of the Paris Climate Change Accords -, the European Union will have to take a clear position in support of its emission reduction commitments, seeking alliances starting with the Great CO2 Emitters. To sustain this position, the Union will need to strengthen its foreign policy in order to garner support not only from the Euro-Asian Great Powers such as Russia and China, but also from the Global South, which would be severely disadvantaged by a failure of agreements to limit emissions and cope with the risks of climate change. The Union, without renouncing a priori to maintain the ties of friendship and structural alliance with the trans-Atlantic country, will have to show no yielding in the face of the arrogance of the American president, but will have to relaunch a network of agreements at the global level to restore hope for a future where multilateral cooperation prevails over the hegemonic thrust of the new US administration. This is certainly a difficult project to achieve, even taking into account the current weakness of the Union, but it can be a starting point toward a less confrontational world order.

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A Democratic Global Polity Is More Feasible and Desirable Than Many Think

Mathias Koenig-Archibugi

A spectre is haunting political philosophy – the spectre of world government. Theorists argue passionately about what a just world order would look like, with some endorsing demanding obligations of solidarity across borders and others favouring a clear-cut distinction between what people owe to compatriots and what they owe to foreigners. They also disagree about how the world should be governed, with opinions ranging from a staunch defence of national sovereignty to advocacy of stronger and more democratic global institutions. What most participants in this debate share, though, is the aversion to the idea of a political unification of humankind under a world state. Such a prospect is a step too far even for resolute advocates of cosmopolitan ethics such as Kwame Anthony Appiah, Seyla Benhabib, Jürgen Habermas and Martha Nussbaum.

Diffidence and outright hostility toward the idea of world government have deep roots. Immanuel Kant, the Enlightenment philosopher who continues to inspire many contemporary accounts of global political justice, held that the establishment of a ‘world republic’ was demanded by reason, but eventually, he settled for what he called a ‘negative surrogate’, that is a purely voluntary association of free states that would promote peace among its members without wielding coercive powers itself. Some key elements of this Kantian vision are enshrined in the founding charters of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. However, the obvious limitations of these organizations also

highlight the downside of a global governance system based on the principle of state consent and the lack of central enforcement. Major wars still break out, and conflicts between nuclear-armed powers are troubling to people who live well beyond their borders. It is simplistic to maintain that all would be well if only every country was governed democratically: as Jean-Jacques Rousseau acknowledged a long time ago, even well-governed democracies can start unjust wars.

Moreover, today global governance needs to address a wider range of problems than just preventing and ending wars. Mitigating climate change, averting and responding to pandemics, protecting biodiversity and reducing the dangers of artificial intelligence are only some of the additional tasks that require international cooperation. The high degree of interdependence and mutual vulnerability that we see in the world today, combined with the weaknesses of existing international institutions, should prompt us to reconsider the age-old question: why not world government?

Two answers to that question are often heard. The first is that, as the prominent scholar of international relations Kenneth Waltz put it, the prospect of world government would be an invitation to prepare for world civil war. The second is that, even if a world government came into being, it would be – in the memorable words of Hannah Arendt – a forbidding nightmare of tyranny. In other words, even if a world state were achievable,

a *democratic* world state would not. And few political philosophers would be willing to sacrifice democracy and basic liberties for the sake of the hypothetical benefits that a world state might bring.

These are powerful objections to the idea of world government. But are they enough to settle the issue? Probably not. The argument that a world state could not survive as a democracy and that it would be bound to degenerate into tyranny or global civil war vacates the terrain of philosophy, which is the natural home of controversies about the relative importance of values such as freedom and community, and hinges instead on a series of factual assumptions about how politics works – now and in the foreseeable future. The sceptics' attempt to be 'realistic' is commendable, but we should ask what exactly makes them confident that things would end badly if world government advocates managed to persuade citizens and world leaders of the soundness of their cause. In short: what is the relevant evidence, and what does it tell us?

My recent book *The Universal Republic: A Realistic Utopia?* tackles this question. Among the themes addressed there is whether a world state could be democratic and remain so for a long time, given supposedly unfavourable conditions such as the world's extreme diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion and language, high levels of economic inequality, and other features that are emphasised by the sceptics. I leverage the fact that today we have access to a wealth of data on these cultural and economic features in nearly two hundred countries over several decades as well as data on the survival and breakdown of democracy.

As a first step, I trained a machine learning algorithm to identify patterns in the relationship between demographic, cultural, economic, and political features of countries on the one hand and the likelihood that

democracy will survive in those countries over time on the other. This machine learning procedure assessed the relative ability of different combinations of features to predict democratic survival and selected the most informative ones. The second step consisted of applying the resulting models to the demographic, cultural, economic, and political features of a hypothetical state encompassing the entire world and estimating the likelihood that such a state would maintain a democratic form of government in the long run. In other words, I checked whether an initially democratic world state would be destined to collapse into the forbidding nightmare of tyranny or world civil war feared by some. The result of these analyses will surprise many: if a world state were established, the probability that it would maintain a democratic form of government in the long run is rather high, and similar to the average likelihood of democracy surviving in the countries that were democratic at some point since 1900. In other words, global democracy would not be more fragile than existing national democracies.

Attentive readers will have noticed a crucial proviso in the previous paragraph: "if a world state were established..." Perhaps world government would not be such a nightmare after all, but to debate its desirability may be a waste of time if it is plainly unachievable. My book presents some evidence about that aspect as well. For starters, I rule out coercion as a feasible (let alone desirable) route to world state formation: in a world with nine nuclear-armed powers, several other candidates for nuclear-power status, and 27 million active-duty military and paramilitary personnel, resistance to imposed political unification would be insurmountable. Such unification could only come about through the voluntary pooling of sovereignty agreed by state representatives, similar to the process that led to the United States of America in

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the eighteenth century, the Commonwealth of Australia in the nineteenth century, and the European Union in the twentieth century. Such a development requires that favourable windows of opportunity open across the world at the same time – admittedly, that is unlikely. But is it impossible?

Governments may well be reluctant to relinquish power, but for many sceptics, the problem runs even deeper: citizens around the world value national sovereignty and will stop any politician bent on diminishing it. This view is certainly plausible, not least in light of the electoral performance of nationalist parties in many countries. However, the idea of world government is surprisingly popular among both citizens and civil society leaders, as shown by multiple surveys conducted around the world. My book presents plenty of evidence of that, but the findings of a recent study by Farsan Ghassim and Markus Pauli deserve special attention. Having surveyed around 42,000 citizens in seventeen countries across the world, they find that majorities in all countries support a democratic world government, with the exception of the United States. To be sure, expressing support for such a major political change in a survey is not the same thing as campaigning for it or voting for political parties that endorse the idea.

Many people may demur after considering the implications carefully. The evidence does not show that a democratic world state is inevitable or even probable. But it shows that its emergence can be the result of politics as we are used to it in other settings: the complex interaction of activists campaigning for or against it, citizens evaluating proposals in the light of their interests and their values, and politicians taking shifts in public opinion into account as they formulate policies and negotiate with one another.

No one can tell for sure how world politics will look like in fifty or a hundred years. The world may still be divided in almost two hundred independent states, or humanity may govern itself through common representative institutions, or a global catastrophe may turn the clock back by hundreds of years. Positions about how we should deal with shared global challenges should not be dismissed by appealing to ostensibly factual statements about what is and is not possible in the political world, when those statements have not been subjected to systematic empirical scrutiny. Sometimes political science provides a salutary antidote to excessive optimism. In the case of world government, however, its main contribution is to show why the topic is worthy of serious debate.

This work is based upon Mathias' recent book The Universal Republic: A Realistic Utopia?. The article was originally published on iai.tv. The copyright remains with the original publisher and/or the author.

Democracy: A System that Gives Power to the People

Zhiyong Xu

Who holds the highest authority in a nation? Of course, it is the people. The people are the masters of the country. "The people" is not an abstract concept, but rather it is the collective of all citizens. Being "masters of the country" is not an empty slogan; it requires constitutional safeguards, including free elections, checks and balances, judicial independence, and multi-party competition.

Democracy is not "winning power and keeping it", treating the country as personal property – that is the logic of bandits. It is not some inevitable outcome of history where ordinary people suffer silently amidst chaos. Democracy does not entail presiding over the people from up on high, demanding their praise and loyalty. It cannot coexist with one-party rule: "the Party's leadership" and "people as masters of their own affairs" are mutually irreconcilable concepts.

Democracy requires free elections, checks and balances, judicial independence, and multi-party competition

A nation is the sum of its people, territory, government, and history and culture – both materially and spiritually. The government should act as a public servant, entrusted by the people to manage and serve. Political parties should promote ideals and serve peoples' needs, with competition among parties and regular elections allowing the people to choose their government, just as homeowners choose a property manager – the best candidate assumes power. Loving

one's country is not the same as loving the government, and certainly not the same as loving any particular party. When autocrats usurp the people's sovereignty, the people resist authoritarianism precisely *because* they love their country.

Protesters in Hong Kong hold signs in support of academic and activist Xu Zhiyong's release from prison following his 2013 arrest.

Direct democracy, where everyone participates directly in decision-making on public matters, represents the ideal model of democracy. However, participation comes at a cost, just as each area requires specialized expertise. Electing professional politicians to represent oneself in governing the country – representative democracy – is a rationally designed institutional arrangement. Regular elections are an essential process for upholding popular sovereignty and the legitimacy of power in modern states.

Democratic models vary: the American presidential system, the German parliamentary cabinet system, and the British constitutional monarchy each reflect their country's cultural traditions and paths of political transformation. However, the fundamental rules of democracy – free elections, checks and balances, judicial independence, multi-party competition, and local autonomy – are universal. They transcend the East-West or capitalist-socialist divide; they instead distinguish between genuine and false

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democracy. With these institutions, democracy is real. Without them, it is fake.

The rights of minorities must be respected and safeguarded

Democracy is not merely rule by the majority. While the majority opinion guides governance, the rights of minorities must also be respected and safeguarded. Constitutions enshrine certain fundamental rights and freedoms that cannot be arbitrarily infringed upon, even in the name of the majority. Modern democratic systems encompass a comprehensive framework of constitutional mechanisms, including elections, the separation of powers, and the rule of law, designed to prevent the “tyranny of the majority” which Socrates once suffered.

What is often referred to as “elite democracy” is, in truth, merely a facade for the rule of a minority. When factors such as status, wealth, or gender are used as thresholds for participation in democracy – for instance, restricting voting rights to men of certain property holdings – this belongs to the cradle stage of democracy. In modern society, equality of status, gender equality, and the equality of human dignity are foundational principles. The most crucial hallmark of a nation truly belonging to its people is universal suffrage.

There is no such thing as “consultative democracy”. Emperors consult with their ministers, and fathers consult with their sons – this is not democracy. At its core, democracy is about decision-making power: whether decisions are made by the majority or by a minority. Merely consulting without voting, or consulting only to have a minority make the final decision, is not true democracy. Consultation is an essential element of democracy. Even in the United States, where partisan competition is fierce, consultation remains a norm. However, democracy and consultation are like eating a

meal and drinking water: one might drink water before, during, or after a meal, but that does not make the meal a “water meal.”

The so-called “eight democratic parties” in China cannot even be said to engage in consultation; at best, they amount to ministers offering advice to the throne. True consultation requires equality of status, yet these parties hold a position even lower than concubines. A concubine might occasionally lose her temper with the master of the house, but these eight parties wouldn’t dare. They wouldn’t even venture to make suggestions on significant national affairs, limiting themselves instead to trivial matters. They are nothing more than eight decorative vases, arranged and manipulated at will.

There is no such thing as “whole-process democracy”. Democracy, by its very nature, is a whole process – from elections to checks and balances, to citizens’ daily participation. Democracy is a way of life in modern civilization. Without the right to vote, without freedom of speech, and without space for genuine civic engagement, so-called “public hearings” on price hikes – where officials handpick a few “citizen representatives” – are no different from arranging eight decorative vases. This is merely a facade of post-totalitarian rule.

Democracy is not bread itself, but a system for the fair distribution of bread

Democracy cannot be eaten as food. Yet without democracy, some would really starve: hungry people were not allowed to go elsewhere begging for food, as happened when tens of millions starved to death during the so-called “three years of famine”. Democracy is not bread itself, but a system for the fair distribution of bread. It is the spiritual sustenance that ensures freedom and dignity for all. Distribution is as important as production. In an age of

agricultural surpluses, spiritual nourishment becomes even more precious.

Democracy is not perfect. Elections require funding, they may bring to power silver-tongued deceivers, and legislators may argue endlessly or even resort to physical altercations. Yet none of these imperfections is reason to reject democracy. Election funding is primarily driven by donations; it turns campaigns into a nationwide celebration, and it's not a waste. In an open society, fraudsters are quickly exposed. Democracy determines a nation's direction. While it may be less efficient, this trade-off ensures greater safety and long-term stability. Over a hundred countries have chosen democracy, representing a sweeping tide of historical progress.

The most direct way to realize democracy is through elections. The only true proof of the legitimacy of power lies in elections. The electoral system, based on its own inherent logic, adheres to the following principles:

Equality. Citizens, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, education level, or place of residence, enjoy equal voting rights and the right to stand for election. One person, one

vote, with each vote carrying equal weight. Measures are in place to limit the corrosive influence of money, ensuring campaign funding is open and transparent, capping donation limits, and eliminating vote-buying.

Directness. From mayors to presidents, from city councils to national parliaments, government leaders and legislators should be elected directly. The more layers of indirect elections, the greater the risk of vote-buying and corruption, and the more representation is eroded. Modern nations possess both the means and the technology to implement direct elections.

Competition. Genuine elections feature passionate competition between candidates and the free choice of the people. In contrast, sham elections feature lifeless candidates resembling zombie portraits, where citizens are mobilized to vote and outcomes are manipulated. Without competition, there can be no real election. Free competition allows individuals and parties, regardless of affiliation, to participate openly, providing voters with real choices. Peaceful competition prohibits the use of violence and requires strict adherence to the rule of law.

Freedom House Reports “Global Freedom Decline” for 19th Consecutive Year

Olivia Gauvin

In their annual *Freedom in the World* report, Freedom House announced a global decline in freedom scores for the 19th consecutive year.

Political rights and civil liberties deteriorated in 60 countries, with El Salvador, Haiti, Kuwait, and Tunisia comprising the largest score declines. Only 34 countries reported improvements in freedom, with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Syria recording the largest gains. Among the 66 national elections being held across the world in 2024, 40 percent experienced violence related to voting and political parties.

Furthermore, the organization based in Washington D.C. in its assessment for 2024 rated 106 out of 195 countries and territories as “electoral democracies”, which is a decrease from the previous year’s 110.

The global freedom decline

Key features of the decline in global freedoms included violent repression directed against political opposition, heightened authoritarian entrenchment, as well as ongoing armed conflict and civil unrest. However, certain countries also witnessed secure competitive elections, peaceful civic mobilizations, and the toppling of long-standing authoritarian regimes, thus indicating complex changes on the horizon.

In 2024, political rights and civil liberties deteriorated in 60 countries and improved in 34 countries with aggregate score declines

in Freedom in the World have outnumbered those with gains every year for the past 19 years. The declines in 2024 affected more than 40 percent of the global population. (Source: freedomhouse.org)

Election-related violence took place in 11 countries, with disproportionate violence often being enacted against protestors. Elected governments across the globe have revealed patterns of democratic regression in countries such as Georgia, South Korea, Serbia, and Slovakia, with leaders declaring martial law, undermining the free press, and evading anti-corruption institutions. Attacks against opposition candidates were also a prevalent trend, with criminal organizations gaining political influence in Mexico and South Africa. Of all the civil liberties measured by Freedom House, freedom of expression has declined the most in the past 19 years.

Kuwait, Niger, Tanzania and Thailand are now rated not free

Authoritarian entrenchment has further contributed to global declining freedom, with Kuwait, Niger, Tanzania, and Thailand all falling from ‘Partly Free’ to ‘Not Free’ due to autocratic abuses against voter safety and political opposition parties. Overall, Tunisia saw one of the largest declines in freedom, as President Kais Saïed’s regime gained full control over the electoral commission and disqualified all political opposition. In Venezuela, after questionable publishing of electoral results, armed gangs arbitrarily arrested and detained

protestors, signalling a deepening violence in President Nicolás Maduro's autocratic regime. Judiciaries were particularly targeted in both Mexico and Israel, with executive reforms in both countries making it difficult for the Supreme Courts to exert checks and balances.

More severe challenges to freedom and civil institutions were seen in Myanmar, Sudan, the Ukraine, and the Gaza Strip – all of whom have experienced ongoing war throughout the past year. In all four countries and territories, violent conflicts have triggered mass displacement and crises of physical security. In total, over 40 percent of the global population has witnessed deterioration in freedoms within the last year.

Pockets of growing freedom

Despite the rather solemn trends of declining global freedom, some hopeful improvements unfolded this past year. In December 2024, Syria witnessed the sudden fall of President Bashar al-Asad, whose presidency had often been marked by violent repression and abuse. As one of the lowest ranked countries, Syria now bears the hopeful yet daunting task of ensuring regime reforms do not reproduce militant authoritarianism. Notwithstanding violent crackdowns on student protesters in Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country in July of 2024 due to civil and legislative pressures. Promising democratic advancements have since been enacted, with Muhammad Yunus leading the interim government.

Hopeful developments in Syria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Senegal, Jordan and Somaliland

Tied with Bangladesh for the highest freedom score increase this year is Bhutan, which held free and fair elections in 2024 thus shifting democratic reforms away from the monarchy in favor of an elected parliament. Sri Lanka and Senegal both witnessed large score improvements despite the contested elections in 2023, as both have consolidated democratic institutions within the past year. Jordan and Somaliland also stand out as brightened spots for increasing freedom, as both states have opened up spaces for fair political representation among opposition groups. Though the number has dwindled, over 20 percent of the global population now lives within 'Free' ranked territories.

Fierce challenges to democracy and freedom have expanded throughout recent years. Autocratic leaders have consolidated stark and often violent repressive apparatuses, thus signalling weakening freedoms and democratic institutions globally. In reflection of these global trends, Freedom House recommends "democratic governments, international organizations, civil society groups, the private sector, and ordinary people," to play more central roles in "safeguarding institutions at home... and finding durable resolutions to armed conflicts that give the affected populations an opportunity to live in freedom."

Defending European Democracy, Strengthening the Voice of the People

Michele Fiorillo

If the European Parliament was able in the last parliamentary term, under the impetus of the federalist vanguard, to venture into calling for a Convention to reform the Treaties - activating Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union - it was largely thanks to the leverage offered by the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE).

However, the Parliament's action, tepidly supported by the Commission, has so far been ignored by the European Council. How to attempt to overcome this impasse? By returning to giving direct prominence to the voice of European citizens and people.

Surely the most innovative element of the CoFoE had indeed been the experimentation with the European Citizens Panels (ECPs): four transnational "assemblies" of 200 citizens drawn by lot (800 in total), from different corners of Europe and from different social backgrounds, with the task of making recommendations to the EU institutions on the continent's priorities - modeled on the citizens assemblies already tried out particularly in Ireland, Belgium, Germany and France.

Recall that among the recommendations that emerged from the ECPs was the call to "hold citizens' assemblies through a legally binding and compulsory law or regulation" and the need to reopen the European constitutional debate, with a leading role in the process of revising the Treaties to be assigned to the citizens themselves.

After the end of CoFoE, a new season of ECPs has been launched by the European Commission, making it a new institutional tool for consulting European citizens, from whose recommendations the Commission is committed to drawing lines to be included in the legislative process on a number of issues crucial to daily life: from energy efficiency to food waste, from education to the digital world and the fight against hate in society.

In the intentions of the Von der Leyen II Commission, there emerges a willingness to continue to develop the potential of ECPs, which were given a crucial role in the mission letter sent by the Commission President to each of the chosen commissioners: "We will build on the Conference on the Future of Europe to instill a true and lasting culture of participative democracy. We will choose policy areas and proposals where recommendations from a European Citizens' Panel would have the greatest value and follow up on their proposals". This intent reflected what the President herself said on July 18, 2024 in her speech to Parliament on the occasion of the vote to renew her mandate: "European democracy must be more participative, more vibrant. Civil society must be better supported and defended". The political guidelines she presented at the same time that day read: "The Conference on the Future of Europe - and the success of the European Citizens' Panels - have been big steps towards a more deliberative democracy and engaging people beyond elections or

politics. We now need to embed citizens' participation across the EU".

In short, the Commission seems to want to use ECPs more and more systematically in its policymaking. Crucial will be to ensure that they are visible to the general public, even dealing with more controversial issues, including the Common European Defense - with the necessary democratic control over it- and the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) - perhaps through a full-fledged experiment of European participatory budgeting. This is necessary in order to go beyond the laudable exercise confined to the palaces in Brussels and to ensure a meaningful impact: the opposite of the expected effect must be avoided, due to disappointed expectations and a perceived "citizens-washing" that would be spilled by national-populist forces against the European institutions themselves.

Certain mechanisms will have to be imagined for this purpose to make the Commission accountable in following up on the recommendations that emerged from the ECP, making sure that they are actually incorporated into the European legislative process, toward building a permanent European Citizens' Assembly.

And likewise: if Parliament's call for the opening of the Convention on Treaty Reform is ever acted upon, mechanisms for the direct involvement of citizens and civil society on the model of the Future of Europe Conference itself will have to be imagined with it.

But, from the discussion of the particular issues in and around the ECPs organized by the Commission, can thrusts for the revival of the treaty reform theme perhaps re-emerge?

Yes, if there is a vibrant and transnationally organized civil society, capable of bringing

those discussions to life in a multiplication of deliberative assemblies from below across the continent - and if federalist forces are again able to leverage this renewed participatory fabric by pointing to the need for a European democratic Constitution, helping to build from below a deliberative constituent power that prefigures and poses the very possibility of a real Constituent Assembly (which could also be the institutional outcome of the Convention).

In any case, it is clear that without new, widespread, mass civic and popular pressure, country by country, and at the European level, the convening of the Convention for the Treaty reform will most likely not happen.

And while waiting for the Council perhaps to convene the Convention someday, it will be convenient to leverage the participatory and deliberative spaces offered to European citizens by the Commission (the ECPs) and those organized from below by civil society (such as the European Citizens' Assembly project carried out by the Citizens Take Over Europe coalition, including through the CitiDem project or the Democratic Odyssey organized in collaboration with the European University Institute).

Finally: an important role could also be given to the ECPs in view of the enlargement of the Union, ensuring the participation in them of citizens of the accession countries.

And again: a New Pact for the Mediterranean is part of the new mandate given to Dubravka Šuica, who moved to Commissioner for the Mediterranean, leaving her role as Vice-President for Democracy and Demography -in whose capacities she had co-chaired the CoFoE Executive Committee, along with Guy Verhofstadt for the Parliament and Clément Baune for the Council.

Borderless Debate: The Decline of Democracy

But how should this pact be arrived at? We propose that it could be done through a Conference on the Future of the Mediterranean - modeled on the same participatory format as CoFoE - promoted jointly by the European Commission and Parliament, in collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM).

In this context, unprecedented Mediterranean Citizens' Panels - modeled on the European

Citizens Panels, with citizens drawn by lot from all the Mediterranean countries - could be initiated, which in time could evolve into a full-fledged Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly. This assembly would be able to constantly foster a peaceful and continuous dialogue between peoples and persons in this area so crucial for the future of Europe and the world. A way to think the bottom up about solutions to crises, beyond intergovernmental summits where those short-sighted national interests that often lead to wars tend to prevail.

The UN Cannot Continue to Stand by as Democracy Retreats

Yuyun Wahyuningrum

Democracy is facing a global crisis. For nearly two decades, the world has witnessed a global democratic recession. More countries are shifting toward authoritarianism than toward democracy. Fundamental freedoms are eroding and civic space is shrinking.

Yet, despite democracy being a core principle of the United Nations, there is no dedicated UN mechanism to monitor and protect it. Unlike particular human rights such as freedom of expression or peaceful assembly, democracy lacks a UN Special Rapporteur – a role designed to assess, report, and advocate for its protection. This gap must be urgently addressed.

Across the world, elections are manipulated, political opposition is stifled, and judicial independence is under threat. Many governments that claim to support democratic values engage with authoritarian regimes, prioritizing economic and security interests over human rights. This failure has helped democratic norms to deteriorate, civic spaces to close, and fundamental freedoms to be curtailed.

There is no dedicated UN mechanism to monitor and protect democracy

Southeast Asia is a striking example of these trends. Myanmar remains under a military junta that silences opposition. Cambodia ensures one-party rule through unfair elections. Thailand's political system remains constrained by military influence, while

Indonesia faces growing oligarchic control. Independent media and dissenting voices in the Philippines are under siege, while Vietnam and Laos, both also under one-party rule, repress political opposition. Digital authoritarianism is expanding, with governments using surveillance and censorship to suppress dissent.

A UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy would provide impartial assessments of global democratic trends. The role would engage with governments, regional organizations, and civil society to promote stronger commitments to democratic principles. By investigating electoral integrity, judicial independence, and political freedoms, it would help fill gaps in the UN's assessment of human rights. Establishing such a mandate would strengthen global efforts to protect democracy and empower pro-democracy voices fighting to uphold it.

The challenges in Southeast Asia also highlight the need for regional mechanisms to reinforce democratic governance. Unlike other regions, Southeast Asia lacks a structured approach to democracy-building, with no official electoral observation missions or coordinated initiatives to strengthen democratic institutions. ASEAN has no binding framework to uphold democracy, and its consensus-driven decision-making has failed to address crises like Myanmar. This is why ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) has called for an ASEAN Democracy Charter – a framework to reinforce

Borderless Debate: The Decline of Democracy

democratic governance, which a UN Special Rapporteur could support.

A UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy can provide essential support

While some governments may resist this initiative, they cannot claim that democracy is a foreign imposition. Many of the strongest voices advocating for democracy today come from the Global South, demonstrating that democracy promotion is not a Western-driven agenda but a universal aspiration of most people everywhere. Certain Western countries themselves are on a path of autocratization.

Without a global mechanism to track and respond to these challenges, democracy will erode further. The UN has long played a role in safeguarding fundamental freedoms; establishing a Special Rapporteur on Democracy would be a natural and necessary extension of this commitment.

Democracy is an essential foundation for human rights. The UN cannot afford to stand by and watch as it erodes further. A UN Special Rapporteur on Democracy can provide essential support and advocacy. Now is the time to act before the decline becomes irreversible.

Declaration on 25 April, the Day of the Liberation from Fascism

European Movement Italy

Eighty years later, we continue the European Resistance against new imperialisms and nationalisms.

On April 25 we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Italy from fascist regime and Nazi occupation. From the liberation of the oppressed peoples of Europe and from the Resistance movements - which united Europeans in the struggle against totalitarianism - the project of a free and united Europe was born, conceived by the thinking of three anti-fascists confined to Ventotene.

Today, the European Union has partly realized that project, promoting democracy and guaranteeing peace among its Member States for eighty years. But it has partly betrayed it, failing to create an international order based on Law and not on the law of the strongest.

New imperialisms and new nationalisms threaten world peace, also because European states have failed to speak with one voice, to acquire a strategic autonomy and globally promote federalism, the only solution to banish war as a means of resolving disputes between states.

The European Union - conceived, designed and built by oppressed peoples who freed themselves from totalitarian regimes - cannot but stand by the peoples who are today oppressed by imperialist and neocolonial policies.

Nationalism is upstating and raising its head: the events of eighty years ago and those of today are in fact united by the same acts of overwhelming, the mythologizing of national interest above any value, and by the search for «living space» through annexations and occupations that deny the freedom and dignity of peoples and individuals.

That is why yesterday's resistance is today's Ukrainian resistance against the Russian occupation, made by those fighting on the front but also by the civilians who continue their lives under the bombs. It is the resistance of the Palestinian people trying to survive a terrible humanitarian tragedy unleashed by the military aggression of the Israeli government. It is the resistance of all peoples whose rights are denied, and of migrants who risk their lives for the hope of a better future, experiencing the violence of national borders on their skin. And it is the resistance of the volunteers who try to alleviate the suffering of people victimized or fleeing wars or misery, as well as that of those who continue to document crimes and injustices of nationalism.

To date, neither the European Union nor its Member States are in a position to influence the course of conflicts and to oppose oppression and violations of the Rule of Law. Lacking their own strategic independence, they are obliged to follow the direction given by hegemonic powers at a global level.

Believing in the value of Peace cannot mean remaining indifferent to its denial. The

Federalist Action

Europeans who today want Peace find themselves unable to fight to affirm a world based on Law and multilateralism, against the imperialist nationalist model based on the oppression of the weakest ones. In order to do this, Europe must unite and make itself a State. The early militants of the European Federalist Movement knew this when, on July 30, 1943, launched the call for insurrection against Nazi-fascism. And today, more than ever, the European peoples know it, having understood that only by uniting they can emancipate themselves and not become vassals of the great powers.

If the citizens have greater lucidity than those in Government, it is up to the citizens to make themselves heard.

We therefore launch this appeal so that anyone who already sees the need to complete the construction of the European States takes to the streets with us - European Union flag in hand - at every opportunity; and join the Citizenship Committee being built or the movements that compose it.

Long live United Europe!

Long live Democracy

EU Member States: Protect Us with a European Army!

Petition for a European Army – Volt

Sign our petition to protect our future!

We need a European army for our security. Sign this petition if you agree.

The US will no longer protect Europe. The Trump administration has made this perfectly clear. During the Munich Security Conference, the US destroyed the transatlantic bond which lasted for 80 years. They then blamed Ukraine for a war Russia started and called Zelensky a dictator. US troops might even leave the European continent as part of a punitive peace imposed upon Ukrainians and Europeans by Putin and Trump. We have been left on our own. Therefore, we need to be able to defend ourselves against aggressors.

While Ukrainians are fighting to survive, and Russia attacks critical infrastructure and interferes in elections all over Europe, the US is turning its back on us and supporting extremist and undemocratic parties all over the continent, like we now see in Romania and Germany. With these actions the US helps Russia's attempt to destroy European peace.

We must stand with Ukraine and step in where the US is backing out. To do so, we need to be able to operate independently from the US by creating our own capabilities, and at the same time integrating our 27 separate armies to fight as one.

As Zelensky said at Munich: "I really believe that the time has come that the armed forces of Europe must be created. Let's be honest, now we can't rule out that America might say 'no' to Europe on issues that might threaten it.

Europe has everything it takes". We need to stop reacting to what the US is doing, and start believing in Europe's own strength.

We need a European Defence Union. We need a common European Armed Forces.

Our Demands:

- Appoint a single EU Minister for Defense and abolish the veto for military decisions, so that we can act quickly
- Create joint European units now, so that we can act independently from the US if necessary
- Develop fully integrated European Armed Forces in the future, so we have one strong army instead of 27 small ones
- Found an EU military academy
- Appoint a single EU representative to NATO
- Let the EU buy military equipment on behalf of Member States, so that we have 1 tank type instead of 17
- Enlarge the Rapid Deployment Capacity and
 - Eurocorps and make them permanent
- Raise Eurobonds and spend the money on EU-wide defense projects, so that we get more value for less money
- Establish an EU Defense Industry and standardise equipment

In 1950, a European Army was almost created. It didn't happen precisely because the United States provided a strong alternative through a guarantee that it would defend Europeans from the Soviet Union. Now that that guarantee is gone, it is time to go back to the original idea. All it takes is the will to act.

A Legally Binding Global Climate Agreement

Ingmar Rentzhog

On April 11, 2025, the world achieved something rare: a legally binding global climate agreement. The United States didn't vote – they walked out, warning others to follow or face consequences. But 63 nations stayed. And they passed the deal. That's not just diplomacy. That's global governance, alive and kicking.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), a UN body that regulates global shipping, approved new regulations to cut greenhouse gas emissions across the maritime sector – one of the most polluting and least regulated industries on Earth. The deal mandates a trajectory to net-zero emissions by 2050, backed by financial penalties and a structured compliance framework.

This is not just another pledge. It's a binding agreement with enforcement. Shipowners who fail to meet emissions reduction targets will pay up to \$380 per tonne of CO₂ equivalent, feeding into a new Net-Zero Fund to support the transition and ensure climate justice within the sector.

It's a milestone. But it's also something more: a proof of concept for a world hungry for functioning international cooperation and governance.

A Success for Global Governance

The IMO's decision-making process avoids the paralyzing requirement for consensus that plagues climate COPs. When Saudi Arabia and a coalition of fossil fuel-aligned nations raised

objections, they could not veto the outcome. Instead, the chair called for a vote – country by country, alphabetically.

The result? 63 countries voted in favor. Only 16 opposed. Even North Korea, at one point, seemed to say “yes, no” before clarifying.

One of the most notable dissenters was the United States, which withdrew from the negotiations just before the final vote. A diplomatic note called the proposed emissions fee “blatantly unfair” and warned of “reciprocal measures”, citing concerns over sovereignty, competitiveness, and disproportionate impact on US shipping. It even urged others to walk out. But the deal passed anyway.

Why such strong opposition? Almost half of all commercial ships transport oil, coal, and gas. The new emissions fee delivers a double blow to fossil fuels: it raises the cost of transporting them – while accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels used to power the ships themselves. The economic implications were clear, and so was the resistance from fossil fuel-aligned countries.

But this time, they lost. The outcome wasn't just a win for climate policy – it was a rare and timely victory for global governance itself.

Resistance Means Global Governance Is Working

The instinct is to view US withdrawal and

Saudi resistance as signs of failure. But in fact, the opposite may be true. "Resistance is not failure – it's evidence that you're shifting the system", said Maja Groff, international lawyer and convenor of the Climate Governance Commission, in an interview on the very same day.

Power rarely resists what it doesn't fear. The

backlash against global climate cooperation may feel destabilizing, but it's also a signal that change is finally reaching the centers of entrenched influence.

What happened at the IMO shows that, when structured right, global governance can withstand that resistance – and deliver.

Federalism and Transnational Organized Crime: Good News and Bad News From Latin America

Fernando Iglesias

The expansion of organized crime has become the main problem in Latin America, a region that is today - by far - the most violent in the world. More than 120,000 people were killed in 2024 in the territories between the Rio Grande and the Tierra del Fuego, representing a rate of 20.2 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (compared to 7 per 100,000 inhabitants in Africa and 3 in Europe). The situation is becoming dramatic in its two largest countries, Mexico and Brazil, which correspond by population, territory and economy to half of Central and South America, respectively. The enormous growth of transnational trafficking networks of drug, humans and arms is today the main threat to life, human rights, rule of law and democracy in the region. No need to mention, this is another of the disastrous results of the imbalance of forces between criminal organizations that ignore and mock on national borders, and the legal and police systems that pursue them, tied to the logic of national institutions and territory.

For all these reasons, the creation of regional and international institutions capable of combating organized crime is one of the objectives that, as a federalist, I have been pursuing for years. In particular, the creation of a Mercosur agency against Transnational Organized Crime that takes advantage of the European experience of Europol and Eurojust and achieves at the regional level the same objectives that the Direzione Nazionale Antimafia achieved in

Italy: to centralize, coordinate and promote the work of prosecutors and security forces currently isolated and at the mercy of the mafias. The proposal, which has been years in preparation and development, has had the support of the Italian Ministero degli Esteri and the Latin American Institute (IIIA), thanks to its Falcone-Borsellino program, which has financed the work of a group of South American and DNA experts to prepare a joint document on the need, possible capacities and functioning of the agency.

The work is beginning to bear fruit. At the LIII Meeting of Ministers of the Interior and Security of Mercosur (RMIS), held in Buenos Aires on May 30 with the presence of the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, it was decided to move forward the agenda, including the creation of the agency in the forthcoming July declaration that closes the Argentine pro tempore presidency, and committing that, during the next semester and under the Brazilian presidency, the agency will be created, recognizing the initiative of President Milei and the Argentine pro tempore presidency.

In the final declaration of the summit, the States Parties and Associated States highlighted the main achievements, among them: the "Protocol for the implementation of the Specialized Working Group for the fight against Criminal Organizations, through the

implementation of joint police investigation teams and the creation of a Mercosur Agency against Transnational Organized Crime which will allow for closer operational cooperation between security forces and national police, consolidating the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime”.

At both the general meeting and the bilateral meeting with Brazil, in which I participated, Argentina’s Minister of Security, Patricia Bullrich, pointed out that during Argentina’s pro tempore presidency the Group to Combat Transnational Organized Crime had become operational, with a view towards the creation of an agency to combat transnational organized crime in the next six months. And the Minister of Justice and Public Security of Brazil, Enrique Lewandoski, indicated that Brazil “fully supported Argentina’s proposal to create a specialized agency to combat transnational organized crime” and agreed “to put it into practice during the Brazilian pro tempore presidency” and then “extend it to

the South American and global level”, since he considered that “Interpol, Ameripol and Europol are not sufficient”.

Of course, this is only the beginning. A lot of work will have to be done for the agency to be created and for it to be austere, modern and effective, rather than a mere bureaucratic structure. But its potential is enormous since, if it were to improve living conditions and security for Mercosur citizens, the agency would provide an excellent example of the potential of regional institutions to improve concrete aspects of citizens’ lives. Moreover, if the Mercosur’s example were extended to the South American and global level, as proposed by Minister Lewandoski, it would open an interesting window of opportunity for the development of international institutions. It would be an appropriate continuation of the efforts initiated by the UN Palermo Convention against transnational organized crime (2000) and a demonstration of the effectiveness of multilateral cooperation at a time when it is being severely questioned.

The Moment for European Leadership: Support a New Path for Israel-Palestine

Collective

Condemning atrocities or expressing abstract support for a “two-state solution” is no longer enough, says an international group of 121 academics and intellectuals, including Kenneth Pomeranz and Gisèle Sapiro, in an article published by *Le Monde* on April 29th, 2025.

The European Union must urgently support a political shift toward a just and equal future for Palestinians and Israelis through a confederation of two sovereign states. Rooted in the principles of the Israeli-Palestinian movement *A Land for All*, this confederation—under the principles of two states in one homeland—is based on full political equality, mutual recognition, freedom of movement, shared Jerusalem, and a return mechanism for refugees through cooperation—not separation.

As the war devastates the lives of Palestinians and Israelis, and as Jewish and Palestinian communities around the world reel from pain, fear, and grief, we believe Europe must act with courage and clarity. *A Land for All* is a political movement that includes Palestinians and Israelis from across the homeland.

The ongoing cycle of war, occupation, and displacement has reached a political and moral breaking point. The continued support—whether implicit or explicit—of the international community for the status quo has allowed deepening violence, impunity, and authoritarianism to flourish. It is no longer enough to condemn atrocities or express support for a “two-state solution” in the

abstract. What is needed is concrete backing for a new political horizon: one rooted in justice, dignity, and the shared humanity of both peoples.

Deep interdependence

The confederation model—two states in one homeland—offers this horizon. It is a practical, deeply considered framework created by Palestinians and Israelis working together, grounded in international law and present-day realities. Based on our commitment to international law and recognition of the realities on the ground, we offer a pragmatic path forward: both peoples feel a deep connection to the land and that will not change. This connection must be acknowledged, and any political process must begin from the current reality, not from the diplomatic frameworks of thirty years ago.

This model addresses the longstanding deadlocks—water, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem—not by postponing them, but by offering pragmatic, cooperative solutions from day one. It is grounded in the reality of intertwined lives and deep interdependence between Palestinians and Israelis in the economy, climate, natural resources, Jerusalem, and the homeland itself. Even security and regional integration depend on mutual cooperation rather than control. *A Land for All* provides a realistic, future-oriented framework that responds to these shared challenges and connections.

Without entering into precise formulations, we wish to affirm and strengthen what has already

been said: the connection between defending the system of international laws and human rights – and defending the rights of Palestinians to liberty and self-determination, which the international community has long failed to guarantee. There can be no true international stability without rights for Palestinians; this vacuum undermines the entire international system.

We believe it is the duty of the European Union – historically, politically, and morally – to lead in supporting this shift. Europe has experienced the devastation of nationalist conflict and the power of integration. The EU was built on the promise that shared sovereignty and cooperation can replace war. That lesson must now be applied beyond its borders, especially in a region where Europe has long played a decisive role.

The only realistic basis

A confederation is the only realistic foundation for long-term security, economic development, welfare, and environmental sustainability for both Israelis and Palestinians. It can prevent further cycles of dehumanization and ensure that both peoples can live in dignity and peace. Continuing to support governments that prioritize expansion, occupation, and control over life and equality is a betrayal of Europe’s foundational values.

We call on the European Union to take a principled and courageous stand for peace, justice, and equality in the shared homeland of both Israelis and Palestinians. This means publicly endorsing the confederation model – “Two States, One Homeland” – as a viable, just, and visionary alternative to the crumbling status quo. It means recognizing the State of Palestine not as a symbolic gesture, but as a transformative step toward ending the occupation and enabling equal sovereignty.

It means using Europe’s economic and

diplomatic influence to take immediate and drastic measures to stop the war and annexation, and incentivize concrete steps toward equality, including support for bi-national cooperation. It means providing robust support to grassroots and civil society initiatives that promote peace, democratic resistance, shared governance, mutual recognition, and the hard work of transitional justice. This is not a time for silence or ambiguity. The European Union must take a stand: for peace over domination, for equality over oppression, for a future shared by both peoples and rooted in justice. The era of neutrality is over. The moment for European leadership is now!

First signatories: Annie Ernaux, writer and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2022; Sari Hanafi, Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut; François Héran, Professor at the Collège de France; Cécile Laborde, Professor of Political Theory at Oxford University (UK); Chibli Mallat, Lawyer and Professor Emeritus of Law at the University of Utah; Florian Meinel, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Göttingen (Germany); Samuel Moyn, Professor of Law and History at Yale University (Connecticut); Thomas Piketty, Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and Professor at the Paris School of Economics; Kenneth Pomeranz, Professor of History at the University of Chicago (Illinois); Julie Ringelheim, Professor of Law at the University of Louvain (Belgium); Gisèle Sapiro, Director of Studies at the EHESS and Director of Research at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS); Svetlana Slapsak, Professor of Anthropology of Ancient Worlds; Abram de Swaan, Professor Emeritus of Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam; Olga Tokarczuk, writer and winner of the 2018 Nobel Prize for Literature; Dag Tuastad, Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oslo.

The Role of Henri Frenay and General de Gaulle in the Resistance Movement

Bruno Poucet

Robert Belot

Henri Frenay au General de Gaulle. Lettres et rapports sur la Résistance et l'Europe
Lyon, Presse fédéraliste, 2023, 254 p., € 20

This book, written by Robert Belot, professor at Jean-Monnet University in Saint-Étienne, was published by *Presse fédéraliste*, an association dedicated to the distribution of publications on European and world federalism. It publishes the journal *"Pour le fédéralisme-Fédéchoses"*, several issues of which appear each year, and a collection of books from which this work is drawn. In a way, it is complementary to Robert Belot's book, *"Henri Frenay. De la Résistance à l'Europe"* (Seuil). A convinced European, he is, like Marc Lazar, Jean Garrigues and Jean-François Chanet, well known to Cahiers Jaurès, a member of the Scientific Council of the *Union des fédéralistes européens France* (UEF). Founded in 1946, the association welcomed among its members Henri Frenay, who served as president until the European Defense Community (EDC) was rejected by the French National Assembly in 1954. This explains why a biography has been devoted to him.

This book is a collection of works by Henri Frenay between 1942 and 1953, the last being the most "European", as it is a letter which the founder of Combat wrote to de Gaulle about the EDC, which he ardently backed despite Charles de Gaulle's opposition.

Containing abundant notes that explain the documents, the book mainly features manuscripts written during the war. The letters, notes and reports for the most part describe the great moments of the Resistance: internal resistance, of which Infantry Captain Frenay (1905-1988, Companion of the Liberation) became one of the main leaders when he founded Combat, the external resistance by de Gaulle and Frenay's ties with the Americans. On the other hand, although the book's numerous footnotes do not avoid the issue, there is no text on Frenay's Petain period, which lasted until 1941, when he broke with Philippe Pétain, who embarked on a policy of collaboration.

The intention of this book, some sections of which are unpublished while others are well known to historians, is to show how much the Resistance was first and foremost a fight against the Nazis, but also, in a more muted and less dramatic way, an internal struggle between men and women who wanted to assert their power. It talks about the relationship between de Gaulle and Frenay, the role of Admiral Darlan, of Giraud, the relations with Jean Moulin and the stance vis-à-vis political parties, particularly the Communists. A debate has arisen over the role of the Secret Army, which De Gaulle wanted to be autonomous from the more political resistance movements, a decision which annoyed Frenay. The relationship between Frenay and De Gaulle gradually deteriorated over time, with the former finding it difficult to place himself under De Gaulle's authority. Relations with Jean Moulin were also very tense, as Frenay was close to the man who, through carelessness, seems to have contributed to the arrest of René Hardy, de Gaulle's representative in France. He later clashed with Daniel Cordier, when he publicly accused Jean Moulin of being a crypto-communist.

Reading these texts as a whole, it is clear that Frenay believed himself to be a great politician - which he was not - and Robert Belot's copious notes make this abundantly clear. He wanted, somewhat naively, to impose a revolutionary vision of the Resistance on de Gaulle, and advise him on economic matters. He also seems to have had an embryonic notion of a Europe of nations. The publication of all these documents is therefore justified as, in a way, they give an indication of the difficulties which lay ahead for the very concept of building Europe.

Review originally published in the fortnightly L'Ours, no. 539, January-February 2025, reprinted with kind permission.

A Look Back at the Links Between Socialism and Federalism in the Post-War Period

Marc-Olivier Lacroix

Wilfried Loth

André Philip et le Mouvement Socialiste pour les États-Unis d'Europe (1947-1951)

Lyon, Presse fédéraliste, 2024, 164 p, 15 €

Jean-François Billion, Pierre Chevalier, (with Jean-Pierre Gouzy and Jean-Luc Prevel)

Fédéralisme et décolonisation. Jean Rous et le Congrès des peuples contre l'impérialisme (1948 - 1955)

Lyon, Presse fédéraliste, 2024, 257 p., €20

This article explores the links between certain socialists and the federalist ideal in the aftermath of the Second World War and during decolonization. These two books re-edit and update articles and papers that are sometimes difficult to find in print anymore.

Wilfried Loth's book is a translation and update of his work on the *Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE)*, originally published in the monumental work by Walter Lipgens in the 1980s¹. This reissue benefits from the deepening knowledge of the transnational history of federalist networks thanks to the many colloquia held in recent years². It also complements his recent publication on the Europeanism of the Socialist Resistance³.

Book Reviews

From now on, it's the post-war period that is described, through the founders of the MSEUE from left-wing socialism (notably the French around M. Pivert and the British from *the Independent Labour Party*), and their hesitations in the face of the various "bourgeois" groupings. Finally agreeing to cooperate, A. Philip's presidency in 1949 enabled the organization to better coordinate its action with parties and parliamentarians. Above all, the economic theses he developed within the MSEUE were pioneering, such as the European Movement's acceptance, in early 1949, of the principle of a common market (with planning) and the integration of heavy industries.

A hundred pages of documents give substance to the historical introduction, and the texts show the essential contribution made by socialists to the debate on European unification, as well as their hopes for a federalist way beyond. In addition, the Congress reports provide easy access to the principles of the movement's organization, and its evolution after André Philip took over. It is regrettable, however, that the evolution of the MSEUE after 1951 is not mentioned, despite the fact that European construction began on non-federalist foundations. This book provides a solid basis for further research into the federalists of the 1950s, thanks to its recent bibliography and the location of sources throughout Europe.

With their book *Fédéralisme et décolonisation*, Jean-François Billion and Pierre Chevalier propose a certain decentering of federalism, with an emphasis on the decolonial movement. The thread running through the book is the extraordinary militancy of Jean Rous, initially a militant of the IVth International, before remaining active in left-wing socialist movements (supporter of G. Mollet in 1946, founding member of the *Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire* in 1948, etc.). After an introduction on the Catalan, Trotskyist

and Resistance origins of J. Rous' federalism⁴, the book benefits from Pierre Chevalier's expertise⁵. His chapter forms the heart of the book, tracing the little-known history of the Peoples' Congress against Imperialism, founded in 1948 alongside the MSEUE. It looks back at this atypical forum for discussion at the start of the Cold War: European socialists and laborists who were members of governments administering colonial empires; left-wing socialists (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista-POUM* and *Independent Labour Party-ILP*); Trotskyist militants from all over the world; and a large number of groups from the colonies. The first congress (June 18-21, 1948) is particularly well analyzed, providing a clear understanding of the tensions and attempts at convergence between all the participants: was it a question of preserving Europe and the world from American and Soviet imperialism, or of denouncing the fact that the most imperialist powers remain the countries of the Old Continent? A member of the Board and the organization's linchpin, J. Rous was central to keeping alive the links with the decolonization movements, despite the cessation of support from European parties. Warmly received at the Bandung conference in 1955, he continued his commitment to the Third World, becoming an advisor to Léopold Sédar Senghor until his final return to France in 1968.

The book goes on to analyze L. Senghor's relationship with federalism. A text by Jean-Pierre Gouzy looks back at his commitment to Europe during the EDC and the attempt to create a European Political Community. Above all, J.-F. Billion returns to the beginnings of Senghor's federalism, based on his reflections on negritude. This was the common thread running through his political commitment from 1945 onwards, as an elected member of the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (SFIO), then as an independent, to changing the links between metropolitan

France and its empire, or when he sought to avoid the balkanization of Africa during the independence process. Finally, the book is completed by an introduction by J.-F. Billion to federalist reflections and attempts in Black Africa and the West Indies (Aimé Césaire and

the British colonies). These various articles provide access to little-known aspects of the federalist perspectives and actions of activists with transnational trajectories, which are still more difficult to grasp than more traditional militancy.

Article originally published in the fortnightly *L'Ours* and in *Fedechoses*, reprinted here with their kind permission.

¹ Walter Lippens and Wilfried Loth (eds.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, Berlin, New York, De Gruyter, vol 1-4, 1984-1991. [Available from OURS] The chapter dedicated to the MSEUE is published in vol. 4 in 1991, p.277-318.

² Notably: Colloquium on the UEF Foundation, Paris, 2016; Conference "Visions of Europe in the Resistance", Genoa, 2019; Colloquium "Europe de la Défense", Historical Archives of the European Union in 2022.

³ Wilfried Loth, *Léon Blum, La Résistance socialiste française et l'Europe*, Lyon, Presse fédéraliste, 2023.

⁴ Revised and expanded reprint of an article by J.-F. Billion and Jean-Luc Prevel in *Le Fédéraliste*, Pavie, 1986.

⁵ «Jean Rous (1908-1985) : une vie pour le socialisme et la décolonisation», doctoral thesis directed by Jean Sagnes, Université de Perpignan, 1999, 1142 pages. [Available from OURS].

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