

The history of an idea: from a "Europe of nations" to federalism

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Interactive lecture

An exploration of different approaches to European integration from a historical perspective. A reflection on why federalism is a distinctive approach to studying European integration and how European federalists believe in transnational multi-level democracy, whereas nationalist perspectives focus on the democratic mandates of the national governments.

Session flow:

- We would project the figure of the peaceful world federation.
 - With the help of it we would first discuss what federalism is in a historical perspective, and what kind of European integration approaches there are (classical nationalism, intergovernmentalism (unionism), functionalism, intergovernmentalist functionalism, federalist functionalism (constitutional federalism, personalist federalism), and how these approaches developed according to the intergovernmentalism versus federalism dichotomy.
 - After all this, we will draw conclusions about the role of federalism in the establishment of the European Union, and discuss what the role of federalism can be in shaping the future of the EU.
 - We would then discuss whether the EU-model is suitable to other countries belonging to other civilizations, and can it be used to reform the international organization.
 - Finally, I would ask the participants, based on the lecture and the figure, to define themselves as Europeans, i.e. which approach they prefer in terms of federalism versus intergovernmentalism, and why.

Lecture draft

“Modern civilization has taken as its specific foundation the principle of liberty which says that man is not a mere instrument to be used by

others but that every man must be an autonomous life centre.”¹

With these words started the Ventotene Manifesto, written in 1941 by Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, the anti-Fascists activists. The Manifesto called for the creation of a steady federal state in Europe with the participation of everybody. It called for a democratic reform of social organization based on the principle of liberty and autonomy of persons and states. It emphasized that, in the future, the dividing line would be the fight for national power or for a solid international state, i.e. between intergovernmentalists and federalists. The authors, Spinelli and Rossi, warned that the fight for national power helped the reactionary forces.

The Ventotene Manifesto clearly showed that there were two basic integration approaches from a historical point of view: the intergovernmentalist and the federalist. And the aim of the federalists was the democratic federalist transformation of the historical “Europe of nations” which ended in a tragic deadlock. They believed that federalism is the only way to end wars, power struggles, and the only means to humanize power.

The questions arise: where did this belief in a democratic federalist European union come from? What it means to be federalist in the theory and practice of the international policy? What other integration approaches are there, and how does federalism relate to them?

1. Integration approaches: What is federalism

The most important integration approaches are the following: conservative intergovernmentalism, intergovernmental functionalism, federalism, functionalism, intergovernmentalist functionalism and federalist functionalism (constitutional federalist functionalism and integral or personal federalist functionalism).

Intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism is a social organization theory and practice placing the (nation) state and its interests in the centre of the social organization, subordinating the persons to it.

It has two directions: the conservative intergovernmentalism and the intergovernmentalist functionalism.

Conservative intergovernmentalism is eurosceptic, criticizes the EU, and denies the importance of supranational institutions. Its ideal is the “European

¹ Ernesto Rossi – Altiero Spinelli, *The Ventotene Manifesto*. Ventotene, 1941. The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies. 2. URL: www.cvce.eu, https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/316aa96c-e7ff-4b9e-b43a-958e96afbecc/publishable_en.pdf (Retrieved: 10.09.2019)

Family of Nations”, “Europe of Nations”, how Margaret Thatcher and Charles de Gaulle imagined it. It means cooperation, bargaining and negotiations between the governments of sovereign states, without sharing the sovereignty.

Intergovernmental functionalism concentrates on the states, governments and the national interests, but realizes the necessity of transnational multilevel organization of cooperation between states under the control of the governments and on the level of the lowest common denominator. It aims to use the federalist institutions in the service of the national governments.

- Recognition of the importance of institutionalisation, based on the lowest common denominator, and under governmental control
- Intergovernmental negotiated decisions in supranational independent institutions
- Subsidiarity (nationalist interpretation)
- Multilevelis (nationalist interpretation)

Federalism

Federalism is a social organization theory and practice placing the person and his/her bottom-up associative communities in the center of the state and international organization. Its aim is a bottom-up internal and external democracy between states, based on the personal principle (popular sovereignty) as well as the principles of autonomy, decentralization, sharing of sovereignty, subsidiarity, and multilevelism, in the framework of the Western system of liberties (representative parliamentary system and human rights). Persons are citizens of the federation and of their own state.

The Western system of liberties

The most important internal and external principles of the Western system of liberties are: representative Parliament created by general elections, elected by the people for a specific length of time; the separation of powers; an executive branch that is either responsible to the legislative Parliament or subject to popular recall; judiciary power independent of the executive branch; free press; freedom of conscience, freedom of assembly, and other civic rights; extensive local autonomy.²

Functionalism

Functionalism is cooperation between different functions of the states. This means linking authority to a specific activity and breaking it away from the

² István Bibó, “Reflections on the Social Development of Europe (1971-1972)”. In *Democracy, Revolution, Self-determination. Selected Writings*. Edited by Nagy Károly, translated by Boros-Kazai András. Boulder CO.: Social Science Monographs, Highland Lakes, Atlantic Research and Publications, New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1991, 467.

sovereignty of the states, and organizing this specific activity (function) in the framework of supranational institutions.³

Intergovernmentalist functionalism

Historically intergovernmentalism was not functionalist because there was not sharing of sovereignty (although the cooperation was always in the field of functions). In the EU integration intergovernmentalists gradually accepted supranational institutions dealing with the shared functions, and so developed institutional intergovernmentalism. It means that the governments use the supranational common institutions for negotiation, bargain, and decision making. They keep under governmental control the supranational institutions, and subordinate the parliament.

Federalist functionalism

Federalism is functionalist, because it is based on the sharing of functions, and the states (governments) remain autonomous in all other fields.

The competences under the control of the federation are managed in a constitutional representative parliamentary system, according to the Western system of liberties (constitutional federalism), or in the framework of gradually developing open democratic institutions (personal federalism).

Figure of the peaceful world federation

I would like to present these state and international organization approaches by using the model of the peaceful world federation.

³ David Mitrany, "A Working Peace System (1943)." In David Mitrany, *The Functional Theory of Politics*. London School of Economics and Political Science. London: Martin Robertson & Company Ltd., 1975, 123, 125, 128, 129.

I made this figure based on my historical researches because while researching the history of the idea of European unity I discovered that the idea of a peaceful world federation based on the personal and the autonomy principles, subsidiarity and the Western system of liberties (representative parliamentary system and human rights) was present in the thinking and the works of all the European representatives of federalism, among whom we find Aristotle, Podiebrad, Althusius, Locke, Penn, Saint-Pierre, Montesquieu, Kant, the American founding fathers, among them, Hamilton, Madison, Jay, the creators of the Swiss Constitution of 1848, Tocqueville, Proudhon, and the Founding Fathers of the European Union, Coudenhove-Kalergi, Rougemont, Brugmans, Schuman, Monnet, Spinelli, and Delors. It was present also in the most important legal documents, among them the Treaty of Utrecht (1579) of the Dutch provinces, the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the Constitution of the United States of America (1787); the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), the Swiss Constitution (1848), the Covenant of the League of Nations (1918), the Charter of the United Nations Organization (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the basic treaties of European integration.

According to the classical idea and model of the peaceful World federation, social organization starts with the persons, and their communities created by the personal association policy. Persons share those tasks/fields that they cannot do alone with other persons and manage them within the framework of the local government in a representative [or direct] democratic form. But in all other fields they remain free and autonomous.

The local communities continue this association policy based on the sharing of fields and create provinces, the provinces states, the states federal unions (republics), the federal unions federations of federal unions. The different communities (family, local community, province, state, federation of states, federation of federations of states, world federation) can be seen as concentric circles around the persons in the centre. Constitutional state law, representative parliamentary system, international law, and universal human rights – the so called Western system of liberties – create the harmony between the persons and these circles of associations. So, the persons and their communities should share their freedom (autonomy) in common areas, but in exchange for this they can become interested and active in all levels of the social organization.

In the case of intergovernmentalism, the emphasis is on the nation state. The

free association of persons ends at the state level, and the Western system of liberties is not applied between the states to manage the shared common functional areas. So the national governments can enforce their will, in the name of the national interest, in the international relations. People can not live and associate with other states according to their interests.

2. History of the federalist idea

2.1. The birth of democratic federalism in opposition to centralized authoritarian national monarchies

The idea of the democratic world federation presents federalism as the representative of popular sovereignty that places the person and his/her creative force at the center of world organization.

The essence of this definition was first formulated by Aristotle (4th century B.C.), who is regarded as the father of the European political culture. He was in favor of personal federalism in the polis organization. It meant a social organization which started from bottom-up, from the persons, and families. As a result of their associations larger and larger communities were created (local community, village, province). At the top of this organization the polis was self-sufficient and sovereign. It did not consider necessary to share sovereignty in the cooperation with other polis. In the polis direct democracy ruled, in the framework of a slaveholding society. Slaves and women were excluded from this democratic form.

In the feudal Europe, and the Europe of authoritarian nation states and national empires, not Aristotle was followed. Jean Bodin's idea was the dominant, according to which the authority of the state should be absolute, centralized and indivisible. The ruler's sovereignty was sacred and inviolable, so the sovereignty was indivisible.

The Bodian concept was opposed by Althusius (1614), German Calvinist thinker, who continuing in the footsteps of Aristotle, and influenced by the Union of Utrecht (1579), the defense union of the Dutch provinces, fighting for independence, discovered the concept of a federal union.

The Dutch provinces, fighting for independence against the Spanish Habsburg invaders, elaborated the principles of an aristocratic federal defense union among the seven cooperating provinces in the *Treaty of the Union of Utrecht, 1579*⁴. The union was based on the sharing of their sovereignty in the field of defense and the

⁴ "The Treaty of the Union, Eternal Alliance and Confederation Made in the Town of Utrecht by Countries and Their Towns and Members, 29 January 1579." In E. H. Kossman (ed.), *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974, 165-173.

necessary economic and financial cooperation. In all other fields the provinces remained sovereign. The Union of Utrecht made steps in the direction of the unification of the economic policy: the provinces had common financial policy, they had to agree in the exchange rate of their currencies, and they could not levy arbitrarily tax. The Union of Utrecht was not only a defense union but it was also an economic union representing the concept of a custom and financial union. The union established, in The Hague, the assembly of the union, as central institution, with legislative function. It was composed of the representatives of the participating provinces, and headed by the stadhouder (“state holder”) with executive function. The draft laws were sent to the participating provinces for approval. The assembly of the union dealt with the foreign policy, warfare and related finances. The provinces delegated unequal number of representatives to the assembly, but each province had one vote. The decisions were unanimous in the most important questions, otherwise the majority vote was used. The treaty on the union could be amended with the consent of the allies.⁵

The Dutch defense union was influenced by the plan of George Podiebrad, the King of Bohemia, who suggested in 1462-64 to establish a federal council of European rulers and a court dealing with the common military and financial matters and conflict solving. In all other areas the cooperating countries remained sovereign.⁶ He believed that, through this, they could defend themselves better against the Ottoman Empire.

Based on these examples, Johannes Althusius (1563-1638) thought that it was possible to divide sovereignty in bottom-up personal federalist states. In his view there were partial and complete confederations.

In the case of a complete confederation the contracting states shared the sovereignty. In his words:

“A complete confederation is one in which a foreign realm, province, or any other universal association, together with its inhabitants, are fully and integrally coopted and admitted into the right and communion of the realm by a communicating of its fundamental laws and right of sovereignty. To the extent that they coalesce and are united into one and the same body they become members of that one

⁵ The provinces had their own provincial assembly where citizens, merchants, bankers, the delegates of the cities and religious communities assembled. It was led by the provincial stadhouder.

⁶ George Podiebrad (1964), “Tractatus pacis toti Christianitati fiendae.” In *The Universal Peace Organization of King George of Bohemia. A Fifteenth Century Plan for World Peace, 1462-1464*. Edited by V. Vanacek. Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, 71-82.

and same body.”⁷

In the case of a partial confederation the contracting states did not share their sovereignty.

“A partial confederation is one in which various realms or provinces, while reserving their rights of sovereignty, solemnly obligate themselves one to the other by a treaty or covenant made preferably for a fixed period of time. Such a partial confederation is for the purpose of conducting mutual defense against enemies, for extending trust and cultivating peace and friendship among themselves, and for holding common friends and enemies, with a sharing of expenses.”⁸

By his thought process Althusius arrived at the idea of popular sovereignty, democracy, and modern federalism. In opposition to the centralized authoritarian (monarchical) nation state, he declared state sovereignty divisible and so the way towards a world federation became libre as it can be seen in the figure.

John Locke, 1689, elaborated the principles of the representative parliamentary monarchy in opposition to the absolute rule of the king.⁹ His concept of civil government involved the people in the shaping of the state. Through a bottom-up association policy they created civil society. Civil society needed civil government, in which the legislature was based in collective bodies of men, called senate and parliament, and was divided from the executive power. Locke represented the rights of man and the representative parliamentary system. He raised the problem of establishing federal unions among civil governments but did not elaborate on modern federalism.

William Penn suggested, in 1693, to adopt Locke’s ideas on a constitutional parliamentary representative system in the organization of interstate relations. He proposed to establish a European Council, Parliament and Court between (above) the states dealing with common matters, like defense, economy and finances.

Abbé de Saint-Pierre represented similar ideas. He suggested in 1713-1715 to convene a European congress in The Hague, to establish a European Council, and to conclude a treaty of alliance on the common matters. In his view peaceful

⁷ Johannes Althusius, *Politica*. Edited and translated with an introduction by Frederik S. Carney, foreword by Daniel J. Elazar. Indianapolis: Indiana, Liberty Fund Inc, 1995, 89-90.

⁸ Althusius, *Politica*, 90.

⁹ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited with an introduction and notes by Peter Laslett. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Originally published in John Locke. *Two Treatises of Government*. London, 1689.

cooperation among states demanded the establishment of an economic and trade union.

Montesquieu, French thinker of the Enlightenment, elaborated the idea of a federal republic (1748). It meant a voluntary association of sovereign states, which, through the treaty among themselves, renounced their sovereignty in certain fields for the benefice of common institutions.

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America (Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Jay), fighting against the British colonizers for freedom, summarized all these ideas, and discussed them in the *Federalist Papers*, and established a new democratic state, a federal republic under a president [as a defense union]. They have chosen liberty as the basic principle of state organization, declared popular sovereignty and rejected feudalism. The *Declaration of Independence* (1776), declared that all men are created equal, with the rights to life, liberty and happiness.

On the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, the 55 delegates of the 13 states drafted the *Constitution of the United States of America*, from the 25th of May to the 7th September 1787 (it was made in about three months). They defined which competences belong to the federation and which ones to the states. The constitution rejected feudalism and feudal privileges, represented self-determination, democracy, popular sovereignty and federalism in a bottom up state. All these novelties were realized in practice by a bicameral parliament composed of the House of Representatives (representing the citizens) and the Senate (representing the states). At the top was the federal government headed by a president. (They used the example of the English Parliament, but the House of Peers was changed for the Senate). Democracy and liberty were ensured by the representative parliament, voting right, co-decision procedure (checks and balances), separation of powers (executive, legislative and judiciary), federalism and the *Bill of Rights* (1791).

However, the new state was the democracy of those men who had voting right based on wealth. The woman, the African-Americans, and the native Indians did not have voting right.

The Constitution of the United States formulated the rules of the life of those Americans, who had voting right. The necessary reforms in the future took place within the framework of the Constitution.

In Europe, only the citizens of the Swiss cantons could create a similar federal union under a federal government, in 1848, against the nationalists, who were the supporters of the French-type unifying nation-state.

The *Swiss Constitution of 1848* declared the Swiss Confederation (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft) a parliamentary federation composed of the

Bundesversammlung (Federal Assembly) and the Bundesrat (Federal Council). The Federal Assembly was the legislative organ. It was bicameral, composed of the Ständerat (Council of the States) and the Nationalrat (National Council). In the Ständerat the interests of the citizens, as the citizens of their own cantons, were represented, and in the Nationalrat the interests of the citizens, as the citizens of the Swiss Confederation (Nationalrat). At the head of the Swiss Confederation stood the Bundesrat (Federal Council) under the leadership of the Bundespräsident. The Federal Council had seven members and represented the executive branch of the country. The President of the Swiss Confederation was elected for one year and had no power. The Federal Council was the collective head of the state. The Swiss cantons conferred competences to the federal power (Bundesgewalt) but they remained sovereign in all other things.¹⁰ To the federal government belonged, for example, foreign policy, alliances, custom duties and commercial policy.

It was Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), who – believing that the history of European civilization represented a progressive democratization process – proposed Europeans to continue the example of the US Constitution (1787), and he explained the essence of the federalist government to the Europeans. In his view the new federal republic was a state in which several states were fused into one with regard to certain common interests (functionalism) but remained autonomous with regard to all other matters. The central power governed as a national government but in a limited circle. It was an incomplete national government.

“Another form of society is afterwards discovered in which several states are fused into one with regard to certain common interests, although they remain distinct, or only confederate, with regard to all other concerns. In this case the central power acts directly upon the governed, whom it rules and judges in the same manner as a national government, but in a more limited circle. Evidently this is no longer a federal government, but an incomplete national government, which is neither exactly national nor exactly federal; but the new word which ought to express this novel thing does not yet exist.”¹¹

¹⁰ „Bundesverfassung der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft vom 12. Herbstmonat 1848“ [Bundesverfassung vom 12. September 1848]. In *Geschichte und Texte der Bundesverfassungen der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft von der helvetischen Staatsumwälzung bis zur Gegenwart*, bearbeitet von Simon Kaiser und Johannes Strickler, Bern: Verlag van K. J. Wyss, 1901.

¹¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. vol. 1. New York: Vintage Books Edition, A Division of Random House INC., 1990, 158-159.

2.2. Federalism in opposition to the unitary nation state and nationalism

Influenced by the American revolution the French revolutionaries declared *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789*. But they established, instead of a federation, a unitary nation state (and national empire). The revolution (1789-1799) was not successful, and The Terror created fear of social reform. The centralizing power of the absolutist past was very strong, and the democratic forces could only advance slowly.

Immanuel Kant suggested to make an eternal peace treaty (foedus pacificum) (1795), in harmony with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens (1789), based on similar democratic states, international law and legal harmonization without sharing the sovereignty.¹²

The French unitary nation state has become an example in Europe, and launched nationalism instead of federalism.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), French political thinker, in the name of the idea of a democratic Europe, opposed the system of centralized authoritarian nation states and national empires, and colonization. He was convinced that the expansive European national monarchies and empires, seeking power world-wide, were not able to establish federations.

He opposed Mazzini's nationalist New Europe concept based on unitary nation states; the monarchist solution to Italian unity; the authoritarian militarist confederalism of Bismarck who defeated the German federalists, and the centralized Marxist proletarian state based on state property.

Proudhon realized that the development of the Western system of liberties slowed down in the second half of the 19th century. He criticized the business men who, after an energetic and, in ideas far-reaching period, lost their democratization creativity. In the circumstances of laissez-faire capitalism they started to concentrate on safeguarding money and power. In his view this was a serious problem because large masses of people had no idea what to do, how to continue the democratization process in the name of popular sovereignty.¹³

He believed that democracy and federalism were the only solutions to modernize European international (inter-state) policy.

Like Althusius, he was for a federalist Europe composed of small political

¹² Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." In *Kant Political Writings*. Edited by Hans Reiss, translated by Hugh Barr Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 93-130. Originally published in Immanuel Kant. *Ewigen Frieden*. Ein philosophische Entwurf, 1795. Königsberg: F. Nicolovius, 1795.

¹³ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003, 5-6.

entities which were created as bottom-up free associations of people (persons) concentrating on their security and livelihood.

In his view a European union should be based on federalism. It means a bottom-up association policy of persons in all fields of life, and the transfer of sovereignty towards larger common levels of organization in the fields of common interest.

His model of state and international organization was composed of autonomous persons and communities: persons and their associations federated on the basis of contracts freely entered into based on subsidiarity. He believed that power should be divided in order to be as close as possible to the level of the problems to be solved. This is why he was for a Europe composed of small political entities which were created as free associations of people concentrating on their security and livelihood. 14

Central European federalist thinkers fighting against cultural and political nationalism followed Proudhon's personalist ideas. Searching the legal means against nationalism after the bloody nationalist fight in 1849, they elaborated important federalist ideas opposing the idea of a sovereign nation state not suitable for multinational states (like the Habsburg Monarchy, for example). Personal principle and subsidiarity played a significant role in this. The most important among these thinkers were Eötvös, Palacky, Naumann, Renner, and Coudenhove-Kalergi. Their contributions to the development of a democratic federal European idea and of human rights are indeed very important, primarily in the area of national minority rights. They elaborated also the model of a democratic multinational and multidimensional personalist federalist state.

The US Constitution, the Federalist Papers, Tocqueville, Proudhon and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens (1789) influenced the constitutional federalist Founding Fathers of the European Union (Coudenhove-Kalergi, Spinelli), and Proudhon the integral or personalist federalists, among them Rougemont, Brugmans and Marc.

How could Europeans realize the system of liberties in the state and international organization in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century?

Controversially and inconsistently.

Authoritarian nation states and national empires emerged, which used the democratic ideas in the name of authoritarian states and colonial empires. Laissez-

14 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, «Du principe fédératif». In *Du principe fédératif et oeuvres diverses sur les problèmes politiques européens. Oeuvres complètes de P.-J. Proudhon*. Introductions et notes par J.-L. Puech et Th. Ruyssen, vol. 15, Paris: Librairie Marcel Rivière, 1959.

faire liberal market expansion and colonization resulted in a center-periphery world system of rich and poor countries.

Totalitarian states, Fascism, National Socialism, Communist dictatorship emerged, and promised a better future and livelihood to the frustrated and desperate masses. They embraced the idea of a European United States. Stalin, for example, also used the figure of world federation to present his rule as democratic, but the totalitarian dictatorship turned it into a top-down pyramid system, within the framework of the all-powerful state.

The reasons of the failure of democratic modernization:

- No colonization policy according to the Western system of liberties
- Strong retrograde power of the old authoritarian and centralizing past
- New wave of colonization, imperialism, nationalism; center-periphery system of rich and poor countries; fictive world economy; corrupt business mentality

All this led directly to the First World War, the world economic crisis, and the Second World War

The most important problem was, as Proudhon warned about it, that people did not know what to do, how to continue the revolutionary process of democratization. Fascism, National socialism, and Stalinism (Communism) was the revolt of the masses, how Ortega y Gasset, (1883-1955), Spanish philosopher, expressed it in his essay, under the title, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930). He explained the rejection of the parliamentary democracy by the masses as follows:

“Europe had created a system of standards whose efficacy and productiveness the centuries have proved. Those standards are not the best possible; far from it. But they are, without a doubt, definite standards as long as no others exist or are visualized. Before supplanting them, it is essential to produce others. Now, the mass-peoples have decided to consider as bankrupt that system of standards which European civilization implies, but as they are incapable of creating others, they do not know what to do.”¹⁵

So, in his explanation, people did not know what to do during the world economic crisis. They embraced Fascism and National Socialism instead of a rational democratic association policy leading toward a European federation. The question arises why? Why could the masses believe in dictators creating totalitarian systems? And why did not they choose to support the creation of a democratic European federation?

¹⁵ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*. New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993, Chapter 14.2, 134.

3. The fight of the federalists for European democracy between the two world wars

The European democratic federalist reform movement was launched, in 1923, by Count Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894–1972), a political philosopher with Japanese and Central-European family background (Bohemia of the Czech Republic). He was one of the Founding Fathers of the European Union. The essence of Coudenhove-Kalergi's plan was that Europe (including Central-Europe) could only regenerate after the First World War if it became a political and economic regional federation in the framework of the League of Nations.¹⁶

Coudenhove-Kalergi saw that the problem of the masses and the rise of nationalism could only be solved by creating a democratic European federation following the logic of the model of the peaceful world federation, and the practice of the Constitution of the United States (later he made the emphasis on the Swiss example).

He organized the Paneuropean Movement, the program of which was declared in Coudenhove-Kalergi's *Paneuropa* (1923).¹⁷

Coudenhove-Kalergi imagined the creation of a European federation – the centre of which would be the French-German cooperation – in four steps:

1. Some European states establish a European convent and its bureau functioning as the centre of the movement, and coming to agreement in periodic meetings
2. Conflict solution by international arbitration
3. Creation of a Paneuropean customs union (abolition of customs frontiers, creation of a finance union)
4. Establishment of the European United States as a constitutional parliamentary federation with two chambers (Völkerhaus and Staatenhaus) following the example of the USA. The House of the People (Völkerhaus) would be composed of 300 representatives (1 representative for 1 million inhabitants), and the House of States from the representatives of the states of Europe.

Paneurope would be an autonomous regional union inside the League of Nations.

Coudenhove-Kalergi represented the idea of a “revolution of fraternity”, which was in line with the idea and figure of the peaceful world federation.

¹⁶ Éva Bóka, *Az európai egység gondolat története*. Budapest: Napvilág, 2001, 163.

¹⁷ Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa*. Wien-Leipzig: Paneuropa-Verlag, 1926.

He was among the first who recognized and analyzed the characteristics of the totalitarian systems, which denied the idea of the free man (Total State—Total Man).¹⁸

He created the Paneuropean Movement which played an important role in the history of the idea of European unity and of the European Union. When Coudenhove-Kalergi started the movement he was alone, only his wife, Ida Roland, helped him. In 1924, the Austrian national council of the Paneuropean Movement was organized under the presidency of the Austrian chancellor, Seipel, and vice-presidency of Karl Renner, the foreign minister. The centre of the Movement was in the Hofburg. The Paneuropean Movement received financial aid from German and Austrian bankers, among them Max Warburg and Brosche. Edvard Beneš, Karl Renner, and the opposition of Mussolini, Benedetto Croce, Guglielmo Ferrero, Albertini, and Carlo Sforza protected the Paneuropean Movement. It could establish sections in Belgium, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹⁹ In New York, in 1926, Coudenhove-Kalergi founded the American Cooperation Committee of the Paneuropean Movement. The movement was protected by many artists and writers, among them Paul Claudel, Paul Valéry, Jules Romains, Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan Zweig, Guglielmo Ferrero, Sigmund Freud and José Ortega y Gasset. It played an important role in the opposition to the national socialism of Hitler, and in the establishment of the European Community.

Under the influence of Coudenhove-Kalergi, Briand, French foreign minister, proposed for the European governments the establishment of the European economic and political union. It was based on the sovereignty of the states in the framework of an adequately elastic economic union in the framework of the League of Nations.²⁰

Another significant federalist group was the L'Ordre Nouveau (1933-1938),

¹⁸ Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Totaler State – Totaler Mensch*. Wien: Paneuropa Verlag, 1937.

¹⁹ Jean-Luc Chabot, *Aux origines intellectuelles de l'Union européenne. L'idée d'Europe unie de 1919 à 1939*. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2005, 48-49.

²⁰ Aristide Briand, «Mémorandum sur l'organisation d'un régime d'Union fédérale européenne.» In *Le Plan Briand d'Union fédérale européenne. Perspectives nationales et transnationales, avec documents. Actes du colloque international tenu à Genève du 19 au 21 septembre 1991*, édité par Antoine Fleury. Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M., New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang, 1998, 569-582.

organized under the influence of Proudhon's ideas.²¹ It was a group of highly influential philosophers, Alexander Marc, Robert Aron, Emmanuel Mounier, Daniel Rops and Denis de Rougemont. Henri Brugmans joined after the end of the Second World War to the personalist federalist group, continuing Proudhon's ideas. Jacques Delors also belonged to this group.

It was nonconformist, and wanted to create a new order in the service of the persons, the 'living forces' with the participation of persons, placing the person, and the associations of the persons in the centre of state and inter-state organization. The institutions should be shaped according to the results achieved.

They opposed the conformist state and society of their age. It meant that the new Europe broke with the colonial past and all kind of exploitation. Its purpose was to realize popular sovereignty, democracy and federalism. Its manifest called for the creation of a steady European federal state with the participation of everybody. It called for a democratic reform of social organization based on the principle of liberty.

The Ventotene Manifesto (1941) of Spinelli and Rossi called for the creation of a European federation following the American example, after the Second World War. They highly appreciated the principle of liberty which played an important role in the development of democratic civil states. In their view, the laissez-faire free-market capitalist expansion deformed the civil state development because authoritarian and totalitarian states emerged as a consequence of the fight for power and markets during colonial expansion. States became absolute sovereign, nationalist, aiming to dominate, without regard for the damage this might cause to others. The Manifesto concluded that the nation state system after a period of progressive results ceased to be progressive and resulted in totalitarian nation states in Europe. Therefore, the main division in Europe was between the supporters of national sovereignty and the supporters of the creation of a solid international state. The former used national power for achieving international unity. But international unity could only be achieved by establishing a single federal state in which each state would retain the autonomy it needed on the basis of subsidiarity. The new Europe should be a federalist state with a European army and an economic community.

Resistance Movement: *The Geneva Declaration* (1944), the common project of the members of the Resistance Movement, which was drafted, by Spinelli, aimed to transcend the dogma of indivisibility of state sovereignty, and to establish a European constitutional federation with a European government accountable to the people, and to make a federal army.

²¹ Jean-Louis, Loubet del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années 30. Une tentative de renouvellement de la pensée politique française*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001.

The United Nations (1945) represented the idea of a world union of sovereign nation states based on intergovernmental cooperation. As a novelty it realized economic functionalism in the framework of the independent specialized agencies working together with the Economic and Social Council (among them the International Monetary Fund (established in 1945), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (1946), World Health Organization (1948), and World Bank Group (1944)). The United Nations also paved the way for geographical regionalism because the Economic and Social Council had European, African, Latin-American and Asian regional commissions. So a European union would be imagined as the regional part of the United Nations.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which rejected imperialism, colonization, exploitation, slavery and racism, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

4. The role of federalism in the establishment of the European Union

There was a federalist enthusiasm in Europe after the Second World War, based on the reviving of the idea of a peaceful world federation. The desire for peace strengthened the federalist alternative. Many wondered how the new federalist Europe, launched by *The Ventotene Manifesto*, could be realized. But the federalist élan gradually diminished as the former nation states and national governments were reconstructed. As an irony of history the American aid policy helped the reconstruction of the former system of sovereign nation states in Western Europe. All this hindered the realization of the federalist plan of the Resistance Movement because the bottom-up association policy that could launch the renewal and reorganization of society on the basis of the creative forces of the European people could not start. Despite all this, the struggle between the conservative intergovernmentalist supporters of the sovereignty of nation states and the federalist supporters of a European federation dominated European policy. But it was the first time in European history that federalists could gain a real political role.

The most important role of the federalists was to launch a democratic pluralist European policy as an opposition to the conservative intergovernmentalists. In a long struggle, they made it possible to build a European union based on the system of liberties and human rights by incorporating the principle of subsidiarity and multilevelism into the European policy.

European federalism had two major oppositional directions: the constitutional federalist and the integral or personalist federalist.²²

²² Bertrand Vayssière, *Vers une Europe fédérale? Les espoirs et les actions fédéralistes au sortir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*. Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2007, 34-37.

The constitutional federalists regarded the American or the Swiss constitution as an example to follow. Altiero Spinelli (1907-1986), the leader of the European Federalist Movement (Movimento Federalista Europeo) was the most important representative of this direction. He was for the establishment of a European constitutional federation as the American Founding Fathers had done. He was in favor of a European constituent assembly framing a constitution, and the immediate establishment of federal political institutions and a federal government directly responsible to European citizens. He believed that the federal institutional reform could start the necessary social organization reform and decentralization.

The opposing federalist group to the constitutional federalists was the personal or integral federalist. They opposed simply extending the parliamentary state model to the supranational constitutional level through a constituent assembly. They regarded the establishment of a European federation as a gradual social reform process which could force national political establishments to cede powers to the corporate and local communities, and start an economic and social organization serving the real needs and the livelihood of the people.

These fundamental differences, that became clear at the Montreux Congress (1947), divided the European federalist movement, and confused its image.²³ Intergovernmentalists could profit from the division of the federalists at the Hague Congress (1948).

Denis de Rougemont (1906-1985) and Hendrik Brugmans (1906-1997) were characteristic representatives, after the Second World War, of this new European personal or integral federalist idea.

Rougemont, in his lecture on “*The Federalist Attitude*” at the Montreux Congress of the European federalists, in 1947, explained his vision on a European federation as follows:

“[A European federation] taking shape gradually, in various places and in all sorts of ways: here an economic understanding, there an awareness of cultural affinity. In one place, two churches with similar tenets will open their doors to each other, in another a group of small countries will form a customs union. Above all, individual human beings will gradually form varied networks of European exchanges. Every little helps. And all these moves that seem so dispersed, and often so ineffectual, will gradually turn into complex phenomena, the lineaments of a bone structure and system of blood vessels of what

²³ Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth, eds. *Documents on the History of European Integration*. Vol. 4. *Transnational Organizations and Political Parties and Pressure Groups in the Struggle for European Union, 1945-1950*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, vol. 4, 10.

will one day be the body of the United States of Europe.”²⁴

Brugmans, Dutch political thinker, the follower of Proudhon's ideas, and the first president of the European Union of Federalists, in his speech on “*Fundamentals of European Federalism*”, at the Montreux Congress, said that the goal of real personal politic was the “dismemberment of sovereignty”. He believed that a European federation had to be a free association of people because people were interested in uniting for their common good. In his vision a united Europe must be organized as an open society.²⁵

Alexandre Marc (1904–2000), leading French integral federalist, in his article “*From Unionism to Federalism*”, published in the May 1948 issue of *La Fédération* (no. 40), rejected the intergovernmentalist (unionist) policy. He emphasized that “Europe will either be Federalist or will not exist at all.”²⁶ He believed that unionism (intergovernmentalism) was not enough. The unionist knew that as well and this is why they started to be open toward European federalism. But they could not join federalism because federalism was not only about to advance from the national to the supranational plan, federalism was a philosophy which they could not accept.

In his view federalist philosophy had its “own doctrine, attitude to life, and method of organization and action”; it was “a principle of political, economic and social transformation.” It did not simply mean the coordination of existing structures at a higher level because the transfer of sovereignty to a federal institution would solve every problem. Federalism demanded a radical transformation of all the structures of society, and the body politic. It needed the involvement of the working class and all the 'living forces' in social organization.²⁷

The conservative unionists (intergovernmentalists) opposed such a democratic transformation.

The problem with the integral or personalist federalist theory was that it became less and less understandable during the European political campaign. Despite this the majority of the federalists protected the step-by-step approach of

²⁴ Rougemont, “The Federalist Attitude”, 27 August 1947, Lecture at the Montreux Congress, in Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 26.

²⁵ Brugmans, “Fundamentals of European Federalism” 27 August 1947. Speech at the Montreux Congress, in Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 33.

²⁶ Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 47.

²⁷ Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 49-50.

integral or personal federalism. The influence of constitutional federalism diminished.

Spinelli believed that the integral federalists disorientated the federalist movement because they were incapable of formulating a clear European federalist policy. Because of this the broader European political campaign developed irrespective of the theories of the European federalists.²⁸ However, unionists, the protectors of the sovereign nation state system and the intergovernmental policy, profited from this disorientation.

There was one more pro-European union federalist group which acted independently from the constitutional federalist, the integral federalist and the unionist group. This was the parliamentary federalist group of Coudenhove-Kalergi which regarded the parliaments of Europe and the parliamentarians to be destined to take the lead in the battle for Europe. Its aim was the establishment of the United States of Europe as a European Parliamentary Federation with a Supreme Council and a Supreme Court, a joint police force, equal human rights for all, a European market and a European currency.²⁹

The different views on a new Europe were discussed at the Congress of Europe in The Hague from 7-10 May 1948, where the federalists (first of all the integral or personal federalists) were significant players. The question was whether they could succeed in winning the support of the European politicians to build a democratic federalist European union.

The answer is no, because there was an intergovernmentalist majority at the Hague Congress, and their influence prevailed against the federalists.

The following scenarios were outlined:

1. Constitutional federalist: European bicameral parliamentary federation (European United States) established immediately after the war, through a constitutional assembly, elected by the people. This is what the constitutional federalists, led by Spinelli, wanted.

The same was the goal of Coudenhove-Kalergi's European Parliamentary Union.

2. Integral or personal federalist: Gradual establishment of a democratic European federation, based on the bottom-up association policy of the 'living forces' (people) in the framework of a deep social reform. This was the aim of the integral or personal federalists (Rougemont, Brugmans).

²⁸ Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 12.

²⁹ Coudenhove-Kalergi, "Appeal to all Europeans, 28 April 1947", in Lipgens and Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. 4, 123-124.

3. Intergovernmentalist: no federal revolution, but a European assembly. Intergovernmental Europe coordinated by functional supranational agencies. This is what the intergovernmentalists wanted (Churchill, Ramadier).

4. Intergovernmentalist functionalist: Functionalist economic sectoral cooperation.

These different scenarios, under discussions and mutually influencing one another shaped the history of the European integration. But intergovernmentalist economic functionalism prevailed.

Spinelli was in a reserved position, waiting for better times for federalism.

Coudenhove-Kalergi tried to explain that the federalist and intergovernmentalist positions are different, and mean different institutional systems.

The personal federalists (Brugmans) saw the congress as a defeat, because their ideas were considered confusing, and because the principle of gradualism and the establishment of a European Assembly were accepted by the intergovernmentalists, too. It seemed that a compromise had been reached, that led to a dead end for the federalists.

All of this was proven by the creation of the intergovernmental Council of Europe, which set up the first transnational assembly (the consultative Parliamentary Assembly). But the Council of Europe did not break the dogma of the inviolability of national sovereignty.

It was Jean Monnet (1888-1979) who was able to move the personalist federalists out of the impasse. He discovered sectoral federalist functionalism, which could initiate supranational integration in a federalist and intergovernmentalist joint institutional structure. The *Schuman Declaration* (1950) established the ECSC, whose governing body, the High Authority, was the first federalist institution in Europe based on the division of one function from the national sovereignty of the member states. So breaking the dogma of the indivisibility of national sovereignty the Monnet-method started the European integration.

The ECSC was followed by the EDC, based on the same principle (federalist functionalism).

Spinelli also gained momentum and drafted the first bicameral parliamentary European federalist and intergovernmentalist constitutional draft (*Draft Treaty Embodying the Statute of the European Community* (Strasbourg, 11 March 1953)). It was not completely federalist, due to the role given to the Council.

All of this was followed by the intergovernmentalist rejection of the federalist plans, and the strengthening of the intergovernmentalist. So the federalist achievements were defeated.

However, the integration did not stop, it was possible to build further the union on the basis of the institutional structure created by Jean Monet, as evidenced by the Treaties of Rome.

The struggle over the institutional structure of the EEC was finally decided by De Gaulle in an intergovernmental functionalist form. The Luxembourg Compromise gave the governments the opportunity to politicize in the supranational institutions, to control them, and to protect the national interest through the right of veto.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament was strengthened and its members were directly elected from 1979. And then the time has come for the federalists to fight for strengthening the role of the Parliament in European politics, and push back the control of the intergovernmental functionalist governments, and heads of state or government.

Spinelli recognized this, and started the fight for the strengthening of the European Parliament against the intergovernmentalist functionalists governments. (The aim was the gradual establishment of a bicameral European parliamentary union.) The *Draft Treaty Establishing the European Union* ('Spinelli draft'), in 1984, started a new federalist elan fighting for the democratization of the co-decision procedure between the Council and the Parliament, and for the division of the federal and intergovernmental competences based on multilevelism and subsidiarity.

Spinelli believed that the federalists had to continue the political struggle for the democratization of the institutions of the European Community. He therefore proposed three political strategies:

1. The democratization of the co-decision procedure between the European Parliament and the Council
2. The enlargement of the fields of supranational cooperation, to gradually transfer more and more fields from the national level to the supranational level by using the principle of subsidiarity
3. A clear division of competences between the union and the member states (multilevelism).

Then the fight for the democratization of the relations and cooperation between the member states took place within the framework of the European Parliament, in which the federalists played the leading role and the driving force. The most important aim was the democratization of the co-decision procedure between the Council and the Parliament, to continue to transfer common competences to the Union level, and the division of the federal and intergovernmental competences based on multilevelism and subsidiarity.

Finally, the *Treaty of Lisbon* (2007) amended the Treaty on the European

Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community. It made the Union's bill of rights, the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, legally binding. The treaty established a supranational and intergovernmental union of states based on subsidiarity and multilevelism. According to multilevelism the European Union had exclusive, shared, and supported competences based on the principle of subsidiarity: exclusive competences (customs union, internal market, monetary policy of the euro countries, common fisheries policy, and common commercial policy); shared competences (social policy, economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture, environment, consumer protection, transport, trans-European networks, energy, areas of freedom, security, and justice, common safety concerns in public health matters); and supported, coordinated, or supplemented competences (protection and improvement of human health, industry, culture, tourism, education, vocational training, youth and sport, civil protection, administrative cooperation).

The *Treaty of Lisbon* (2007) recognized the legal personality of the EU. It strengthened the European Parliament and represented a move toward a bicameral system. Parliament's powers were expanded with important new elements on EU legislation and budget. Measures were taken in the co-decision procedure (ordinary legislative procedure) between the Parliament and the Council to put the Parliament in an equal status with the Council. The Commission was accountable to the Parliament. The European Council submitted a report to Parliament after each meeting.

In conclusion, the Lisbon Treaty, which created the transnational multilevel democracy, left the door open for further democratization of the EU toward a bicameral parliamentary federation of people.

EU is a federal and intergovernmental union of states based on subsidiarity and multilevelism in the framework of the Western system of liberties with a democratic deficit. In this sense, the message of *The Ventotene Manifesto* remained valid. The fight should be fought so that the European people could participate in the shaping of the European democracy as the citizens of the European Union and of their own states.

“Modern civilization has taken as its specific foundation the principle of liberty which says that man is not a mere instrument to be used by others but that every man must be an autonomous life centre.”³⁰

5. The EU-model and the other countries belonging to other

³⁰ Ernesto Rossi – Altiero Spinelli, *The Ventotene Manifesto*. Ventotene, 1941. The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies. 2. URL: www.cvce.eu, https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/316aa96c-e7ff-4b9e-b43a-958e96afbecc/publishable_en.pdf (Retrieved: 10.09.2019)

civilizations

Whether the EU-model is suitable to other countries in the world?

The answer is yes and no.

Yes, because it could create a transnational multilevel democracy, a federal and intergovernmental union of states based on subsidiarity and multilevelism as an answer to the challenges of modernization/democratization and globalization. And the EU integration process is open to democratization through the strengthening of the European Parliament.

No, due to the historical and cultural differences among the states around the globe. The EU-model is the product of the European history, with federalism as a driving force. The other regional unions are intergovernmentalist, and the UN is also intergovernmentalist.

EU-model and the United Nations

EU-model is suitable to modernize/democratize the UN.

Inside the institutional structure of the UN the principle of multilevelism and subsidiarity should be realized. So, the governance of those fields which were most affected by globalization – economy, finances, trade, communication, environmental protection, protection against epidemics (pandemics), migration – should be organized following the principle of multilevel governance. It means that all these fields representing global interest should be transferred to the higher interregional level institution of the UN which is the Economic and the Social Council. The special agencies (IMF, World Bank, UNESCO) should be reorganized according to multilevelism (according to a multilevel world organization). For example, they should be part of the common/exclusive competences of the Economic and Social Council. In such a multilevel system the member regions (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin-America) should play a coordinative and intermediary role towards the Economic and Social Council and the member states.

6. Federalist self-determination

Federalist functionalist

- Constitutional federalist
- Integral or personal federalist
- European parliamentary federalist
- Other

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