

The Spinellian Sprits

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Regrettably, I have never met Altiero Spinelli. When he passed away, I was a university student in Japan, distant from Europe; with no knowledge of his name, even without knowing I would later study the processes of European integration and the variety of federalism behind them!

I thus only know of him. While his *Come ho tentato di divenire saggio* was my guide with which to approach his way of thinking, *The Eurocrats* illuminates me when I studied the European Commission, particularly the technocratic problems faced by it. I later wrote my D.Phil thesis on the theme, partly relying on his observations.

While I then had a sympathy to Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors, I was able to relativise it with the help of strong criticism against their technocratic line by Spinelli. I feel this democratic element is still with me.

More than anything, though, I think, his contribution lies in the legacy he left, that is a sort of open-minded federalist network around the world.

Levi, Pistone, Pannella... All treated me so warmly. In particular, Spinelli's former assistant and a future president of European Movement, Pier Virgilio Dastoli, so kindly took me to the Isle of Ventotene, introducing numerous European federalists. At his home in Rome, at times, I felt I was made one of his family members. The time spent with them remains one of my most cherished memories in Europe.

The version of federalism I encountered and felt from these wonderful people was certainly different from another one I tried to understand, that is integral federalism a la Proudhon. Perhaps it was a matter of French nationality. It looked rather unapproachable, seen from a Japanese. Closeness, even secrecy, characterised the integral federalists.

That made a stark contrast with the Spinellian school of federalism. The people he left were, and are, open to other peoples. That was, looking back, the magnetism for me.

Theoretically too, the Spinellian federalism can be stretched to the world stage. Ostensibly, his focus was more or less fixed upon Europe, independent from the US and the USSR. Nonetheless, his rather institutional doctrine of overcoming a divided world of nation-states leaves the room for non-Europeans.

The Proudhonian federalism is about Europe, for Europe, only. Intentionally, the essence of Europe is characterized as distinct from America, Russia, and Asia. The personalist doctrine, the core of Proudhon's *Wirtschaftslehre*, stands at a tight balance between the individual and the societal/statal. The US is considered too individualistic, while USSR or later Asia (or for that matter Japan) too top-heavy, with societal conformity and state intervention. Europe is idealised as balanced and none of these. This conception creates distance.

The Spinellian milieu is less explicit. Theoretically it leaves some room for global federalism. This mentality leads to some hesitation for open discrimination against non-Europeans.

The air of Ventotene made me realise the variety of European federalisms. It remains my treasury.

This is why I am grateful for Altiero Spinelli, even though I stay distant from Europe, having never seen himself. His spirits have out-reached.