

Alla luce dell'attualità del dibattito sull'approfondimento politico e istituzionale dell'UE, segnato dall'entrata in vigore del Trattato di Lisbona, *Res Europae* raccoglie i contributi scientifici di un *network* interdisciplinare di ricercatori in Studi europei, riunito dal CRIE-Centro di Eccellenza Jean Monnet dell'Università di Siena. Il volume si articola in tre filoni di ricerca che esplorano le idee sull'Europa unita, l'evoluzione delle politiche comunitarie e il ruolo dei partiti quali attori della costruzione europea. *Res Europae* testimonia la ricchezza degli *European Studies*, fornendo molteplici letture dei limiti e delle potenzialità dell'Unione europea nello scenario mondiale.

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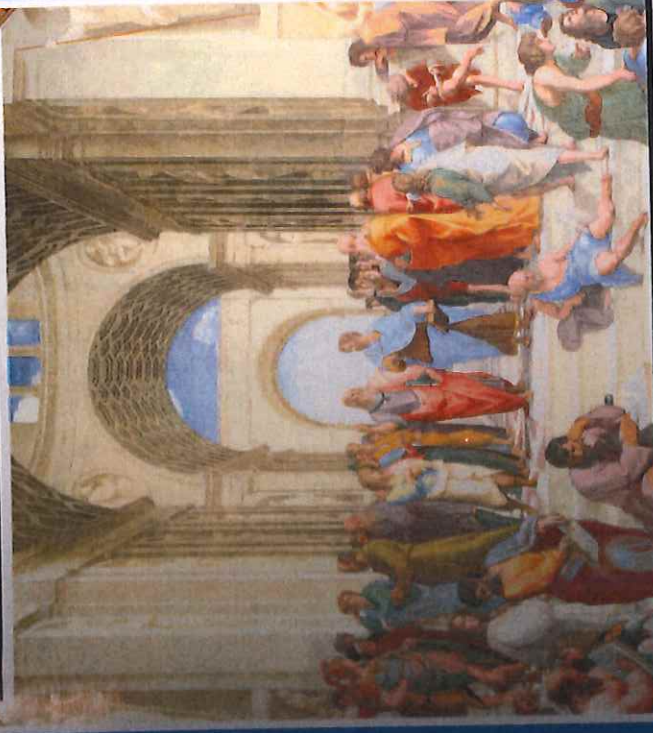
ATTORI, POLITICHE E SFIDE
DELL'INTEGRAZIONE EUROPEA

a cura di

Federica Di Sarcina, Laura Grazi, Laura Scichilone



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Attori, politiche e sfide dell'integrazione europea

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CENTRO EDITORIALE TOSCANO

INTRODUZIONE

FEDERICA DI SARCINA, LAURA GRAZI, LAURA SCICHILONE

Il volume *Res Europae. Attori, politiche e sfide strategiche dell'integrazione europea* raccoglie i contributi presentati in occasione della quarta edizione del seminario internazionale «Dialogo sull'Europa». Tale incontro periodico, dedicato ai lavori svolti da giovani studiosi italiani e stranieri nell'ambito degli studi europei e organizzato dal Centro interdipartimentale di ricerca sull'integrazione europea (CRIE – Centro di Eccellenza Jean Monnet) dell'Università degli Studi di Siena, costituisce un'esperienza pionieristica la cui prima edizione risale al 2004, nata nell'intento di creare un forum sull'integrazione europea che ruotasse intorno alle ricerche di dottorato e post-dottorato. L'iniziativa si è avvalsa della supervisione della professoressa Ariane Landuyt, Cattedra Jean Monnet di Storia dell'integrazione europea, alla quale va il nostro più affettuoso ringraziamento per aver sostenuto l'iter della pubblicazione, fornendo la sua preziosa guida scientifica e il suo costante incoraggiamento.

La rilevanza di un'esperienza quale «Dialogo sull'Europa» è stata testimoniata inoltre dal diffondersi di altri *networks* di giovani ricercatori, in particolare nel campo degli *European Studies*. Basti ricordare le iniziative dell'associazione *Richie (Reseau International de jeunes chercheurs en histoire de l'integration européenne)*, costituita da un gruppo di dottorandi attivi presso l'Université Paris Sorbonne – Paris IV, che organizza incontri periodici di giovani ricercatori di storia dell'Europa e di storia dell'integrazione europea, nonché numerose iniziative di approfondimento su temi specifici. Anche la rete *Heirs (History of European Integration Research Society)*, sorta presso

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FILIPPO MARIA GIORDANO

EUROPE AS SEEN AND CONCEIVED
BY THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GENEVA
(1937-1945)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the greatest expression of the Ecumenical Movement, the most important institution of reference for Ecumenism throughout the world¹. The Council was officially set up during the Amsterdam conference in 1948, but the original idea and its first organisation date back to the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences in 1937². The road towards the construction of this permanent structure is the result of a long Ecumenical journey which began in 1910 in Edinburgh, where the first international conference of missions was held³. For the Churches, the need to tackle

¹ Today the WCC comprises three hundred and fifty Christian communities, practically all of those is the world, apart from the Catholic Church. See www.oikoumene.org.

² At the end of a series of orientation conferences during which the aims and spheres of action of the Ecumenical Movement were defined, the two great protestant movements of Life and Work and Faith and Constitution – set up immediately after the Great War – gave life, together with the World Missionary Council to the WCC. Only after the Utrecht conference in 1938 did the Ecumenical Council begin operation, albeit on an unofficial basis at that time.

³ The genesis of the Ecumenical Movement took off at the beginning of the 20th century, although the modern Ecumenical idea or at least the influences that determined its most significant development date back to the middle of the 19th century. The origin of the modern Ecumenical Movement is usually indicated as coinciding with the Edinburgh Conference. The effort to achieve Ecumenical communication initially stemmed from non-ecclesiastic organizations, especially the youth organizations (*World*

the problems of Christianity as a whole was linked to political issues within the various States and had always been subject to fluctuating international balances. The Christian world, characterized by internal division, was transversally projected in terms of political and state organisations, thus finding itself with a tendency towards unitary and universalistic aspirations, rather like the internationalist organisations and movements. The Ecumenical Movement was and still is the tangible demonstration of this desire.

This awareness became even stronger in the wake of the First World War, when the Churches, which occupied very distant positions, found themselves facing a world left prostrate and divided by the war. The protestant and orthodox universes found themselves with a unanimous need for cooperation, reconciliation and unity, possible – from their point of view – only via increased cohesion between denominations and confessions. In an age described by some as post-Christian, the Waldensian theologian Vittorio Subilia reminded us that the time had come for the Churches to

cooperate and federate on practical ground (...) [to] be no longer absent in Christian terms from local society, but (...) to adopt a charitable attitude (...) towards the economic and international problems subject to debate by the peoples⁴.

Hence the birth of the idea of a League of Churches,

Student Christian Federation, Young Men's Christian Association); tired of the pompous austerity of confessional and dogmatic Christianity, these were more attracted by the evangelising action. The Ecumenical spirit was also cultivated by the missionary organizations, due to the fact that they were becoming increasingly important on the colonial front due to the internal denominational divisions which made every organizational attempt useless. See R. Rouse, S.C. Neill (edited by), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, vol. I, Geneva, WCC Ed., 2004.

⁴ V. Subilia, *Il Movimento ecumenico*, s.l., Ed. Abete, 1948, pp. 12-13.

which triggered the theory of creation of a stable institution, a «Council of Churches» based on the example set by the League of Nations, able to coordinate the action of the Churches and settling certain doctrinarian and confessional issues, which had long been the cause of misunderstandings and deep rifts, on the common basis of Christology⁵. This enables us to state that

⁵ In 1920, the Patriarch of Constantinople, worried by the divisions within Christianity, issued an Encyclical containing an appeal to all the Christian Churches of the World, proposing the idea of forming a stable league of Churches. A spirit of reconciliation between European Christians would have contributed, in the opinion of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, to strengthen the political links between the peoples and nations of the Old World, simplifying the task of the League of Nations. This initiative, which Visser't Hooft was later to acknowledge as one of the fundamental requirements for the formation of the Ecumenical Movement, had been suggested in January 1919 by a proposal put forward in this sense by the Metropolitan Dorotheus of Brussa during the synod of the Church of Constantinople. A proposal of this kind, in which the Orthodox religious figure reiterated the imperative need to create a *league of churches*, a permanent organization for the brotherhood and cooperation among the churches in view of their future union, was an enterprise without precedent in the history of the Church. The Metropolitan textually stated: «As the most important announcement and recommendation for union of the different nations in a League of Nations have come from the great Republic of the United States of America in the Western world, so also the most significant announcement and recommendation for the study on the approach and the union of the different Christian denominations in a League of Churches ought to come from the Great Church of Constantinople in the East». In the same Encyclical and in the accompanying letter, the League of Nations is mentioned several times, highlighting the delay of the Churches in organizing a similar institution in the religious field. A reprimand aimed at the Churches emerged clearly from these documents: «How should they [Churches] continue to fall piteously behind the political authorities who, truly applying the spirit of the gospel and of the teaching of Christ, have under happy auspices already set up the so-called League of Nations in order of defend justice and cultivate charity and agreement between the nations». First of all, it would be necessary to make «a contact and league

the ideological petitions and the institutional aspect central to the Ecumenical debate had acquired a dual dimension: one of religious nature, within the Christian world, which concerned the organisation of the Churches which had decided to confederate or federate; and another of political nature, extraneous to the direct jurisdiction of the ecclesiastic organisations, but which expressed their aspirations to establish, within the context of international policy, a «new order», capable of creating the «kingdom of peace» and of better spreading the evangelic message. To this end, we ought to remember that contaminations and alternating reciprocities between ecclesiastic constitutional models and those of a more political-institutional nature are not historically unusual, although we must always consider the substantial differences between one and the other. Every confession, drawing on its tradition and its culture, emulates on its own behalf or projects outside of itself the institutional model considered most appropriate and closest to its own personal sensitivity. In the case of the Reformist Churches, the prioritized organisational model is the federal/confederal model, being nearest to the *forma mentis* and culture of the protestant world.

After the First World War, Christianity found itself facing the dissemination of new ideologies capable of directing and systematically determining collective and individual ethics, pushing European civilisation towards and new a even more dreadful conflict. The League of Nations had failed, ecumenical fervour was nothing compared to the rekindling of the nationalistic emphasis. While the Great War had encourage

between the churches». Lastly, the accompanying letter made explicit reference to «the setting up of league of churches (Koinonia ton Ekklesion) on the model of the League of Nations (Koinonia ton Ethnon)». W. A. Visser't Hooft, *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, Geneva, WCC Ed., 1982, pp. 1-4.

the effort to achieve greater unity between States and between Churches, ending up in failure on both fronts, the Second World War produced a dramatic improvement in the reflection of the WCC, both with regard to the thinking of a new international political order of federal nature and to the intensification of the Ecumenical effort and communication between religions.

Setting aside the evolution of the Ecumenical journey which was to develop considerably after the war, on this occasion we intend to briefly cast a light on the genesis of political reflection carried forth by certain farsighted exponents and directors of the WCC in the Thirties. By quoting the words and thoughts of the protagonists, we intend to recreate the feelings of the time and the hopes set on the federal model, seen as being more appropriate in order to accomplish and «to defend justice and cultivate charity and agreement between the nations»⁶.

Right from the formation and the beginning of works by the temporary Council of the WCC, issues relating to international politics became urgent. In 1939, the Dutch theologian W. A. Visser't Hooft⁷, then elected Secretary General, highlighted

⁶ W. A. Visser't Hooft, *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, quot., p. 4.

⁷ Willem Adolf Visser't Hooft (1900-1985), Dutch pastor and theologian, was one of the most significant and relevant personalities in the Protestant Ecumenical Movement. In 1924, he became Secretary of the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA); subsequently, deeply influenced by the «theology of the crisis» of Karl Barth and filled with a strong Ecumenical spirit, he took part in the birth of the WCC of which he was elected Secretary General (1937/1948-1966). In spring 1944 he welcomed into his Geneva home the representatives of the European Resistance who, under the guide of A. Spinelli and E. Rossi, signed the *International federalist declaration of the Resistance Movements*. See W. A. Visser't Hooft, *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1987; A.J. Van der Bent, *W. A. Visser't Hooft 1900-1985. Fisherman of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, WCC Ed., 2000.

in a letter addressed to reverend William Paton⁸, Associated secretary general in London, the importance and the role that the WCC would have had in relation to «the problem of the preparation of a future international settlement»⁹. In the letter, the Secretary emphasized that the WCC represented the only Christian organisation capable of working in this direction because, in the words of Visser't Hooft, «we are practically the only Christian group that can work effectively in this realm» and, secondly, because «we are one of the few international groups who have contacts with all parties concerned in a future settlement»¹⁰.

On the basis of these considerations, just before and during the Second World War, the WCC moved in two directions. On one hand, it tried, thanks to Visser't Hooft, to intensify its relations with the European Churches which were still free

⁸ William Paton (1886-1943) was one of the most important figures of Protestant Ecumenism of the early 20th century. He occupied leading positions within the Ecumenical world, working hard to rebuild inter-ecclesiastic relationships after the First World War. After joining the Provisional Committee of the WCC, he dedicated his work largely to maintaining Ecumenical relations between the Churches during the Second World War. His writings include *L'Eglise et l'ordre nouveau* which was very successful and had a considerable influence on Christian public opinion, not only in Britain, but also in the United States and Europe. Paton was not just a central figure of Protestant Ecumenism, he was mainly a man who was convinced that it was possible to achieve lasting peace between the European nations and peoples in a climate of confessional brotherhood. About his Ecumenical and federalist conception of the new world order, see W. Paton, *World Community*, London, Northumberland press, 1938.

⁹ Letter from Visser't Hooft to Paton dated 12 December 1939, in Archives of World Council of Churches of Geneva (hereinafter AWCC), War files collection: Bishop Bergrav's peace efforts 1939-40 and other documents 1939-45, ref. code 301.1.02, box 4.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

and with those on the other side of the Atlantic, developing special relationships also with certain exponents of the allied governments, one of whom was A. W. Dulles. On the other hand, it promoted a series of inquiries, organising international conferences and conventions in order to trace the guidelines that should have characterized the new international political system at the end of the conflict. During one of these meetings, the Secretary General of the WCC, highlighting that «the problem of international order includes the problem of international law», asserted that «the specific Christian contribution in this connection is to test the projects of federalism (whether on a world, a European, or more restricted scale) or proposals for a reorganized League of Nations» on the basis «of the realistic Christian conception of history and man, of nation and state». But when faced with the doubts raised by the newly commenced war, Visser't Hooft could but conclude with the question: «in how far would the creation of federal organisms in each Continent be a useful step toward the organic organization of the world in regional bodies?»¹¹.

In the same period, Paton had succeeded in making important contacts in Great Britain with various pacifist, pro-European and federalist groups, including the Federal Union. The correspondence between the Secretariat of the Federal Union and Paton suggests not only a collaboration between the British federalist movement and the associated secretariat of the WCC, but also a significant exchange of ideas on federalism, considered to be the only political system capable of generating a global government by overcoming nationalisms. Many people, wrote Paton, «are prepared to admit that claim of each National State

¹¹ See *Study Department of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work*, doc. N. 1E/40, Geneva, 1940, in AWCC, The WCC collection: In process of formation 1929-70, ref. code 301.009, box 3.

to be judge in its own cause is a potent cause of international disorder, and the abrogation of absolute National sovereignty, is duty that the Church should urge upon the nation»¹². These words seem to echo the thoughts of Lord Lothian, of Lionel Curtis and of that federalist forge which was the *Round Table* and which Paton referred to in his book.

As evident in these brief considerations, federalism had given the directors of the WCC clear guidelines; partly in relation to the political tradition of the States from which the member-Churches of the WCC originated (Switzerland, Great Britain and the Commonwealth, and the United States), and partly in relation to the now mature conviction that a simple confederation of States, based on the model of the League of Nations, would be completely incapable of containing national egoisms adequate. This consideration was already evident in 1940, when some American Churches, in criticising the isolationist policy of the US government, declared themselves to be in favour of a new, more constructive foreign policy. These Churches asked for a direct American commitment to the organization of a new world order, based on a federal system¹³. In the words of a member of the Church of Minneapolis, G. A. More to Paton:

It is impossible understand our National depression from the inside National view alone, but only from the world view; it is impossible understand why some form of Federation is inevitable as a new world order, until it is seen wherein the League failed. It failed and is fundamentally unsound, because it depended upon the Nations for voluntary support;

¹² W. Paton, *World Community*, quot., pp. 156-157.

¹³ The harshest criticism and most significant proposals in this sense came from the so-called «new order theologians». See H.A. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920-1948*, Oxford University Press US, 1997.

because under it the Nations were trying to get away from the evils of Nationalism, without themselves living up Nationalism¹⁴.

Therefore, to achieve the federation, it was necessary to create a «federative nucleus»; indeed, «the next best thing to do – reiterated More – is to “accomplish a start”, a nucleus, of a new world gov[ernmen]t. by a group of a nations whose interests are such as to enable them to do so»¹⁵. This aim was shared by a consistent part of American Protestantism and considered «the “right” start» to achieve world government.

The idea of a European federation became increasingly stronger within the WCC, so much so that in 1941 Visser't Hooft, seeing a return to the disorder which had characterized the old Europe to be impossible, thought that «some form of European federation will probably be acceptable to the large masses of Europeans who seek above all a real insurance against further wars and against economic ruin». The Secretary of the WCC concluded

most countries will probably be willing to accept a considerable limitation of their sovereignty (...), if they can be sure that community will not mean the domination of one or two nations over all others, and if they can maintain their full cultural independence¹⁶.

In conclusion, the federalist ambitions nurtured by certain exponents of the WCC had already been born after the First World War, coinciding with the rising up of the Ecumenical

¹⁴ Letter from More to Paton dated 7 February 1940, in AWCC, War files collection: Bishop Bergrav's peace efforts 1939-40 and other documents 1939-45, ref. code 301.1.02, box 6.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Document sent from Visser't Hooft to J.F. Dulles, *Some considerations concerning the post-war settlement*, Geneva, March 1941, in AWCC, The WCC collection: In process of formation 1929-70, ref. code 301.009, box 3.

Movement. Many protestants convinced themselves of the need for an international political system which, beside uniting the nations and people of Europe, would guarantee them fundamental freedoms and the mutual respect of their respective historical, cultural and confessional traditions.

I would like to end this intervention with a brief declaration of the conference of collaborators of the WCC on future international order, whose title, *Un ordre politique fédéraliste, basé sur la justice, sur le plan national, continental et mondial*, not only clarifies the Council's preference for the federal system, but, in drafting an initial, albeit general, institutional structure, confirmed the priority of this project in the light of the evangelic message:

Les chrétiens sont convaincus que l'état est soumis au commandement de justice, et cela non seulement dans le sens qu'il doit sauvegarder les droits fondamentaux de l'homme et le droit de la communauté à une vie indépendante, mais aussi en ce qu'il est responsable de la paix entre les peuples, selon la règle: à plus de puissance, plus de responsabilité. L'Eglise resterait sourde à l'appel que Dieu fait retentir à travers les événements actuels, si elle ne se prononçait pas en faveur d'un ordre mondial fédéraliste dont les organes seraient doués d'un pouvoir exécutif suffisant pour assurer une paix juste différends surgissant entre les peuples¹⁷.

¹⁷ *Programme de la Conférence de Collaborateurs du Conseil Oecuménique des Eglises*, Presinge, 7- 9 Juillet 1944, in AWCC, The WCC collection: In process of formation: 1919-56, ref. code 301.011, box 1.