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The Concept of Foedus in the History of Modern Reformed Protestantism. The Case of the Waldensian Church

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Federalism

Filippo Maria Giordano (ed.)

United through Diversity An Insight into Federalism and Ecumenism within Italian Protestantism

P.I.E. Peter Lang



United through Diversity

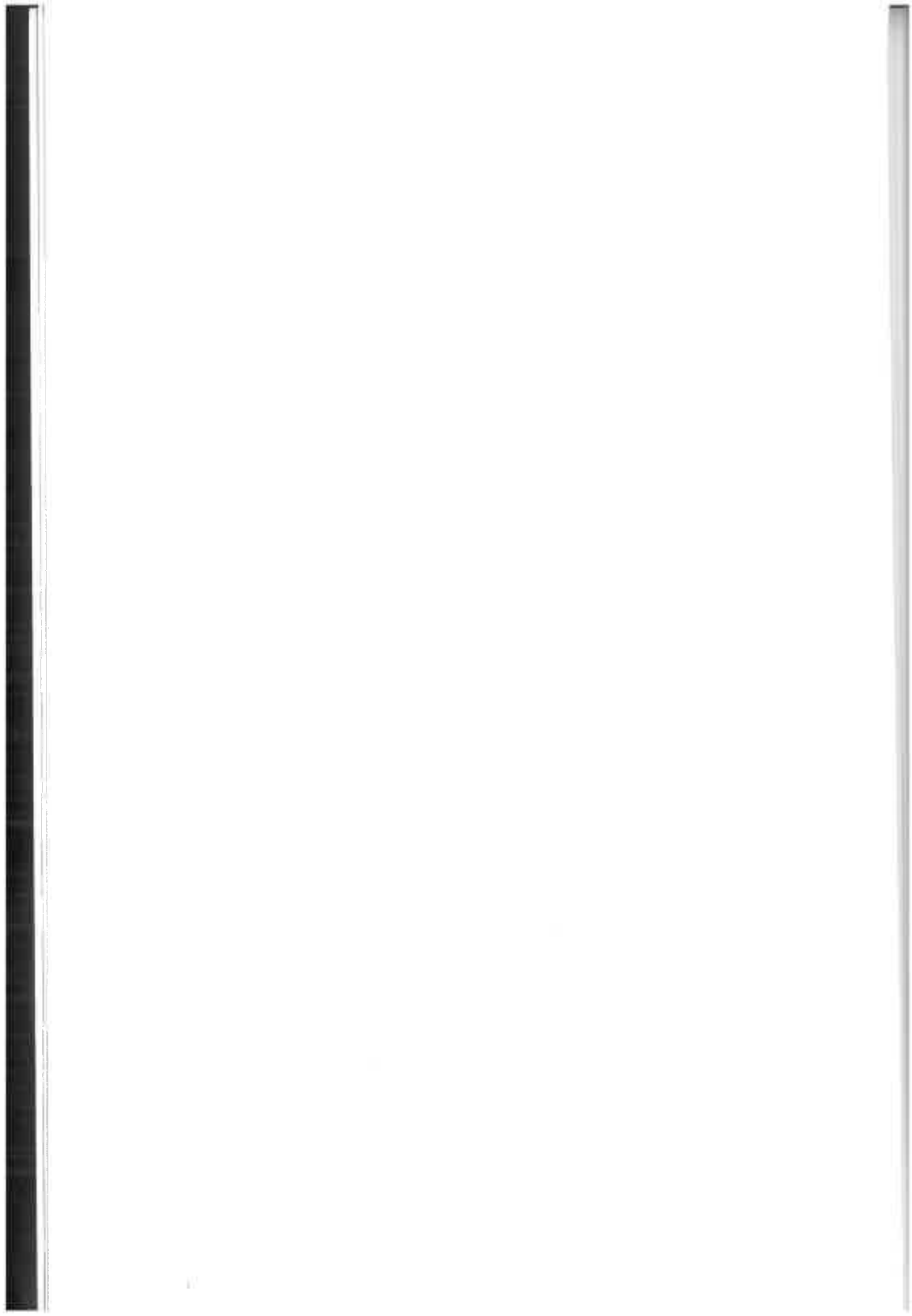
An Insight into Federalism and Ecumenism within Italian Protestantism

Preface by Paolo Ricca



P.I.E. Peter Lang

Bruxelles · Bern · Berlin · Frankfurt am Main · New York · Oxford · Wien



Filippo Maria GIORDANO

United through Diversity

**An Insight into Federalism
and Ecumenism within
Italian Protestantism**

Federalism

No. 6

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*To Franco Giampiccoli, for his ecumenical faith
and for helping me understand the Waldensian
spirit, in memory of his tenacity in his final days*

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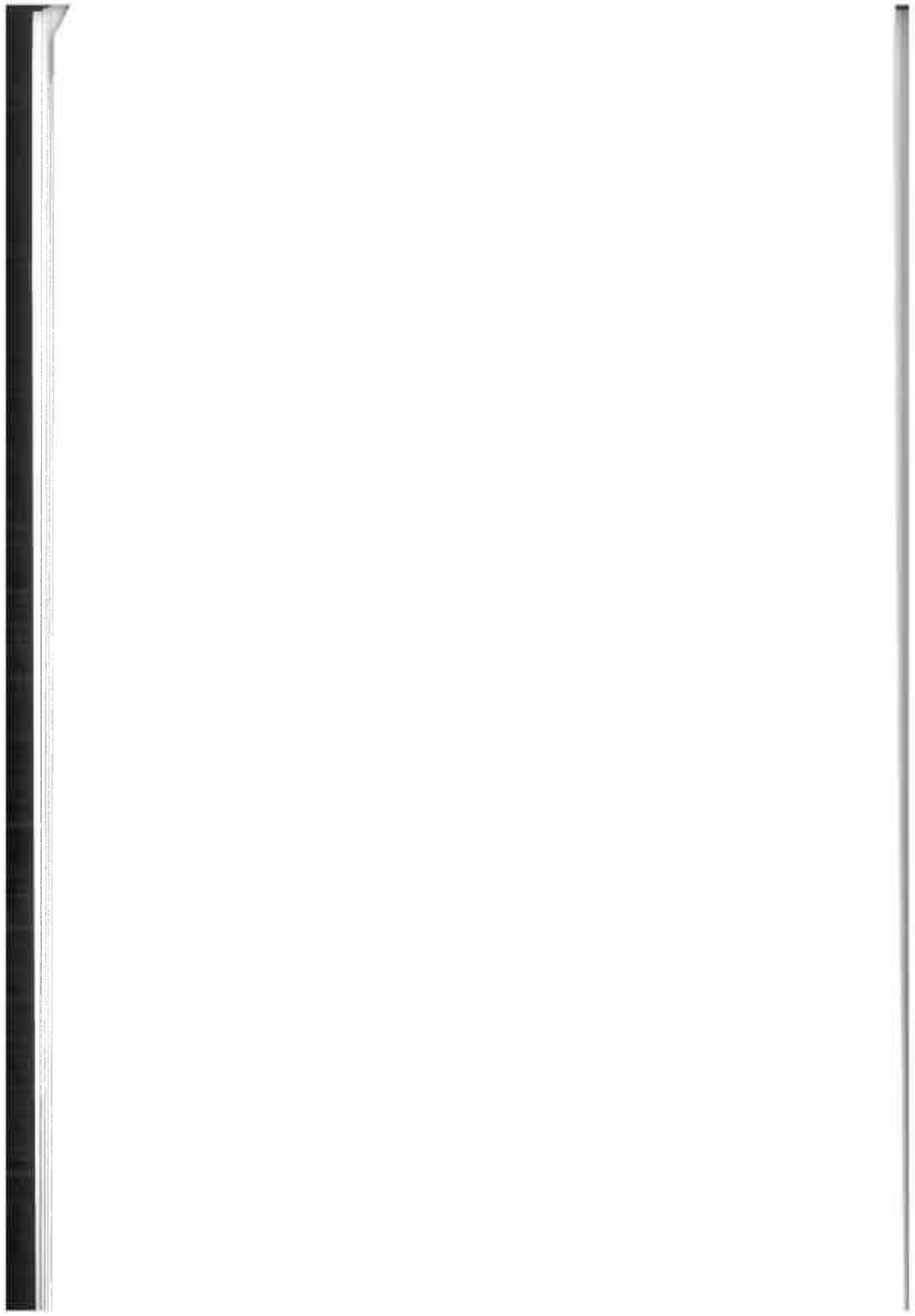


Table of Contents

Preface	13
<i>Paolo Ricca</i>	

Introduction	25
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PREMISE

I. Federalism: A Revolution in the Political Thought	37
1. What type of federalism?.....	37
2. Pacifism and europeanism versus federalism	46

FIRST PART

I. The Origins of the Political Idea behind Protestant Federalism	57
1. The Protestant “Revolution”	57
2. From “federal theology” to political federalism	72
3. Some aspects of Reformed ecclesiastical constitutionalism	100
4. The Protestants and the idea of Europe.....	112
II. Pre-federal Aspects in Waldensian Culture and History	125
1. Territorial and confessional identity of a “popolo-chiesa”	125
2. The use of the “covenant” in the history of the Waldensian Church	138
3. Protofederal aspects in the Waldensian ecclesiology.....	152

SECOND PART

I. The Question of “Peace” within Italian Protestantism	167
1. Europeanism, pacifism and irenism in the Waldensian Church and society between the 19 th and 20 th centuries.....	167

2. From the ideals of the Risorgimento to the perspective of a European Unity 176
3. The Peace Association of Torre Pellice and its action to establish a "Federation of Civil States" 196

- II. The Question of "Christian Unity" within Italian Protestantism** 207
1. From the World Alliance to the Ecumenical Movement..... 207
 2. Some remarks on nationalism in the "Barthian youth": towards the ecumenism, in search of federalism 216

THIRD PART

- I. Federalism and Ecumenism in International Reformed Protestantism**..... 235
1. Christian ecumenism and European federalism: "United through Diversity" 235
 2. The World Council of Churches and the idea of a federal Europe..... 245
 3. The federalist perspective in the young Barthians: the "Giornate teologiche" of 1945 266

- II. Federalism within Anti-Fascism and Waldensian Resistance**..... 275
1. The Waldensian world faced with Fascism: a "silent resistance" 275
 2. From spiritual to armed resistance: in favour of a federal Europe..... 282

- III. The Waldensian Contribution to European Federalism: A Cultural and Political Battle**..... 293
1. The United States of Europe: towards the idea of a supranational federation..... 293
 2. The Declaration of Chivasso: towards the idea of an infranational federalism 322

Bibliography 335

Index..... 361

List of the Archives and Funds Consulted

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- Archivio Storico della Società di Studi Valdesi* di Torre Pellice, ASSV (Historical Archive of the Society of Waldensian Studies, Torre Pellice)
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Preface

Paolo RICCA

The substance of this book is made up of three focal points, resulting in its originality and merit. The first explores and documents the link between Calvinism and Federalism, between Reformed ecclesiology (distinct from the Lutheran) and federal democracy. The second traces and brings to light this link in the centuries-old history of the Waldensian Church – a small Calvinist enclave within Roman Catholic Italy. The third shows the close interconnection in the first half of last century (but with consequences that extend to the present day) between the ecumenical intentions of the churches (at the time, only the main Protestant, Anglican and some Orthodox Churches outside the Soviet area) to embark on their reconciliation after centuries of divisions and controversies, and the political project to unite the countries of Europe, finally overcoming the various and often ominous nationalist currents and, with them, the anarchy caused by the sovereignty of nation states¹. These three focal points deserve to be further briefly explored.

1. That there is a close connection between Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, and the progressive constitution of modern democracies is an established and long acknowledged fact. While Lutheranism maintained the Episcopal system in various national churches or ended up succumbing in others to the “supreme episcopacy” of the prince or whoever held the political authority considered a “prominent member of the church”, thus giving rise to an ecclesiastical organisation governed more from above than below, Calvinism – with its church councillors elected by the community and its synods that variously expressed the local churches – created a system in which power was not managed personally but collectively, and the power of the assemblies did not come from above but from below. It is clear that an ecclesiastical organisation of this sort was sure to result in, or at least encourage and strengthen, democratic forms of governing from below. This certainly happened in countries in which the Reformed churches left their mark, such as in the United States, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Scotland and elsewhere. However, that said, it is important not to forget Troeltsch’s observations that, in their genesis, the advocacy of human rights does not necessarily coincide with a democratic structure of a

¹ See Second Part, p. 195.

society, “and is therefore not to be explained by the historical derivation of one from the other [...]. The two ideas have to be kept separate, and only coalesce where the democratic shaping of the ideas of the State is held to be itself an inalienable human right [...]”². And thus for instance, Troeltsch continues “the Calvinist Puritan States of North America were, it is true, democratic, but, so far from recognizing liberty of conscience, they explicitly rejected it as implying a godless scepticism”³. At that time, freedom of conscience was only to be found – as a right recognized by the State – in Rhode Island organized by the Baptist Roger Williams and in Pennsylvania organised by the Quaker William Penn. But this proves the case: while Baptism and Quakerism belong to the Calvinist-based Protestantism, they, together with other groups and movements, form what is known as “sectarian Protestantism”, very distinct from the Protestantism that Troeltsch defines as “ecclesiastical” – that of the great “established churches” and recognised by the nation’s law. Therefore – continued Troeltsch – the merit of having given rise to the great principles that became the common heritage of modern Western democracies (human rights, separation of church and state and the state’s religious neutrality, freedom of conscience, religion and thought, practising tolerance, etc.) “was therefore not actual Church Protestantism” but what Troeltsch called “the step-children of the Reformation”⁴, i.e. the spiritual children of the “radical Reformation”, also known as the “left wing of the Reformation” constituted in the 16th century by Anabaptism and Spiritualism. Their heirs were, in the 17th century, Baptism, the Society of Friends (better known as the Quaker Community) and other church formations that together formed the great Puritan movement, fundamental for establishing modern parliamentary democracy.

However, there is another way in which Protestantism – especially the “sectarian” kind – has fostered the birth and growth of a democratic conscience and practice: by introducing in fairly large sections of Protestant Christianity a new principle of formation of the church. While people belonged to the church right from birth and involuntarily through the baptism of infants in the “established churches”, that were not infrequently also the “State churches”, church membership in sectarian Protestantism is the free choice of an adult person who can decide to dissociate from the “people’s church” where they were baptised as young children and become part of a new Christian community, dissenting from the church of the majority, thus forming a “sect” i.e. a “free church” separated from the “established church” of the majority. In the established kind of church, it

² Troeltsch E., *Il Protestantismo nella formazione del mondo moderno*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1968 (1^a edition 1929), pages 61 and 62.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63 and ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

is the church that precedes the individual believer, while in the free church the believer precedes the church and builds it together with others who think and believe in the same way. In sectarian Protestantism, believers are not children of the church; it is the church that is the child of the believers. The church is constituted by an independent decision of the believers who, together, bring it into existence. In keeping with this new constitutive principle of the church, in sectarian Protestantism children were not generally baptized and it was only practised on adult believers who requested it following their conversion. As can be seen, it is no longer a case of simply governing the church from below but of *constituting* it from below.

A final aspect worth mentioning is that it was within sectarian Protestantism that “congregationalism” began in the 17th century, the notion that each local Christian community (congregation), formed in the way just described on a voluntary basis out of the free choice of its member believers, is independent of any central authority and not under its control (whether it is a bishop as in the Anglican and, partly, the Lutheran systems, or a synod as in the Calvinist system), and is perfectly able to govern itself, illuminated by the Sacred Scripture and guided by the Holy Spirit. Independence does not mean isolation: the congregation is connected with others, whether similar or different, but does not depend on any authority of any kind outside itself, apart from that of God. It is obvious that this principle of self-government could lead to the exercising of a basic democracy.

2. The second link which, together with the other two, forms the backbone of this book, is the one between Protestant faith and federal democracy in the modern history of the Waldensian Church, after its accession, in the synod held (perhaps in the open) at Chanforan in the upper Angrogna valley in the province of Turin, “*en presencia de tutti li ministri et ecian-dio del populo*”⁵, from September 12 to 18, 1532. This meeting, which involved the whole Waldensian congregation in its decisions, marked a clean break and a profound turning point in Waldensian history, a sort of death and resurrection that the Waldensians consciously faced, supported and guided by the same biblical word that had called them into existence 350 years before and that had miraculously helped them survive throughout their great Diaspora of the Middle Ages, despite the violent repression they were subject to as “heretics”. The *Sola Scriptura* inspiring the Protestant Reformation was, *de facto*, practised by the Waldensians in all their medieval history: this was the bridge that allowed them to pass into the world of the Reformation without denying themselves and their past, while accepting an almost total theological and ethical transformation of their movement which became a church, a proper institution that was small but soundly structured, leaving behind the semi-clandestine situa-

⁵ English translation: “in the presence of all the ministers and also the people”.

tion in which the Waldensians had always lived. The central point of the *Sola Scriptura* of medieval Waldensians was the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ (Matthew 5-7) and in the practising of the “apostolic life”; the central point of the *Sola Scriptura* of the 16th century Reformers was the Letter to the Romans of the apostle Paul and the message of “justification by grace through faith”. By accepting the Reformation, the Waldensians abandoned (largely although not entirely) their interpretation of the *Sola Scriptura*, adopting its interpretation by the Reformation. The Chanforan synod was therefore effectively a kind of “constituent assembly”⁶ of the reformed Waldensian faith. Although it would not be hard to already see in the medieval Waldensians – right from the Bergamo Conference of 1218 – significant traces of a “proto federal” model of ecclesiastical organisation, it is above all in the reformed Waldensian faith that the *foedus* (= pact, alliance, union, association, bond) became the theological pivot and the guiding principle of the new Waldensian ecclesiology.

There is plenty of evidence in this respect, particularly two aspects. The first consists of the *Articles faits et arrêtés* (= Articles written and established) of the 1558 synod, which joined the Waldensians both sides of the Alps in a single community of faith despite living in different countries. It was the first example in Europe of a church order of Presbyterian-synodal character⁷. The second evidence, connected to the previous one, is the Pact of Union of early January 1561, which comes to us in three distinct versions: in one of these, the union is described as a “confederation”. The text of the Pact goes back to a meeting held on French soil of a delegation coming from the community of the Piedmont Valleys which, together with the delegation from the Waldensian communities of the Dauphiné – wrote the pastor and historian Scipione Lentulo, a contemporary of these events – “*furono al fine di parere che il popolo valdese et di qua et di là dei monti farebbero tra loro perpetua et inviolabile confederatione, promettendo tutti di mantenere, con la gratia di Dio, la pura predicatione dell’Evangelio et l’amministrazione de i Santi Sacramenti, di aiutarsi e soccorrere scambievolmente gli uni gli altri, e di rendere ubidienza a i Superiori loro, come la parola di Dio comanda*”⁸.

⁶ First part, p. 141.

⁷ First part, pp. 145, 146. Quoted from the essay by Peyrot G., “Il patto dell’unione del 1561”, in Balmas E. (ed.), *I Valdese e l’Europa*, Torino, Tip. C. Brandoni, 1982, p. 208.

⁸ English translation: “were for the purpose of ensuring that the Waldensian people either side of the mountains would form a perpetual and inviolable confederation, all promising to maintain, through the grace of God, the pure preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the Holy Sacraments, to help and assist each other, and to show obedience to their superiors, as the word of God commands”. See Peyrot G., “Influenze franco-ginevrine nella formazione delle discipline ecclesiastiche valdesi alla metà del

It is not now possible to know the exact meaning of the word “confederation”, only used by Lentulo; the other two versions of the Pact speak respectively of “alliance” and “union”. It could be that Lentulo understood “confederation” as a synonym of “alliance” and “union”: different words saying the same thing. But it could also be that, by “confederation”, Lentulo wanted to suggest the idea of a particular type of union or alliance – a union of federal or proto-federal type i.e. a union not imposed by circumstances or external forces but freely chosen by independent and equal church subjects that, while establishing a pact or entering an alliance with other subjects, do not forgo their independence, deciding instead to no longer exercise it alone but in company and in constant dialogue with other subjects, taking responsibility towards them to protect the unity of the faith and to provide mutual help whenever necessary. What it is still important to emphasize is that this Pact of Union states that the bond of faith uniting the Waldensian churches spread in different countries, and thus subject to different political powers and, above all, belonging to different nations, is stronger than the various national affiliations and the loyalties due to their respective sovereigns. Nationalities can divide and even oppose peoples, but not Christians whose faith overrides “mountains” of any kind since it is universal in nature and thus transnational: it embraces the entire ecumene. And further, the union of the churches of the pact is defined “perpetual and inviolable”: while nationalities are temporary and changing, the communion of faith is final and permanent.

However, the Pact of 1561 also had another very important significance. In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg had entirely adopted and, in a way, canonized the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* which denied, within a given territory, the freedom of conscience of subjects in matters of religion: subjects were required to adopt the religious confession of the prince. As a result of this principle, the Waldensians would have to renounce their faith and take up the one of their Catholic sovereign Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy. The delegations of Waldensian communities from either side of the Alps met on January 21, 1561, in the village of Puy in Bobbio Pellice, and took three decisions of primary importance: (1), confirm and ratify the Pact established earlier that month; (2) refuse the demand from the Savoy court to renounce their faith, maintaining the “*la pura predicazione dell’Evangelio et l’amministrazione de i Santi Sacramenti*”, and abandoning “the false religion of the Pope”; (3) defend the Reformed faith using all means necessary (“*vogliamo vivere et morire nella parola*

XVI secolo”, in Cantimori D., Firpo L., Spini G. *et al.* (eds.), *Ginevra e l’Italia*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1959, p. 231.

⁹ English translation: “the pure preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the Holy Sacraments”.

di Dio")¹⁰. This defence of the faith also allowed the use of arms – a very controversial decision challenged by a large part of the community but, in the end, adopted when it became clear that the alternative to using arms was to recant their faith: in the choice between renouncing their beliefs or taking up arms to defend their freedom of conscience, the Waldensians chose the latter. The decision to “defend Religion with arms”¹¹ was taken on February 2 of that year, at Combe del Villar, by a synod convened there. It has been rightly noted that this armed resistance to constituted authority for reasons of religion “cannot be interpreted as a political revolt or rebellion”¹²: the Waldensians were loyal, obedient, respectful and faithful subjects. Theirs was a spiritual revolt which also became an armed resistance, in defence of freedom of conscience to make their own choices of faith. In practice the Waldensians were resisting, also by taking up arms, the application in Piedmont of the hostile principle of *cuius regio eius religio* by which they would be forced to renounce their reformed faith. It was in those years that the first religious war in Europe between the Waldensians and the Savoy troops took place. The war ended with the Treaty of Cavour in June 1561 which was the first open disobedience to the *cuius regio eius religio* principle in Europe, authorising the Waldensian minority to practise their reformed faith in a circumscribed area of a territory in which the religion of the prince was Roman Catholic. But it did not last long. The times of confessional pluralism within the same territory were still far into the future. However, the fact that a small Waldensian “confederation” had anticipated such a time through the Peace of Cavour, even if at a high price and only for a few years, challenging and disobeying the *cuius regio eius religio* principle, is all the more worthy of being noted and appreciated. The Cavour treaty “was the first treaty to establish in Europe a degree of religious tolerance and therefore also some freedom for the people”¹³, whatever the religion of the prince.

The Pact, chosen by the Waldensians as a way for establishing and developing the unity of their churches, accompanied their entire history through to the recent “Integration Pact” with the Methodist Church in Italy (1975), now part of the Waldensian Church. The central structure of the Pact is the synod, which is the open space where the independence of the local churches meets the common vocation that unites them. It is quite clear that the organised forms of collective life and the governing

¹⁰ English translation: “we want to live and die in the word of God”. According to one source, these decisions were sanctioned and sealed by an oath pronounced “with raised hands”, today known as the “Oath (or Swearing) of Sibaud”.

¹¹ Peyrot G., “Influenze franco-ginevrine nella formazione delle discipline ecclesiastiche valdesi alla metà del XVI secolo”, *op. cit.* p. 233, note 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 240

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

structures that the Waldensian “confederation” acquired over the centuries have much in common with the federalist project of political unity between European countries.

3. The relationship between ecumenism and federalism and the initiatives of a qualified group of Waldensians both in the Ecumenical Movement and in the project for a federal Europe are the theme of the third part of the book. Even though the information and considerations contained are very interesting, they are unfortunately little known or not known at all, or not sufficiently valued: three of them are worth singling out.

[a] The first concerns the relationship between the ecumenical proposal of Oscar Cullmann and the federative idea. Cullmann, a Lutheran from Alsace, one of the 20th century’s greatest scholars of the New Testament, friend of Paul VI who invited him to participate in the Second Vatican Council and, from that time, outstanding ecumenist, coined an original ecumenical formula that was later adopted by many: *unity through diversity*¹⁴. The originality of the formula obviously lies in the word *through*, which replaces the traditional *in* (“Unity *in* diversity”). What does this “through” imply? It implies that diversity is not just a component of unity but is its agent and motive. Christian unity does not just *comprise* diversity but is *built* with it. In the Christian community, diversity does not set in motion a process of progressive separation that results in division but, on the contrary, paves the way to unity and qualifies it as Christian unity. How is this possible? By which routes does Cullmann come to see diversity as a quality of unity? The route is that of the New Testament doctrine of *charisms* which, while differing, all come from the same single Spirit: “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them” (I. Corinthians 12:4). That of the charisms is a diversity unified by the Spirit which is its source, and it is only through the diversity of charisms that the unity of the Spirit is composed and manifests itself: in other words, Christian unity. According to Cullmann, every Christian denomination is characterised by certain charisms and which, once freed from any (always possible) deformations and returned to their original purity, can and must be recognised as true Christian charisms of the various denominations which, in turn, offer their own recognition. It is through the recognition of the charisms of each denomination that Christian unity can be achieved.

But what could be – Cullmann wondered – the structure unifying the various denominations and their charisms? Here is his proposal: “What I advocate, not as a preliminary state, but as an ultimate goal of all our

¹⁴ Cullmann O., *L’unità attraverso la diversità. Il suo fondamento e il problema della sua realizzazione*, Brescia, Queriniana, 1987 (the original German edition of 1986 was considerably expanded for a 2nd edition of 1990: both published by Mohr of Tübingen).

strivings toward unity, is a union of all Christian churches within which each would preserve its valuable elements, including its structure. Lacking a better expression (“alliance”?), I have called this a “federation” (in contrast to merger), despite the fact that the word in its secular sense is not adequate¹⁵. For this reason, but especially for the many criticisms about that term, Cullmann says that he gave up using it “despite not finding – he added – at the present time any term that can perfectly replace it”¹⁶. In admitting that he could not find a better term than his first suggestion of a ‘federation’ of churches to describe Christian unity, it does not mean that such a term does not exist but that it is hard to find. It also means that a Christian unity that is truly “through diversity”, i.e. that lets itself be qualified by diversity, cannot be without, to a greater or lesser extent, elements that pertain to a federalist view of unity. That said, it is certainly understandable that Cullmann ultimately gave up describing Christian unity as a “federation”, he himself considering the word “not adequate”. Why is it not? For the simple reason that “unity” is something more than what “federation” can express. To be convinced, it is sufficient to consider this: the Trinity (i.e. according to Christian doctrine, the relationships within the divinity between Father, Son and Holy Ghost), rightly considered the model of Christian unity, is a communion not a federation. However, what is the indubitable advantage of the term “federation”? It is in being better than any other word for suggesting that Christian unity is, constitutionally, a unity of diversities and in which diversities are neither disgraced nor tamed but valued.

[b] The second little known but highly interesting theme in the third part of the volume is the relationship between ecumenism and federalism and, more specifically, between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the European federalist project. The relationship between ecumenism and federalism has been variously explored and highlighted by scholars, who reached the conclusion that there are fundamental points in common between political federalism of countries and religious associations between Churches, such as the desire for peace, the principles of subsidiarity, tolerance and solidarity, and the wish to establish friendly and constructive relationships with others different from us. Therefore, “federalism and ecumenism not only resemble each other as regards ideological assumptions and practical organizational systems, but they integrate themselves in their objectives”¹⁷. Along these same lines there are those who see in ecumenism “the spirit of federalism or, rather, one of the factors of consciousness at the basis of a federalist social behaviour”. There

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁷ Third part, p. 242.

are some who have spoken of a “federalist spirituality” that is akin, in its fundamental inspiration, to the ecumenical spirituality¹⁸.

That being the case, it is no wonder that the World Council of Churches (WCC), which is the largest organisation so far expressed by the Ecumenical Movement in its over a hundred years of history and which continues to be its main operational tool, adopted at its creation – as has been said – “a loosely federal structure”¹⁹. In fact, the WCC did not want to be and never has been a sort of “super-church” demanding to impose its authority over that of member churches in the name of unity. This was established by the WCC Central Committee at its 1950 meeting in Toronto in these terms: “The WCC is not a super-church. It is not the world church. It is not the *Una Sancta* of which the Creeds speak [...]. The WCC cannot and should not be based on any one particular conception of the Church [...]. The Council as such cannot possibly become the instrument of one confession or school without losing its very *raison d’être* [...]. Membership in the WCC does not imply that a church treats its own conception of the Church as merely relative [...] and does not imply the acceptance of a specific doctrine concerning the nature of Church unity”²⁰. These few quotes suffice to confirm that membership of the WCC certainly commits church members to dialogue, to service and common witness, but does not deprive them any of their independence. In this respect, the unity that churches experience in the WCC can actually be considered federal in nature: a certain degree of unity and collaboration is achieved while respecting the autonomy of the individual churches. In any case, the WCC defines itself as “a *fellowship* of churches that confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Saviour according to the Scriptures”²¹. *Fellowship* is a word that can be expressed in many ways: the dominating idea is that, in the WCC, the churches are “associated” together, i.e. united in the fundamental bond of common faith in Christ, but not yet in full communion with each other. Their relationship is effectively similar to that which can exist between federated nations. This analogy was already glimpsed some thirty years before the creation of the WCC (1948) by the metropolitan bishop Dorotheos of Bursa (in Turkey) who, in 1919 proposed to the synod of Constantinople the creation of “a league of Churches” similar to the League of Nations conceived by US President Thomas W. Wilson²².

¹⁸ Third part, p. 243.

¹⁹ Third part, p. 242.

²⁰ Kinnamon M., Cope B.E. (eds.), *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997, p. 464 and ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²² Third part, p. 247.

It is therefore logical that, within the WCC, the political project of a federated Europe has found a number of influential supporters, starting with the one who was the main architect of the WCC and who, in 1948, became its first Secretary General, the Dutch Reformed pastor Willem A. Visser 't Hooft. He was also a close acquaintance of Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, hosting them in Geneva, drafters of the *Manifesto di Ventotene* and founders in 1943 in Milan of the European Federalist Movement. At various levels and in various ways, the ecumenism-federalism link was discussed and developed with the WCC in the 1930s and 40s until the end of World War II. Also participating was a group of Germans in opposition to the Nazi regime, including the pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a great friend of Visser 't Hooft. This was another group developing the idea that the future political structure of Europe should be federal²³. The explicit proposal for a federal Europe and, in fact, for a confederated world, is contained in the document produced after the July 1944 conference of WCC collaborators of various nationalities on the role of churches in relation to the future world order. It reads: "The Church would remain deaf to the appeal God makes through current events if it fails to speak out in favour of a world federalist order, whose organisations would be provided with sufficient executive power to ensure a just peace, while amid the disputes that arise between nations"²⁴. Two aspects are striking in this declaration. The first is that the central organisations of a federation of nations must have the power to override the will of individual countries – for instance, on matters concerning war and peace – thus curbing the intermittent anarchy and chaos created either by the periodic outbreak of nationalism or by the exercising of the various national sovereignties that still feel they have absolute, omnipotent and unchallengeable authority. The second is the claim that the desired commitment of the churches to help build "a world federalist order" would be the response to an "appeal" by God voiced through the tragedy of war. It is as if the federalist choice was not optional for the churches but should be an act of obedience to a divine commandment. However, such a document confirms not just how much interest there was in the WCC for the federalist political project but also with how much conviction the WCC had taken to it and strongly recommended it to the churches. The relationship between ecumenism and federalism is a little known page in the history of the Ecumenical Movement and its Council, and yet it deserves recognition not just for the theological and political interest it inspires but also for the value it can have today, both for the still divided churches and for the still shaky and incomplete European Union.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 252, note 70.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

[c] The third topic of great interest in the third part of the book is the very well documented account of the active participation of a group of Waldensians – those connected to the magazine *Gioventù cristiana* edited by Giovanni Miegge – in the Ecumenical Movement and, at the same time, in the project of a federated Europe, which they considered to be two sides of the same coin. Here the figure of Mario Alberto Rollier particularly stands out, a Waldensian of Milan where, during a clandestine meeting held at his home on August 27-28, 1943, the European Federalist Movement was founded. There were many federalist Waldensians at that time – including Willy Jervis, martyr of the Resistance. Also Adriano Olivetti was a federalist, from a Jewish family and with a Waldensian mother. In addition, there were some Waldensians in Piedmont who formed the original nucleus of the Movement, whose fundamental lines were those of Rossi and Spinelli's Ventotene *Manifesto* – the “Magna Charta” of federalism in Italy and beyond. However, the most surprising and yet most eloquent event took place in the ancient Waldensian temple of Ciabàs in the municipality of Luserna S. Giovanni in Val Pellice, a building repeatedly destroyed by those who wanted to delete the Protestant presence in Italy, and rebuilt in its original form several times by the Waldensian community. On 1st to 3rd September 1945, just a few months after the end of the war, in a country and a Europe largely in ruins but which had recently begun reconstruction, there were held three “Theological Days” on the subject of *Christian ecumenism and European federalism*²⁵. Seventy years later, we can only marvel at the clear and long sighted spiritual and political vision of that generation of Waldensians. And yet we cannot help but note with dismay how little of that vision the churches and Europe, and we with them, have been able to achieve. One speaker, for instance, emphasized the close relationship of “federalist reasoning with the ecumenical vocation”, tracing both back to the same spirituality rooted in the Reformed faith²⁶. A pastor, in an article published in 1947, made a link between federalism and the experience of resistance to the various totalitarian regimes that dominated and bloodied Europe in the first half of last century, and wrote: “European federalism continues European ‘resistance’. Federalism is resistance, in the dynamic and progressive meaning the word has acquired over the long, tragic and glorious years”²⁷. A certain amount of despair can be felt when comparing these and other speeches of the time with the current condition of Europe and the churches. Since then, no further mention of political federalism has been made in churches, and while there is much talk of ecumenism, the climate of relations between churches is much improved,

²⁵ Third part, pp. 269–272.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

²⁷ Lo Bue F., “Federalismo e Resistenza” in *L’Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 5-6 (28 mar. 1947). See pp. 293 and ff.

United through Diversity

the churches are less divided than in the past, they still continue to not be united; although “reconciled diversity” has been proposed, it is still not within sight. But it is above all the connection between ecumenism and federalism – a theme at Ciabàs in the distant 1945 – that has been completely lost from sight: a connection that would be worth resuming and presenting anew. The churches would gain in their mutual relations and governments would gain in their European policies. Much time has passed, but the construction of Europe is still, or once again, largely ahead of us. So it is not too late.

Rome, April 2016

Paolo Ricca

Introduction*

Filippo MARIA GIORDANO**

One of the chief architects of the European Union, Jacques Delors, in a now long ago speech on the contribution of Christian culture and thought to European construction, recalled how “*les liens entre la tradition chrétienne et le fédéralisme en tant que modèle politique assurant au mieux l'équilibre entre liberté individuelle et la nécessité d'organisation sociale son très forts*”¹. If the merit of being the first “à fonder philosophiquement l'idée de subsidiarité comme principe inspirateur du modèle fédéral” is generally given to Tommaso d'Aquino, stating that “*la personne est première par rapport à toute institution ou structures politique parce qu'elle est image de Dieu*”², the former President of the European Commission also drew attention to another contribution by Christian culture to the theoretical discussion on federalism, i.e. that of the Calvinist Johannes Althusius. It is to him and his famous treatise *Politica methodice digesta* that “*remonterait l'origine de la notion de fédéralisme ainsi que celle de subsidiarité*”³ and, with it, one of the first theories on the proto-federal State. Many other thoughts followed, especially in Protestant circles, substantiated by sometimes bold experiments in social organisations, denominational communities, ecclesiastical structures, and then later political structures, confirming the fundamental influence – not always direct but often implied⁴ – of the

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¹ Delors J., “Message au Congrès”, in Citterio F., Vaccaro L. (eds.), *Quale federalismo per quale Europa? Il contributo della tradizione cristiana*, Brescia, Morcellania, 1996, p. 33.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ In this respect, there still seems applicable Ernst Troeltsch's observation on the ways in which the Reformation and Protestantism exercised their influence on the birth of the modern world, not without confronting itself with humanism, the seven Anabaptists and mystical subjectivism. The German theologian argued that the importance of Protestantism is not to be found in “a universal regeneration or reconstruction of life

Christian tradition on the institutional architecture of the modern nations. It is sufficient to look at the special Presbyterian conformation or the Congregationalist conformation of the Reformed churches, anticipating aspects of republican, democratic and federal institutions. For instance, consider the synodal organization that emerged in the 16th century within the Calvinist Church and the developments of the larger Huguenot Synod of 1559. The Presbyterian-synodal system, established in the Geneva of Calvin, “affirmed both the independence of the individual local churches, governed by the council of elders (presbyters) and the unifying and superior system of the synod composed equally of ministers (pastors) and representatives of the local churches”⁵. There was also ‘liaising’ regional synod between the local church and the general synod. This type of organisation, as Franco Giampiccoli noted, was the one closest to the idea of subsidiarity but, if we were to speculate further, we cannot help but notice also democratic and federal appearances, which political science and government in modern times would have taken as their own, starting precisely from Althusius.

Delors, in his speech mentioned earlier, intended to link this Christian tradition to a vision of Europe that would encapsulate the idea of individual freedom, democratic and parliamentary tradition, the republican principle, the principle of responsibility of government, and then also secularity, the constitutional state and the separation of powers, all values acquired and partly derived from this tradition in the long history of European civilisation. And bringing the discussion back to the EU, at that time fresh from the Maastricht Treaty – and which we could take forward to the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) without much difficulty – he indicated that in those “*concepts de fédéralisme, de subsidiarité et de démocratie, caractéristique des sociétés politiques modernes, qui sont au coeur du grand débat fondamental toujours occulté, celui du devenir de l’Union européenne elle-même*”⁶. Delors defined federalism as the most complete form of democracy⁷ and, thinking of European unity, could not help but find in the history of the old continent and in its best political tradition, a profound “*vocation fédérale*”⁸ steeped in Christian culture.

as a whole, but mainly in indirect and unconsciously produced effects, nay, even in accidental side-influences”. Troeltsch E., *Il Protestantismo nella formazione del mondo moderno*, Venezia, La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1929, p. 45.

⁵ Giampiccoli F., “Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà”, in *Protestantesimo*, 52 (1997), p. 35.

⁶ Delors J., “Message au Congrès”, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁷ Spiazzi R., Magagnotti P. (eds.), *Dalle nazioni alle regioni. Solidarietà e sussidiarietà per la nuova Europa. Argomenti e documenti*, Edizione Studio Domenicano, Bologna, 1996, p. 239.

⁸ Delors J., “Message au Congrès”, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

This is the context of this present study and it is on those assumptions that it explores the contribution of Italian Protestantism to the idea of a united Europe, founded on peace and on the principle of collaboration and solidarity among peoples. In this respect, the intention is to reconstruct, in the widest generality of Protestant culture, also some of the most significant moments in the history of Reformation to better highlight the contributions of its tradition to modern political culture and, later on, to contemporary considerations about ideologies that have arisen in the last two centuries. On this basis it will be easier to understand the commitment of Italian Protestantism and, especially in its Waldensian denomination, the strong pacifist, pro-European and pro-federalist vocation which is often found combined with an equally strong vocation in its peace-pursuing and ecumenical aspirations. In any case, as Ernst Troeltsch explained, there has always been a strong propensity towards peace in the Reformed world of international Calvinism, which “has gone alongside, as regards the difficult question of war in relation to Christian ethics, the pacifist theories”, struggling to replace the system of war with “a system of treaties and arbitration courts”. We will see how, in the late 19th century and even more in the 1900s, Italian Protestants added to these instruments of international law the idea of a European federation to give substance to the dream of the United States of Europe.

The consideration that emerges from the sections of this work and which aims to mend the close and sometimes evanescent weave of inter-relations between aspects of culture, society and religious psychology and ideas of political thought and action, with a view to delineating the contribution of Italian Protestants to the process of European unification, is structured in three parts and covers different scientific approaches. In the first place, it can only begin with a political analysis of Protestant religious thought since the Reformation, restricting the focus to the Reformed world and, gradually getting closer to the 20th century, to just the area of Italian Protestantism, but without ever losing sight of the larger international picture.

Still with the same approach, there will be described the profound interplay between religious beliefs, cultural traditions, moral convictions, and ideas of civilisation and political action that has occurred in the affairs of Italian Protestantism. In this, the Waldensians were particularly adept in being able to adjust to the historical circumstances, without ever losing their originality and denominational independence, and managing to draw on their cultural and religious heritage with originality, both in their internal ecclesiastical organisation and in the perspective of international

⁹ Troeltsch E., *Le dottrine sociali delle chiese e dei gruppi cristiani*, 2 Vols., Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1941, p. 378, Vol. II.

Calvinism, as well as in the political intentions of its members. In this respect, the concept of denominational independence, the idea of federalism expressed in religious and in political terms, the ecumenical vocation to bring unity to the Christian world without standardising it, the call for peace inscribed in the Christian vision of Europe, form some of the main topics around which this study revolves. And it is specifically from this concept of Europe which, since the 16th century, has tried to provide a meaning of unity and ideal coherence, that our investigation here begins.

The intention in the *first part* of this study is to offer an interpretation – in some ways completely new – of certain aspects derived from the Reformation, which led to a cultural and social perspective in Protestant thought and, with it, a political attitude relating to a specific concept of Europe, which the great French historian Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, making reference to its long history, not surprisingly defined a “construction of the spirit”¹⁰. He wished to point out how Europe was a “work in progress”, a dynamic idea that reflects the morphology of European civilisation and is expressed in different ways through the centuries thanks to the diversity of the people who live there, of the faiths and cultures that constantly plough its fertile soil. He then recalled how free thought has been the main carrier of a process which, from humanism forward, had opened up development and moral and material growth opportunities to the continent that had never been imagined before, giving Europeans a common destination despite being divided into different denominational, ideological, linguistic and national families.

Entering this process, the “revolutionary” impact of the Reformation on the Christian world and the subsequent re-reading of the Gospel message and of theological knowledge by its various movements, had an important role in re-establishing, in spite of a general Catholic uniformity and in the light of an original interpretation of the biblical *foedus*, a new balance between, on the one hand, demands for independence and denominational diversity and, on the other hand, a solid propensity for unity in Christ, which flowed through the world of the churches and Christian-Evangelical movements since the division of Western Christianity. The first part, which precedes and anticipates in its basic elements the pacifism-peace and federalism-ecumenism structure on which the second and third part have been constructed to contrast with political nationalism and religious denominationalism, aims to introduce such assumptions and present them under the historical profile and evolution of political thought: firstly by means of the narration of the process that concerns, from a theoretical-theological and practical point of view of ecclesiastical organisation, the

¹⁰ Monnet J., “Prefazione”, in Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, with a preface of J. Monnet, Milano, Edizioni Milano Nuova, 1964.

revising of the concept of covenant in Calvinism, in the light of what is called the “federal theology”, and then in its transformation from religious concept to social and political practices in the Protestant world; lastly, without ever entirely abandoning the big picture, seeking out the root of these assumptions in the more circumscribed framework of the Waldensian world.

Having brought into focus the origin and development of ideas, the *second part* moves forward to the middle of the last century, concentrating on the more strictly historical aspects and on the tangible consequences of those ideas. The latter, prepared in a distant past, only emerged from the depths of Reformed Protestant consciousness in recent centuries in the form of organised political precepts conforming with the nature of contemporary political sciences, appearing for the first time in the constituting of modern, democratic and inclusive republican countries such as the United States and the Swiss Confederation. “Ideal” federalism – the type referred to in these examples – became thus in the second half of the 19th century, i.e. having gone beyond the pacifist and pro-European enthusiasm of the mid 1800s¹¹, a Utopian situation to which many European and Italian Protestants aspired ceaselessly until the outbreak of the Great War, trying to counter nationalism and imperial colonialism and also the denominationalism of the national churches. There were only few Protestants who resisted the temptation to give in to anthropological optimism and the positivistic view of a certain liberal Protestantism faced with the solid march of progress, of technical and scientific development which seemed to be announcing an era of wellbeing but which, conversely, opened up a chasm in the spirit, favouring the obsessive activism of the 20th century, its materialistic notions and the “psychology of war”¹². Among these were the Waldensians, whose thoughts and initiatives between the late 19th and early 20th centuries are reported in this second part, and who fought for peace in Europe and promoted – mindful of the Kantian primacy of law – a legal structure of the system of international relations and a more vigorous interfaith solidarity. Their pessimism about the ability of Man and society to spontaneously achieve peace, order and justice through the spontaneous movement of Christian brotherhood or through some universalistic sentiment or even in the belief of being able to govern social, economic and political processes, according to the impulse that some felt derived from a materialistic or idealistic conception of history, made these “realist” Waldensians into the Utopians of their century. There was already some sign of that anthropological pessimism in them that Karl Barth would later,

¹¹ Croce B., *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono*, edited by G. Galasso, Milano, Adelphi, 1991, pp. 395 and ff.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 412 and ff.

in the early decades of the 20th century, have imprinted on the spirit of successive generations of Calvinists, preparing them for even harder trials and facing them with the tragic choice between civilisation and barbarism.

The *third part* of our study begins from this point. Through the dark years of totalitarian nationalism and the acquiescence – and even connivance in some cases – of the Church and the Christian world of Europe towards Fascism and National Socialism, this part aims to examine the cultural and religious initiatives of a small group of Italian Protestant intellectuals who had a particularly strong desire to oppose, both theologically and politically, the “dehumanising” ideologies of the 20th century. This vanguard of Italian Protestantism, firm in its theological positions, bolstered by Barth’s neo-Calvinism, was able to express itself in terms that were not new at all for the field of religion. It joined the Ecumenical Movement and participated in the debate from the outset of the World Council of Churches, and was politically active in terms of the anti-fascist fight and proactive in ideological matters, reasserting realistically, based on the reflection and political programme of Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi¹³, the “dream” of federal unity in Europe. This group not only addressed the problem of European and international order in new and radical terms, but also interpreted local and national questions, proposing a reorganisation of the Italian State on a federal basis, starting with the specific Waldensian situation.

In tracing the path of federalism in Protestant circles from the 16th to 20th centuries, the book is based, as already said, on the federalism-ecumenism relationship, a theme already partially addressed although only limited to a few segments in the history of the World Council of Churches in the years of its formation and between the two world wars, in a previous volume in this series dedicated to Dutch pastor Willem A. Visser ’t Hooft¹⁴. A contribution which, in the European panorama of historiography, is added to the theme of research that, with important studies, has rediscovered and reaffirmed in recent years the importance of the Christian tradition in the construction of the “common European home”¹⁵, and which aimed to broaden the range of “denominational” prospects on this unanimously agreed goal.

¹³ Spinelli A., Rossi E., *Il Manifesto per un’Europa libera e unita*, preface by E. Colomi, Mondadori, Milano 2006.

¹⁴ Giordano F.M., Dell’Acqua S. (eds.), *“Die Welt war meine Gemeinde”. Willem Adolf Visser ’t Hooft, a Theologian for Europe between Ecumenism and Federalism*, preface by Hans Küng, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2015.

¹⁵ Greshat M., Loth W. (Hrsg), *Die Christen und die Entstehung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1994; Zeilstra J.A., *European Unity in Ecumenical Thinking, 1937-1948*, Zoetermeer, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1995; Canavero A., Durand J.-D. (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell’integrazione europea*, Milano, Edizioni Unicopli, 1999; Leustean L.N., *The*

Naturally, the federalism-ecumenism combination is one point of view out of the myriad reports on these matters and, above all, our approach to interpreting a long historic process in which a gradual rapprochement – not without obstacles and difficulties – seems now quite established in the Protestant area between the Churches and Christian denominations in the interests of reconciliation and recovery of the lost unity, at a federal convergence level to prevent the loss of “character” belonging to each historical Church. However, despite this movement towards ecclesiastical convergence in the perspective adopted by the Calvinists in the political sphere and in the reciprocal influence between ecumenism and federalism (and here we define our point of view, which is based on the assumption of direct action of Reformed Protestant thought on the formulating of precise ideas about the political and institutional systems), there has occurred contrary to the progressive movement towards European unification the reversal of the speculative level and of interference between ideas; and thus also in the political area and institutional architecture, as well as in the ecclesiastical area, it is preferable in the eyes of Reformed Protestants to have an approach to unity that is federal, to preserve differences and ensure freedom and independence.

Apart from this specific theoretical contribution of Reformed Protestantism on the ways and means of European unification, the Christian tradition has nonetheless had a profound effect on this process, even in more recent times, occasionally stirring the European institutions from their functionalist methods and sometimes guiding them to find more original solutions in the emblematic steps of European integration. In the opening we recalled how, during the process of forming the European Union, Delors wanted to emphasize the presence of a “federal vocation” of Europe¹⁶, referring to its heritage of Christian culture. In some moments of European history, it has certainly influenced the formation of European institutions, not always successfully, but sometimes, while maintaining the correct respect for areas of competence, it has made the political projects more in line with people and human dignity, strengthening the ethical

Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

¹⁶ This definition appeared in a draft treaty, put forward at the Intergovernmental Conference of the European Commission in 1991, with a view to the final version of the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht on February 7th, 1992. In this version a reference is made in the general provisions (Article B) to the “federal vocation” of the future European Union, thereby aiming to reiterate the original idea of the European project and the hope of eventually achieving political union. However, in the final version, the term was replaced by the less explicit words in terms of the institutional process of “an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”. See “Structure of the draft treaty on the Union”, in “Intergovernmental Conferences: Contributions by the Commission”, in *Bulletin of the European Community*, Supplement 2/91, p. 173.

dimension in the public space and returning to people their proper central role in social, economic and political life. This is what happened with, for instance, the Maastricht Treaty which, in incorporating the principle of subsidiarity, was not just technical and institutional but gave a moral significance to the idea of solidarity within the new Union.

The current crisis in Europe, which has no precedent during its integration, can only make us reflect on the intrinsic value of this contribution, to ask ourselves what still remains of the original assumptions of a design that has deep echoes in the history and imagery of the Christian tradition and which today seems to have stalled on technicalities and on the return of national self-interest. In this respect, it is precisely history that can offer us the occasion to rejoin the present with the past to help us find the meaning and the moral strength of a project which has come about through the minds of many thinking people; or better, how united Europe has become the “dream of the wise”¹⁷.

We are faced with the perennial dilemma about the ultimate aim of European integration – which, in some cases, seems to have entirely faded – without resolving it according to the intentions of the founding fathers of the European Community who had stated that federation was the ultimate goal of a path based on the convergence of sectoral and material interests¹⁸. The united Europe envisioned by Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi, statesmen deeply enmeshed in their Christian beliefs, was not only the institutional platform on which to develop an economy and market of extraordinary proportions. It should have been, in the first place, a moral achievement, a fundamental and essential step in the civilising process, to which the countries and peoples of the old continent should have endlessly strived. In other words, the founding fathers had a clear political idea of what Europe should be and how it would confirm all the progress made by European civilisation in its long centuries of history. And the idea of a European federation which, in fairness, they supported to shield the peoples of the continent from the risk of new civil wars, partly came also from Christian awareness and its practical intention to have to build a kingdom of peace complying as closely as possible with the heavenly ideal.

In 1934, the British Liberal Lionel George Curtis, in his *Civitas Dei*, hearkened back to the Sermon on the Mount, recalling how Jesus’ words

¹⁷ Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 2001.

¹⁸ In the famous Schuman Declaration of May 9th, 1950, forming the basis of the subsequent European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the French Foreign Minister stated that “*la mise en commun des productions de charbon et d’acier assurera immédiatement l’établissement de bases communes de développement économique, première étape de la Fédération européenne*”.

“seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you” had offered “the greatest contribution of the centuries to constructive thought”, seeing “in the literal significance of these words the affirmation of a social order based on reality as the goal of human endeavour on this Earth”¹⁹. Man is not able to put into practice the Kingdom of God but, according to Curtis, he has the moral duty – and in this Kantian sense, to construct an “ethical society”, ubiquitous and transcending the specific politics of states – to try and give voice to the spirit through the law, ordering human society according to its freest provisions. If political science – Curtis said – does not proceed from a clear conception of supreme values, it can never guide us in practical politics²⁰.

However, this ideal, before becoming political pragmatism, must – without denying itself – necessarily clash with reality and with human nature which transforms the struggle for peace and the construction of European unity into a perennially uncertain undertaking. If, as claimed by Reinold Niebuhr with Christian realism, “the mind and the spirit of man does not attempt the impossible, if it does not seek to conquer or to eliminate nature but tries only to make the forces of nature the servants of the human spirit and the instruments of the moral ideal, a progressively higher justice and more stable peace can be achieved”²¹. In other words, if man looks for the Kingdom rather than imposing one in his own image and likeness, he is more likely to find a way to get closer to it on Earth.

It is therefore on the basis of spiritual and moral achievements that the idea of Europe and its implementation can have a more solid and lasting confirmation in history, more in keeping with the very nature of its civilisation. It is no coincidence that Delors has recently called attention to the need to regain the “soul of Europe”²², the ethical dimension of its construction, without which the European Union merely remains a big market, unable to establish itself as a community of values. Delors recalled how, at the start of integration, “*le choix éthique fondamental était basé sur l’acceptation de l’autre, de l’ancien ennemi (l’Allemagne), et la volonté de penser le bien commun ensemble plutôt que chacun séparément. Ceci suppose évidemment un saut qualitatif tant au niveau éthique*

¹⁹ Curtis L.G., *Civitas Dei. Storia degli ideali dell’umanità*, Bari, Laterza, 1935, pp. 289-290.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

²¹ Niebuhr R., *Uomo morale e società immorale*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1968, pp. 178-179.

²² See the October 2010 interview with Jacques Delors, “Europe needs a soul”, on the twentieth anniversary of German reunification, in which he reproached national governments for having lost enthusiasm in the European project, URL: www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/public/story/20101006STO85428/20101006STO85428_en.pdf; website consulted on March 31st, 2016.

*que politique*²³. Therefore peace in Europe came from a “sublimated” principle of Christian ethics which proposed, after two bloody civil wars, the principle of reciprocity, forgiveness, solidarity and dialogue between European nations, founding on historic conscience a community of destiny. In this way – Curtis imagined – peace will no longer be hindered “by the national state, when the nations, aware of their histories and distinctive structures, will have learned to act as organs of an international republic”: and thus when also men have “learned to obey a higher law, founded on the spirit and conscience of everyone”²⁴.

Nonetheless, giving substance to this plan of peace requires a political technique, “a technique of power which, however, does not deny in its practical action the ends for which it is fighting”²⁵, and does not betray the ultimate aim of its action, the human person.

We seem to have understood this technique in political federalism of Protestant origin, materialised in the North American federation in which, starting from the old covenant through to the Reformed synthesis and its evolution in modern political and institutional science, has looked for the formula that would reconcile the “two stories”, the one that goes under the heading of freedom and the one beneath the heading of liberation; stories that Kant reworked philosophically and in lay terms in his *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*, and in the better known *Perpetual Peace*.

²³ Delors J., “Message au Congrès”, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

²⁴ Curtis L.G., *Civitas Dei*, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

²⁵ Zanzi L., “Quale federalismo per quale Europa? Riflessioni preliminari”, in Citterio F., Vaccaro L. (eds.), *Quale federalismo per quale Europa?*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

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PREMISE



I. Federalism: A Revolution in the Political Thought

1. What type of federalism?

Federico Chabod acknowledged that “one of the most dangerous risks a historian may be exposed to” is the “designation of age-old thoughts, feelings, doctrines [...] through modern terms”, thus incautiously and deceptively transferring the “*present* meaning of these terms to those bygone ages”¹. The above-mentioned warning will be our guiding light in the philological and conceptual explanation of the term *federalism* in relation to the less complex and problematic ideas of *Europeanism* and *pacifism*; these terms stem from a long and gradual transformation process, which had an impact on their contents and, sometimes, even on their spelling. These categories, however, are still deeply rooted in their past: the word “federalism” has not always implied a well-defined political system and ideology², and it was often mistaken for its opposite, “confederalism”³.

Let us focus now on the original overlapping, or interchangeability of feelings deriving from the common sense of belonging to the European civilization as a cultural unity, to which the word “Europeanism” is usually associated, and to the word “cosmopolitanism”, in the illuministic sense of the term. The latter, whose etymological meaning (κόσμος, ‘*world-universe*’, and πολίτης, ‘*citizen*’) reflected the direct and privileged relationship between men and the only inhabited world, was improperly transformed by the modern rationalist natural law theory (in the 17th and 18th centuries) and became synonymous with the European civilization itself. This was mainly due to the fact that these considerations represented the mirror through which European citizens contemplated the world beyond their continent. Besides, such differences strengthened

¹ Chabod F., *L'idea di nazione*, Bari, Laterza, 2004, p. 139.

² Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1997. It should be emphasized that even before considering federalism as a system of government and state organisation, a precise politico-ideological current can be found within it. In this regard, see Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, Roma, Carocci, 2006.

³ Signs of this semantic confusion can still be seen today; a case in point is the contradiction still present in the official name of the Swiss Confederation. In fact, Switzerland, while still retaining this name, became a truly federal State following the 1848 constitutional reform. See Papa E.R., *Storia della Svizzera. Dall'antichità ad oggi. Il mito del federalismo*, Milano, Bompiani, 2004.

the concept of European identity and merged the two concepts. Such a "European-centred" vision had an obvious impact on the observation of other extra-European entities, because there existed very few points of contact between the European and the Eastern civilizations, and it was virtually impossible to compare the European peoples with those living in Africa and the Americas. Therefore, in the 18th century, the term "cosmopolitanism" embodied the supreme European value of cultural unity and thought: a value which would have allowed the overcoming of all religious and national differences in the name of a higher ideal vision of mankind and civilization; in short, it was associated, in a broad sense, with the stricter intellectual dimension of the "society of spirits", as Chabod used to define the ideal unity of Europe⁴. In fact, as Voltaire stated, "il y avait déjà long-tems qu'on pouvait regarder l'Europe chrétienne (a la Moscovie près) comme una grande république partagée en plusieurs États, les uns monarchiques, les autres mixtes; ceux-ci aristocratiques, ceux-là populaires, mais tous correspondants les uns avec les autres; tous ayant un même fonds de religion, quoique divisés en plusieurs sectes; tous ayant les mêmes principes de droit public et de politique, inconnus dans les autres parties du monde"⁵.

According to the French philosopher, this cosmopolitan view of Europe was founded not only on a cultural identity and the same juridical tradition, but also on the common Christian origin. In fact, the humanistic Europeanism was closely connected with the myth of *Christianitas*, and expressed the aspiration to the unity of Christian Europe, also by virtue of the principle of faith. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the leading role of the religious ideal within the Europeanist thought had been gradually replaced by the values fostered by reason; however, it continued to nurture the aspirations for peace of those who believed war-ravaged Christian Europe to be the denial of the universal peace and brotherly love brought forth by the

⁴ Chabod F., *L'idea di nazione*, op. cit., pp. 116-119.

⁵ Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, tome I, 2nd ed., Londres, chez R. Dodsley, 1752, pp. 11. For further details, see Scuccimarra L., *I confini del mondo. Storia del cosmopolitismo dall'antichità al Settecento*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2006. On the interaction between cosmopolitan ideals and identity principles of European culture, see: Saitta A., *Dalla "res publica christiana" agli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, Roma, Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1948; Pomeau R., *L'Europe des Lumières. Cosmopolitisme et unité européenne au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Stock, 1966. For a comparison between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, Meinecke F., *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale. Studi sulla genesi dello Stato nazionale tedesco*, 2 Vols., Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1975. On the idea of Europe, see: Chabod F., *L'idea di nazione*, op. cit.; Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, op. cit.; Febvre L., *L'Europa. Storia di una civiltà*, Roma, Donzelli Editore, 1999 (french edition, *L'Europe. Genèse d'une civilisation*, Paris, Librairie Académique, Perrin, 1999); Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 2001; Rossi P., *L'identità dell'Europa*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007; Verga M., *Storie d'Europa. Secoli XVIII-XXI*, Roma, Carocci, 2008.

European principles⁶. Therefore, the aspirations for peace, together with the Europeanist dream, led to the theoretical creation of leagues and confederations, all aimed at preventing war and conflicts among the European states⁷.

A clear example of the authentic Christian spirit inspiring those projects is given by William Penn (1644-1718) and his idealistic plan, which foresaw the establishment of a complex body of European institutions to ensure a long-lasting peace among the peoples of the Old Continent⁸. Penn's design, inspired by the federal idea and a strong ideal value, was based on the principles of peace and tolerance he had been pursuing according to his religious beliefs. Naturally, the modern idea of *pacifism*, i.e. an organized movement articulated in various plans, all stemming from different ethical perspectives, will not be analyzed in this essay⁹; however, Christian-based pacifism¹⁰ – particularly that of Christian-Reformed origin – still remains an unavoidable and crucial element in the understanding of the nature of the observations on European federalism, as seen from our perspective. As Maria Grazia Melchionni explained, 17th-century religious pacifism gave origin to various projects aimed at a European peace:

⁶ Perkins M. A., *Christendom and European Identity. The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2004.

⁷ Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, op. cit., pp. 38-45.

⁸ Penn W., *An Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European Dyet, Parliament, or Estates*, Washington, The American Peace Society, 1912. On Penn's pacifism, see also Penn W., *Discorso sulla pace presente e futura dell'Europa*, in Archibugi D. and Voltaggio F. (eds.), *Filosofi per la pace*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1999.

⁹ On pacifism, see Bouthoul G., *La pace tra storia e utopia*, Roma, Armando, 1976; Balducci E. and Grassi L., *La pace. Realismo di un'utopia*, Milano, Principato, 1983; Brock P., *Varieties of Pacifism: A Survey from Antiquity to the Outset of the Twentieth Century*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2000; Moro R., *Storia della pace. Idee, movimenti, battaglie, istituzioni*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2004. On 19th and 20th century pacifism, see Brock P., *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968; Grossi V., *Le pacifisme européen, 1889-1914*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 1994; Brock P., Young N., *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1999; Brock P., *Pacifism since 1914. An Annotated Reading List*, Toronto, P. Brock, 2000; Canavero A., Formigoni G., Vecchio G. (eds.), *Le sfide della pace. Istituzioni, movimenti intellettuali e politici tra Otto e Novecento*, Milano, LED, 2008. On pacifism in England, see Ceadel M., *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945. The Defining of a Faith*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1980; Aldobrandini G., *The Wishful Thinking. Storia del Pacifismo Inglese nell' Ottocento*, Roma, LUISS University Press, 2009. On peace movements, see Carter A., *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics Since 1945*, London-New York, Longman, 1990. On the more theoretical aspects, see Howard M., *L'invenzione della pace. Guerre e relazioni internazionali*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2002; Bobbio N., *Il problema della guerra e le vie della pace*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2009.

¹⁰ Nuttall G., *Christian Pacifism in History*, Oxford-New York, Blackwell, 1958.

among them, a prominent place is occupied by Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670)¹¹ who, in 1666's opening of his work *Pangersia*¹² (*Praefatio ad Europeos*) fostered the idea of a "European fatherland". According to Mary Anne Perkins, Comenius yearned to restore the unity of the *corpus christianum* (Christendom). "His motive was evangelical", Perkins wrote. In fact, Comenius himself, supported by his strong irenic awareness and ecumenical perspective, warned that "the light must be taken to other peoples in the name of our fatherland of Europe; that is why we must first of all unite among ourselves"; he then added that "for we, Europeans must be looked upon as travellers who have all embarked on one and the same vessel"¹³. Comenius's *Panhortosia* anticipates Kant's idea of a "perpetual peace" and introduces a universal reform of human institutions, aimed at ensuring peace among the peoples and the Churches through the establishment of three Councils (*Collegio della luce, Corte mondiale della pace, Consiglio ecclesiastico*) within a complex institutional architecture. Despite the absence of a proper constitutional model he could refer to, Comenius appealed to his original Reformed culture and experience, and planned the structure of civil society and the "nations" within his world State in a vaguely federalist sense, through the establishment of a series of minor free organizations.

At this stage, it is enough to point out the close bonds between *Europeanism* and *pacifism* as an expression of the European culture between the 17th and the 18th century. Both terms will find their most accomplished logical and theoretical outcome, on the one hand, in Kant's *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* and, on the other hand, in the constitutional experience of the United States. This argumentation, however, pertains to the synthesis of the general theory of federalism – which will be discussed in more detail later – and represents the guideline adopted throughout our study.

It is now time to analyze the third element of our work: *federalism*.

The term *federalism* often refers to a theory of the State. In actual fact, federalism is more than just a mere constitutional system settled among various political doctrines; instead, we may assume that its ideal structure is the consequence of a long cultural process in which the principle of the covenant has, in modern times, fully taken on the current institutional and

¹¹ On Comenius, see Laurie S. S., *John Amos Comenius: Bishop of the Moravians. His Life and Educational Works*, Firenze, Syracuse, New York, C.W. Bardeen Publisher, 1892. On his works, see Comenius J.A., *Didactica Magna*, Vicenza, Gualandi, 1947 and *Id.*, *Panorthosia. La riforma universale del mondo*, Verona, Gabrielli Editore, 2003.

¹² Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39. See also, Comenius J.A., *Panegersia or Universal Awakening*, Shipston-on-Stour, Drinkwater, 1990.

¹³ Perkins M.A., *Christendom and European Identity*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

political value. This ideology, modern yet deeply rooted in the Jewish and Christian religious and community tradition, is characterized by the evolutionary path followed by the key concept of *foedus*, which can be seen as the result of a long cultural contamination process bearing the traces of the most significant moments in Western history, and in which many of the revolutionary principles shaped within European culture and civilization have gradually become true.

Federalism is a complex, dynamic, interdisciplinary phenomenon which, as Corrado Malandrino wrote, can “indicate political, philosophical, juridical, institutional, social systems which are so separate from one another that it requires the use of adjectives and specifications to be accurately understood”¹⁴. Because of the versatility of its factual concept, federalism is instrumental in preserving a high level of social pluralism, independence and freedom; such principles require a continuous redeployment to face the mutable organizational needs within every vital and dynamic society. The federal thought deeply penetrates every aspects of an individual’s cultural life and influences the mental approach of many societies; besides, it allows not only philosophical interpretations and social and economic theorization, but also the rational organization of complex political and religious communities. Finally, the term federalism has acquired a well-defined juridical and constitutional value in consequence of its empirical nature. Therefore, as Malandrino explained, federalism can be seen as “a natural political and philosophical idea of the federal covenant, an organizational and constitutional principle, a form of government and theory of the the federal State”; federalism, however, is also “an ideological vision of a specific social form”, if not “a particular style and a way of thinking and acting”¹⁵.

Before introducing our definition of federalism and dispelling any interpretative difficulties about some of the most important theoretical trends which characterize this principle-system¹⁶, we will try to illustrate some etymological aspects and point out the main conceptual distinctions at the political and ideological levels.

It would be useless to trace the history and the evolution of the concept of *foedus* from its pre-modern origins, when *federatio* – or *confederatio* – was, notably in Greek and Roman times, a covenant or a treaty formalizing

¹⁴ Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶ Malandrino’s analysis pointed out five trends: Carl Joachin Friedrich’s *federalizing process*, integral federalism, Daniel Judah Elazar’s federalism intended as *grand design*, Mario Albertini’s idea of European federalism as a revolutionary ideology and world-ism. Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-164.

the alliance among peoples or the loyalty among individuals¹⁷; we will focus instead on the nature of the bond of this “political” relation, which is both public and private. The covenant was not a conflictual relation among the parties involved but the result of a free choice on their part. The contractors pledged their word (*fides*) and gave origin to an association in which all the members were mutually bound. This is a crucial aspect, because Calvinism emphasized the ethical and sacred value of the bond, in virtue of the theological nature of the covenant. Besides, the publication of the famous Huguenot tract *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* in 1579¹⁸ strengthened the members’ mutual commitment.

However, before describing the covenant in connection with a theory of federalism and from a theological perspective, we need to make a clear distinction between *federalism* and *confederalism*, as in modern times both terms have become antinomic¹⁹. The French and the American revolutions paved the way to a clear conceptual differentiation, with the birth of the first federal State in history on the east coast of the American Continent²⁰. As Malandrino wrote, the Philadelphia Convention (1787) and the systematization of the federalist thought carried out by *The Federalist*, resulted in a clear distinction between the two concepts²¹. Whereas *confederal-*

¹⁷ On federalism in the ancient world, see Zecchini G. (ed.), *Il federalismo nel mondo antico*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2005.

¹⁸ Stephanus Junius Brutus, (ps.), *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, sive De Principis in Populum et Populi in Principem, legitima potestate*, Edimburgh (d.i. Basel) 1579. This anonymous pamphlet, which gave rise to the monarchomac theory, was probably written by French Calvinist Philippe de Mornay. For a critical edition, see Garnett G. (ed.), *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, or, Concerning the Legitimate Power of a Prince over the People and of the People over a Prince*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

¹⁹ Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 12-17; Daffern T. C., “Towards the Semantic History of the Federal Idea”, in Bosco A. (ed.), *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism from Enlightenment to 1945*, London, Lothian Foundation Press, 1991, pp. 67-75. See also Bowie R.R. and Friedrich C.J., *Studi sul Federalismo*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1954; Friedrich C.J., *Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1968; Elazar D.J., *Federalism as Grand Design. Political Philosophers and the Federal Principle*, Boston, Upa, 1978; Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1993; Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1995; Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, Bari, Laterza, 2002.

²⁰ On the American federation, see Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit.; Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, op. cit.; Bowie R.R. and Friedrich C.J., *Studi sul Federalismo*, op. cit. See Albertini M., *Introduzione a Immanuel Kant. La pace, la ragione e la storia*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1985; Karmis D. and Norman W. (eds.), *Theories of Federalism. A Reader*, New York, Palgrave, 2005; Castaldi R. (ed.), *Immanuel Kant and Alexander Hamilton, the Founders of Federalism. A Political Theory for Our Time*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2013.

²¹ On the American federalist thought, see Hamilton A., Jay J., Madison J., *Il Federalista*, Torino, Giappichelli, 1997. See also Garosci A. (ed.), *Il pensiero politico degli autori*

ism sanctioned "a temporary pact aimed at pursuing limited objectives" without "questioning the sovereignty of the states involved", *federalism* entails, "through the abandonment of part of the sovereignty of the member states, [...] a higher state level which permanently encompasses them"²² while aiming at preserving their independence. The real difference, the "qualitative difference"²³, between the two concepts lies in the existence of a power shared by the contracting parties.

Naturally, if we include federalism in the phenomenology of the international organizations, on the basis of theory of the *raison d'État*, we cannot exclude that this particular principle-system may also become an integral part of the internal political and institutional organization of pre-existing state entities or under development from a pre-existing regional reality. In such cases, we will refer to supranational and infranational federalism. Here, however, the conceptual distinctions used to describe the various categories of federalism come into play. From our ideological point of view, federalism turns from a technical and constitutional instrument allowing the peaceful composition of independent sovereign states (in contrast with the idea of modern unitary State) into an absolute centralized and national sovereignty, whose main historical model refers to the Napoleonic State arising from the French Revolution in 1789. This type of supranational and infranational²⁴ federalism conforms to the principle of freedom and to the value of peace, and satisfies both juridical and organizational needs: in a nutshell, it is a rational and libertarian principle. We are therefore referring to federal states based on safety, freedom and prosperity needs. In this case, we can talk about *institutional* federalism, structured at the state level, in which the relation between powers and institutions rests on the constitutional balance among the parties (states, regions, local bodies, etc.) adhering to the union agreement²⁵.

However, there exists also another type of federalism which expands the application of the federal principle even further, as it aims "to be a peculiar form and theory of the whole society and of its organizational aspects from the cultural and economic point of view"; that is, "all social, political, economic and cultural aspects of associated life"²⁶. This approach

del "Federalist", Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1954; Hamilton A., *Lo Stato federale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1987.

²² Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

²³ Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁴ On the nature of the federal State, see Bowie R.R. and Friedrich C.J., *Studi sul Federalismo*, op. cit.; Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, op. cit.

²⁵ Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, op. cit., p. 50; Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 17-20.

²⁶ Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, op. cit., p. 19.

goes under the name of *integral federalism*²⁷. Ideologically, the term “integral federalism” designates a 19-20th century theoretical trend stemming from Proudhon’s considerations on authority and freedom, and foreseeing new forms of council self-government at the political, social and economic levels²⁸. Such a large definition of federalism, however, is connected also with its largely cultural and behavioural nature, as well as with its ethical and interpretative suggestions, which go back to the Jewish religious/community and to the Christian-Reformed theological/ecclesiological traditions.

Therefore, on the basis of its institutional character and its integral nature (in its ethical and cultural sense), federalism shows significant links with the Calvinist-based religious thought, in which the idea of covenant is codified from the individual relationship with God to social relations and the ecclesiastical structures, to the political organization of the State.

Such a bottom-up structure also shows the ethical stance and the values of the federal idea. In fact, the covenant established not only the freedom of conscience, in which every man is responsible for his covenant with God, but also a general principle of equality within a confessional system of coordinated independent Churches, as in the case of the different communities within the Reformed Church, which were all identical because of their ecumenical perspective. However, the concept of *foedus* can be fully explained through the ideas of universal brotherhood and peaceful coexistence among the peoples; both principles are also the ultimate aim of the Christian message to mankind.

Within the Reformed culture, the ethical contents were transferred to the *foedus* – already equipped with its own theological value – through the practical implementation of the covenant in the organization of the religious life of the Calvinist communities.

The 17th century marked the beginning of the evolution of the “legal” foundations of the covenant²⁹: on the one hand, the *foedus* kept on perform-

²⁷ See Rougemont D. de, *Vita o morte dell'Europa*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1949; Olivetti A., *L'ordine politico delle Comunità. Le garanzie di libertà in uno stato socialista*, Ivrea, Nuove Edizioni Ivrea, 1945; Marc A., *Europa e Federalismo globale*, Firenze, Il Ventilabro, 1996. On Marc’s federalism, see also Rieben H., *Le Fédéralisme et Alexandre Marc*, Lausanne, Centre de Recherches Européennes, 1974; Manganaro Favaretto G., *Il federalismo personalista di Alexandre Marc, 1904-2000*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2006.

²⁸ Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-159.

²⁹ On this aspect, see Johannes Althusius, whose influence and work will be analysed later. Althusius J., *Politica methodice digesta atque exemplis sacris et profanis illustrata*, Herbornae Nassoviorum, s.n.t., 1614, reprinted in Italian and Latin, Althusius J., *La politica – Elaborata organicamente con metodo, e illustrata con esempi sacri e profani*, 2 Vols., edited by C. Malandrino, Torino, Claudiana, 2009. On Althusius’s

ing the same organizational function in the social, economic and political fields; on the other hand, the nature of its fundamental laws shifted from the theological field to that of rational law. This will lead not only to a gradual transition of the federal experience from the religious field to the secular one, but also to the full functional and ideal development of federalism. Finally, as discussed later in this study, while developing, federalism will bring together both Christian-based pacifism and the cosmopolitan and Europeanist feelings of many Calvinist intellectuals, not only in Europe.

Let us focus now on the the ideological theorization of federalism. This new perspective forces us to formulate a more specific definition of federalism focusing on its intrinsic abilities to provide the tools for a functional interpretation of reality in accordance with the nature of its ethical premises, rather than on its content. This will offer us a heuristic instrument to expose the thin, yet firm, link among Europeanism, pacifism and the cultural and theological matrix of federalism, as shown in the theoretical speculations of some Calvinist intellectuals on the social and political organizations, the forms of government and the constitutional principles.

Beside the above-mentioned *integral federalism*, whose federative attitude characterizes parts of the political, religious and social history of Reformed Protestantism, there exist other interpretations of federalism on which to base the theoretical and scientific criteria of our work. Some relationships can be found in Carl Joachin Friedrich's (1901-1984) theoretical work, according to whom federalism is a progressive, dynamic and libertarian institutional process of organization (associative and dissociative) of the relations among political communities at various levels (local, regional, national and supranational), which interact dialectically in a continuous adjustment of the federative process (*federalizing process*)³⁰. Friedrich's political and juridical vision of federalism stems from Althusius's political thought and the analysis of his symbiotic-federative vision³¹. According to Friedrich, Malandrino wrote, "federalism is first of all based on the organization and the balance of the interests, the structure of the political power of a given community and, as a consequence, a specific form of

Politica see Ingravalle F. and Malandrino C. (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica di Johannes Althusius. L'Arte della simbiosi santa, giusta, vantaggiosa e felice*, Firenze, Olschki, 2005; Althusius J., *Politica. Un'antologia*, edited by C. Malandrino, Torino, Claudiana, 2011.

³⁰ Friedrich C.J., *Governo costituzionale e democrazia*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1963; *Id.*, *Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice*, *op. cit. Id.*, *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2002.

³¹ Friedrich C.J., "Introduction" in *Politica methodice digesta of Johannes Althusius (Althaus)*, Reprinted from the Third Edition of 1614, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1932, pp. XV-XCIX.

government”³². All these aspects will converge in the federative genesis of the political and religious Calvinist, Huguenot³³ communities, but mostly in the Puritan communities settled in North America. However, among the federalist theories upon which we have based our analysis, a major role is played by Mario Albertini’s (1919-1997) idea of European federalism as a revolutionary ideology³⁴ and Daniel J. Elazar’s (1934-1999) theory of biblical and theological federalism³⁵, later resumed by other scholars of the so-called “federal theology”³⁶. These theories can be considered the main reference points for the definition and the coordination of federalism in relation both to the origin of the federal principle within the Calvinist culture, seen also as the most important element for the analysis of the political reality, and to justify the peace and Europeanist tensions of many Italian Protestants between the 19th and the 20th centuries.

2. Pacifism and europeanism versus federalism

The analysis of the historical relations between the Calvinist theological thought and modern federalism cannot prescind from Albertini and Elazar’s works, which disclose the strong bonds among federalism, Europeanism and pacifism within the framework of an ideological vision of the federal thought. This will then allow us to address the federal tradition stemming from the religious culture of Reformed Protestantism. Albertini’s theo-

³² Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

³³ On the Huguenot political thought, see Binetti S. T., *Il pensiero politico ugonotto. Dallo studio della storia all’idea di contratto (1572-1579)*, Firenze, Centro editoriale toscano, 2002. On the history of the Huguenot communities in the Midi and on the establishment of the synodal government, see Garrisson-Estebe J., *Protestants du midi, 1559-1598*, Toulouse, Privat, 1980.

³⁴ Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*; *Id.*, *Lo stato nazionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1997; *Id.*, *Una rivoluzione pacifica. Dalla nazione all’Europa*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1999. See also, Albertini M., *Tutti gli scritti*, edited by N. Mosconi, 9 Vols., Bologna, il Mulino, 2006-2010. On his vision of federalism, see Malandrino C., “The ‘invention’ of complementarity of the federalist thought of Kant and Hamilton in Italy”, in Castaldi R. (ed.), *Immanuel Kant and Alexander Hamilton, the Founders of Federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-301.

³⁵ Elazar D.J., *The Covenant Tradition in Politics*, 4 Vols., New Brunswick-London, Transaction, 1995-1998; *Id.*, *Federalism as Grand Design*, *op. cit.*; Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, Lanham, Lexington, 1999. On his theory, see Malandrino C., “Covenant e Covenantalism premoderni nell’elaborazione di Daniel Judah Elazar”, in Carletti G. (ed.), *Prima di Machiavelli. Itinerari e linguaggi della politica tra il XIV e il XVI secolo*, Pescara, ESA, 2007. On Elazar’s works, see Malandrino C., “Pre-modern covenant and covenantalism in Daniel Judah Elazar’s federalist elaboration”, in *Polis Working Papers*, n. 98 (October 2007), pp. 1-24.

³⁶ Malandrino C., “Teologia federale”, in *Il Pensiero Politico*, XXXIII, n. 3 (1999), pp. 427-446. See also McCoy C.S. and Baker J.W., *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, Louisville, Westminster/John Knox, 1991.

retical approach revolves around three key aspects: *value*, *structure* and a *social-historical aspect*. A *cultural* aspect, more closely related to the *social-historical* one, could be added, which enables us to 'isolate' the origin of the federal idea and the cultural preconditions for the development of a modern federal society, thus explaining the reasons behind the establishment of social and political federal-like entities in some specific areas. This allows us to define the historical context of that particular federal social behaviour which contributed to the analysis of the political, social and cultural reasons behind modern federalism. In this regard, an important role was played by the Jewish and Christian-Reformed traditions which, according to Elazar, show "the ancient source of the federal principle and its classic expression"³⁷.

Albertini stated that he "had come to detect the aspects related to the value, the structure and the social-historical components of federalism while trying to shed light on this concept"; in conclusion, according to Albertini "the resulting scheme [can] be generally applied to ideologies, whose analysis is effective at the historical level, but usually not at the theoretical one"³⁸. His investigation into federalism, based on the three above-mentioned criteria, can be applied also to other major traditional ideologies, from liberalism to democracy, to socialism, in the attempt to critically organize their political thought in the light of their historical evolution. In Albertini's view, however, no ideology can be defined simply by equating it with a specific political-institutional structure, as in most cases it is the outcome of a process in which the evolution and the progressive affirmation of an idea are reflected; in other words, federalism cannot be limited to the mere concept of federal State. Like any other ideology, Albertini wrote, federalism entails a more complex and deeper research, which aims at identifying an independent social behaviour leading to a realistic definition of federalism itself³⁹.

The emergence of a new ideology is not only characterized by the establishment of new political and institutional organizational entities, but it is also heralded by favourable pre-existing social conditions and new values leading up to political action. Such conditions are very difficult to detect, as the "social" aspect can be determined by innumerable factors, whereas the "value" and the "structure" of an ideology

³⁷ Elazar D.J., "Federalism as Grand Design", in *Publius*, IX, n. 4 (Autumn, 1979), p. 2.

³⁸ Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 91, note 3.

³⁹ According to Albertini, Lucio Levi explains, ideology is "the conceptual system allowing the convergence of thought necessary for the cohesion of political group and the consistency of its action principles". In other words, ideology is "a political project highlighting the meaning of a historical phase through the establishment of the institutions and the corresponding values". Levi L., "Il federalismo dalla comunità al mondo", in *Il Federalista*, XLIV, n. 3 (2002), p. 226. See also Albertini M., "Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo", in *Il Federalista*, XLIX, n. 2 (2007).

are easier to recognize. Albertini's justification of the social-historical condition of federalism revolved around a critical revision of historical materialism, according to which this aspect was based on "the obfuscation of all class and national conflicts, as well as [on] the development of social and institutional pluralism"⁴⁰. Therefore, Albertini concluded, "community and cosmopolitanism are the two poles of the federalist social behaviour"⁴¹.

In modern-day society, the main features of the above-mentioned attitude could be identified, on the one hand, with Europeanism and worldism⁴², and on the other hand, with all those political trends pursuing global aims (peace, security, justice, human rights, development, material well-being) and the overcoming of the limits imposed by the establishment of national states, in the attempt to reach a peaceful and universal "State of Rights". According to Albertini and many other 19th and 20th-century European intellectuals, the first step in this ambitious plan was the federal unity of Europe – that is, the continent in which nationalism had triggered the most devastating conflicts in the history of mankind – thus leading to the coincidence of pacifism and Europeanism.

It is important to point out, however, that the federalist behaviour manifests itself also in the opposite tendency, and it is therefore instrumental in the implementation of the political and administrative processes aiming at the pursuit of an independent community dimension and the claim of self-management forms. In any case, federalism implies a flexible distribution of powers, locally and internationally, on the basis of a subsidiary relation at all levels. In actual fact, despite the particularly favourable conditions that led to the development of the social-historical aspect of federalism in North America at the end of the 18th century, or in Switzerland in the first half of the the 19th century, a proper federal society has never been codified, notwithstanding the constant expansion of the federal/confederal behaviour in the 20th century (international organizations and regional integrations) driven by the increased economic, cultural, social and political integration among the states. Technical and scientific innovations, as well as the ravages of the World Wars had gradually deteriorated the model of national State, paving the way to other forms of power organization not always based on liberal and democratic principles. In this post-modern scenario, Malandrino wrote, federalism "almost came forward as a new synthesis of leading ideas and values within the political world" through its "open and dynamic State

⁴⁰ Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁴¹ Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴² On worldism, see Malandrino C., *Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164.

systems which were more suitable to grant the freedom and the safety of individuals, as well as the integration among the parties, on the basis of efficiency and equal dignity”⁴³.

Our work, however, does not aim at comparing federalism to the other political doctrines *stricto sensu*, nor at studying it from a contemporary political point of view; suffice it to remind how, in Albertini’s view, federalism, Europeanism and pacifism were logically interconnected. Albertini’s starting point was the criticism of the concept of national State, and his stance was supported by other Italian Protestant intellectuals who were actively engaged in pacifism and Europeanism.

In order to get a better understanding of Albertini’s theory and to relate it to Christian-Reformed Protestantism, we will now focus on the nature of social behaviour. As aforementioned, the term *value* defines the aims of a behaviour and encompasses both human ideals and sensitivity, which require specific historical conditions to be able to establish themselves socially; in the federal vision, this value coincides with peace⁴⁴. According to Albertini, the first theoretical evidence of this close bond between federalism and peace occurred at the end of the 19th century, notably in Kant’s work *Perpetual peace*. According to the German philosopher, federalism was instrumental in establishing peace and represented a political and institutional tool to overcome the natural lawless state – i.e. warfare – and the division of mankind in national states, thus leading to a true peace based on definite right⁴⁵.

The *structural* value indicates the most suitable tool to pursue that aim, as well as the organizational form of power needed to actually establish such value. Needless to say, from the federal point of view, this structure was the federal State. According to Albertini, an ideology becomes well-known only when the underlying institutional mechanism manifests itself clearly, evolving from the theoretical level to the factual one⁴⁶. This transition took place with the creation of the United States of America, the first historical model of federal State. The political experience in the American continent was instrumental in defining the nature of federalism itself and in making a clear distinction between federalism and confederalism. However, Albertini remarked, the character of the society in

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁴⁴ Kant was the first intellectual to theorize the idea of a perpetual peace based on people’s cosmopolitan right. Kant I., *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2009, pp. 163-207. See also Marini G., *La filosofia cosmopolitica di Kant*, Posthumous work, edited by N. De Federicis and C. Pievatolo, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2007. On the idea of peace, see also Reves E., *Anatomia della pace*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1990.

⁴⁵ Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22.

⁴⁶ Mosconi N., “Mario Albertini teorico e militante”, in *Il Federalista*, XLIX, n. 2 (2007), p. 89.

which such mechanism is established, is often neglected; in other words, “the federalist thought and action” are not always adequately known, just like the cultural influences that historically led to the establishment of the federalist thought⁴⁷.

Finally, the *social-historical* value represents “the historical and social conditions allowing for the spread and the consolidation of the behaviour – in conformity to a given ideology”⁴⁸. In the case of federalism, this specifically implies the creation of a pluralist society aiming at overcoming all class divisions and antagonisms among nations, and at achieving the unity of various political expressions, thus granting their independence and freedom of expression. Every human behaviour, Albertini explained, characterizes a society and determines a particular organization of the political relations, as shown in the 19th century American society, in which all conditions concurred to the establishment of a federal-like State⁴⁹.

Every social and political organizational behaviour, however, assumes a peculiar cultural education or, at least, some references to the collective ideas of a community or people. The analysis of these behaviours made Albertini state that “the political and social aspects have never been separated”⁵⁰; the same could be said of the relation between social behaviour and the cultural – and religious – sphere⁵¹. Besides, if we assume that the political and institutional preservation of federalism, as Elazar wrote, implies a federal thought⁵², it is also true that this “thought” must have originated in a previous historical moment characterized by particular cultural conditions, and in which the federal idea had gradually evolved into social behaviour and, finally, political praxis. Therefore, the federalist ideology entails the existence of a “federal culture” originating a “federal thought” which is reflected in a federal-like behaviour manifesting itself in various aspects of human relations. We will then see how some ethical trends and theological assumptions within the Calvinist culture have contributed to the establishment of a federal-like behaviour in some historical/geographical areas; this led to the development of federal-like political systems⁵³.

⁴⁷ See Albertini M., *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 19

⁴⁸ Albertini M., “Il federalismo”, in *Il Federalista*, XIII, n. 2 (1962), p. 92.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91, note 3.

⁵¹ See Weber M., *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1991; and Troeltsch E., *Le dottrine sociali delle Chiese e dei gruppi cristiani*, *op. cit.*

⁵² Elazar D. J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁵³ Bonanate U., (ed.), *I puritani. Soldati della Bibbia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1975; Bein Ricco E., (ed.), *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo*, Torino, Claudiana, 1994; Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi. Il puritanesimo all'origine del radicalismo politico*, Torino,

The above-mentioned scheme calls for the research of the cultural roots underlying the development of a federal-driven collective thought and action within the various historical and social contexts in which federalism manifested itself. We will therefore be able to understand the reasons behind the success of federalism in those contexts and its prominent role in the thought of many Reformed intellectuals.

As Charles McCoy stated, the analysis of the development “of a movement as widespread and pervasive in modern society as federalism” is a challenging task, especially when relying on external factors and the behaviour of a community. According to McCoy, the origin of federalism must be traced back in the cultural context of the Protestant Reformation, in which the religious concept of *foedus*, adapted to the secular culture of the Puritan settlers, gained ground in the American federalism. Always according to McCoy, Zurich was the place “where diverse influences came to focus and produced a movement and a pattern of thought that can be identified as federal”⁵⁴. The Swiss city – whose role will be mentioned in the next chapter – provided the cultural context for the development of a primeval “federal thought”, while the North-American colonies prepared the most fertile social and cultural ground for the actual rooting of modern federalism. It is also convenient to reaffirm that, despite the evidence of federal-like elements, the cultural aspects related to the origin of the federalist thought and the action before the 19th century cannot be seen as the thorough expression of a federalist culture. This was mainly due to the lack of a political and institutional formula, before the Convention of Philadelphia (1787), which could fulfill the ambitions of a federal-like society. Secondly, the federal thought prior to the creation of the United States of America was not part of political science *stricto sensu*; instead, it belonged to the religious thought inspired by Reformed Protestantism, notably in the field of biblical exegesis and theological and ecclesiological research.

Since the very beginning of the Reformation, the term “federal” has attracted the attention of exegetics and has pushed Protestant scholars to review the covenant theology in light of a new and free reading of the Holy Scriptures. As stated by Miegge, “the idea of a covenant (*foedus*) between God and his people [...] largely configures the peculiar identity of the Reformed theological tradition” ranging “from Zwingli to Calvin up to Karl Barth’s *Dogmatica ecclesiale*”⁵⁵. Besides, the federal thought has been the core not only of a long theological and ecclesiological review by

Claudiana, 1996; De Michelis Pintecuda F. and Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna*, Pisa, ETS, 2002.

⁵⁴ McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ Miegge M., “Sulla politica riformata: ‘vocatio’ e ‘foedus’”, in Bein Ricco E. (ed.), *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

the Calvinists which showed a particularly strong interest and a remarkable affinity with its principles, but has also “accompanied” the development and the organization of Protestant Churches over the centuries, thus becoming the starting point and the main tool of the ecumenical dialogue⁵⁶.

The federal thought was not only the subject of an exegetic and intellectual analysis carried out by some Reformed theologians between the 16th and 17th centuries and revolving around the concepts of Covenant and *foedus*⁵⁷, but was also the result of incidental cultural implications coming from the secularisation of the most advanced claims of the Protestant Reformation⁵⁸. Such claims, once started, had a disruptive effect on the old feudal, medieval society and promoted a modern merchant bourgeois society where pre-federal and pre-national forces helped – quite inaccurately, though – to outline the face of modern Europe. The idea of freedom, stemming from humanism and the theological considerations on predesti-

⁵⁶ Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1517 al 1948*, 3 Vols., Bologna, il Mulino, 1973-1982; Fey H.E. (ed.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1948 al 1968*, 1 Vol., Bologna, Dehoniane, 1982. In the framework of the Protestant historical and ecclesiological tradition, the federal system is seen as the most appropriate tool to establish unitarian religious organizations able to promote the cooperation, the rapprochement and the reunion of the Churches at the local, national and international levels. Genre E., Rostagno S., Tourn G., *Le chiese della Riforma. Storia, teologia, prassi*, Cinisello Balsamo, San Paolo, 2001; Bouchard G., *Chiese e movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003.

⁵⁷ Malandrino C., “Foedus (confoederatio)”, and “Symbiosis (symbiotiké, factum, confoederatio)”, in Ingravalle F., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica di Johannes Althusius*, op. cit., pp. 187-201. See also Malandrino C., “Covenant e Covenantalism”, op. cit.; Id., “Teologia federale”, op. cit.; Id., *Federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 11-7; Miegge M., “Sulla politica riformata”, op. cit., pp. 137-66.

⁵⁸ The bibliography on the Protestant Reformation is immense and includes not only many essays on its various distinctive features, but also many monographies and biographies of illustrious Reformers. In this research we will obviously refer the reader only to some works of particular importance for the themes developed herein. It is impossible to prescind from Bainton’s classic work on the history of the Reformation. See Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante*, Torino, Einaudi, 2000. The same work features a rich bibliography. See also Vinay V., *La riforma protestante*, Paideia, Brescia, 1970. Among the recently published studies, see Tourn G., *I protestanti una rivoluzione. Dalle origini a Calvino*, Torino, Claudiana, 1993, vol. I; McGrath A.E., *Il pensiero della Riforma*, Torino, Claudiana, 2000; Tourn G., *I protestanti una società. Da Coligny a Guglielmo d’Orange*, vol. II, Torino, Claudiana, 2007; Naphy W.G., *La rivoluzione protestante. L’altro Cristianesimo*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2010. See also some short introductory essays to the history of the Reformation: Schorn-Schütte L., *La Riforma protestante*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1998; Fiume E., *Il protestantesimo, un’introduzione*, Torino, Claudiana, 2006; Rubboli M., *I protestanti. Da Lutero alle chiese, ai movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007; Decot R., *Breve storia della Riforma protestante*, Brescia, Queriniana, 2007. For an in-depth analysis of the cultural climate of the Reformation, see MacCulloch D., *Riforma. La divisione della casa comune europea (1490-1700)*, Roma, Carocci, 2010.

nation that shook the ancient order to its foundations, as well as the fragile balance between *Imperium* and *Sacerdotium*, crushed the old *Respublica christiana* and started the era of modern (national) states.

The events related to the Protestant Reformation implied two types of consequences: on the one hand, the rise of different confessional currents and the need to organize the Churches to stand both internal and external menaces from the religious, political and military actions of the Counter-Reformation, provided the background for the first considerations of the origin, meaning and use of the biblical *foedus*; on the other hand, the merchant and cultural ferment of European society in the 16th and 17th centuries and the irreversible disintegration of Europe's spiritual and political unity, undermined by the political and confessional claims of cities and principalities and by the hegemonic policies of the rising modern (national) states, pushed some Reformed scholars to relate to the principles of the federal thought in a cosmopolitan and anti-absolutist perspective.

In this light, Althusius's extraordinarily avant-garde *Politica methodice digesta* represents "the most sophisticated and systematic expression of the 'monarchomach' trend of continental Calvinism"⁵⁹, confuting the principles of absolutism in favour of an *ante litteram*⁶⁰ political federalism. Equally impressive is Comenius's religious irenism, who – in his *Panhortosia* – outlines a global institutional architecture aimed at granting peace between people and Churches⁶¹. Finally, the 18th century offered the federal thought more possibilities to experiment, and actually apply – even if in a limited way – its principles, thus steering towards modern federalism. Paradoxically, this did not happen in Europe, home of the federalist thought, but in North America, because of its favourable religious, political, economic and territorial conditions, and the positive historical circumstances. The French Revolution, instead, suppressed all federalist ambitions at the expense of an unprecedented strengthening of the model of centralized national State, thus marking Europe's destiny; on the other hand, the Philadelphia Convention organized the first federal society in history, following up the cultural conditions at the basis of the behaviour and the "federal way of thinking" of Americans (European settlers), establishing a new and revolutionary idea of power. It is no accident if some Founding Fathers of the United States were of Protestant origin and liberal religious orientation, particularly Alexander

⁵⁹ Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", in De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁶⁰ Althusius developed a political theory based on a federal principle which can be seen as the forerunner of some theoretical and functional aspect of modern federalism, and therefore it can be defined as "protofederal". Althusius J., *Politica. Un'antologia*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Comenius J.A., *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*

Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison⁶², authors of *The Federalist*, who made a crucial contribution to the drafting of the American Constitution⁶³.

Therefore, the first part of this research will be focused on the definition of the cultural profile of federalism within the bounds of the Protestant tradition. As already stated, culture is a social and personal heritage from which the deepest level of conscience draws to substantiate its thought and to build up its will, so to justify a socially independent behaviour. Hence, we are now going to track down the thread of this mental process in light of the historical and cultural events of the Protestant Reformation.

In the following pages, we will then try to explain the cultural relationships between federalism and Protestantism, together with an analysis of the values of Protestant tradition that fostered federal thought and behaviour, the relationships between the theological and political nature of federalism, the organizational patterns of life within the Reformed communities that had an influence on the establishment of new political institutions, including the federal ones, and the contexts and the ultimate reasons for the success and the spreading of federalism, well before it became the full expression of a modern political culture, and finally the type of Europe the Protestants were aiming at.

⁶² Alexander Hamilton, born from Rachel Faucett Lavine (of Huguenot origin), was Presbyterian, while John Jay, also coming from a traditionally Huguenot family, was a member of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. Finally, James Madison, who belonged to the Episcopal Church, was one of the authors of the Statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia, together with Thomas Jefferson. The political thought of many of these scholars was influenced by the Enlightenment rationalism, which was largely spread at that time. On their political thought, see: Hamilton A., Jay J., Madison J., *Il Federalista*, *op. cit.*; Hamilton A., *Lo Stato federale*, *op. cit.*; Bassani L.M., *Contro lo Stato nazionale. Federalismo e democrazia in Thomas Jefferson*, Bologna, Il Fenicottero, 1995; Salvadori M.L., *L'Europa degli americani. Dai padri fondatori a Roosevelt*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2005. On the influence and the role played by religion on the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, see Dreisbach D.L., Hall M.D., Morrison J.H., *The Founders on God and Government*, Lanham (Md), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004. Finally, for the biographical notes on the authors of *The Federalist* see: Wills G., *James Madison*, New York, Henry Holt, 2002 and Randall W.S., *Alexander Hamilton. A life*, New York, Harper Collins, 2003. See also Wilentz S., *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2005.

⁶³ On the origin, meaning and history of American Constitutionalism, see McIlwain C.H., *La Rivoluzione americana. Una interpretazione costituzionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1965; Arendt H., *Sulla Rivoluzione*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1983; Bailyn B. and Wood G.S., *The Great Republic. A History of American People*, Lexington (Ma), D.C. Heath and Company, 1985; Bonazzi T., *La Rivoluzione americana*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1986; Matteucci N., *La Rivoluzione americana: una rivoluzione costituzionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1987; Abbattista G., *La Rivoluzione americana*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998. On the Calvinism influences in American political thought, see Rossiter C., *L'alba della Repubblica. Le origini della tradizione americana di libertà politica*, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1963 and Hall D.W., *Genevan Reformation And The American Founding*, Lanham (Md), Lexington Books, 2005. On the documents that influenced the drafting of the American Constitution, see Acquarone A., Negri G., Scelba C. (eds.), *La formazione degli Stati Uniti d'America. Documenti (1606-1796)*, 2 Vols., Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1961.

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FIRST PART



I. The Origins of the Political Idea behind Protestant Federalism

1. The Protestant “Revolution”

After a brief explanation of the concept and theory of federalism, it is now necessary to look at how its principles started appearing within the religious tradition of Protestantism, particularly within Reformed Protestantism, thus giving rise to the cultural conditions necessary to form its idea.

Before getting into a specific analysis of both the confessional and theological aspects of the Reformation having a direct influence on the development of modern ethics and the creation of ideas and political practices, including the federal ones, it is necessary to introduce the phenomenon of Protestantism and to fit it into a wider historical process.

The tumultuous period characterized by the rise of the Protestant Reformation in Europe represented an extremely complex and difficult phase in modern history, marked not only by economic, political, cultural and religious changes, but also by the irreparable rift with the medieval order, based on the political and confessional unit of Western Christianity. Such an order was imposed and granted by the authority of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire¹, whose powers had diminished due to the mutual competition on their spheres of influence, thus giving rise to a social and political instability that let national monarchies affirm their desire for power. These kingdoms cast their ambitions on Europe and strengthened state structures through the ramification and the centralization of power. This process led to the creation of the structure of modern sovereign states – some of which later become national states – and the international system based on the principle of “balance” between continental powers, despite its weakness and its constant subjugation to the hegemonic designs of the greatest power of the moment². A new order was therefore taking form in Europe.

¹ Spini G., *Storia dell'età moderna*, 3 Vols., Torino, Einaudi 1971. See also Tabacco G., Merlo G.G., *Medioevo*, Vol. I, *La civiltà europea nella storia mondiale*, 3 Vols., Bologna, il Mulino, 1989; Tenenti A., *L'età moderna*, Vol. II, *La civiltà europea nella storia mondiale*, 3 Vols., Bologna, il Mulino, 1989; Braudel F., *Il Mediterraneo. Lo spazio, la storia, gli uomini e le tradizioni*, Milano, Bompiani, 1998.

² About the development and the decline of modern (national) states within the framework of a international political order, see Kennedy P., *The Rise and Fall of the Great*

The establishment of new rising forces led to a redistribution of the balance of powers and to the beginning of a period of fluctuation where the Western world was torn between the two principles of unity and plurality. According to Dehio, “for more than a millennium there comes to pass an oscillation between the tendency towards unification, that nonetheless never leads to full unity, and the tendency towards fragmentation, that however never reaches full dissolution”³. He ended his analysis by stating that, afterwards, these two trends came in with “diverse forces and circumstances”.

This is the case of 16th-century Europe, where the two orders granted by unity were subjected to tearing centrifugal thrusts, followed by the inevitable fragmentation of power. The evolution of this historical period, aimed at that moment at supporting the latent impulse towards the disgregation of the existing reality, links up with two seemingly unrelated “forces” and “circumstances”. The first circumstance, strictly military and political, is provided by the hegemonic ambitions cast by the great powers on the dying system of Italian principalities, as clearly stated by the war between Charles V and Francis I. The rise of modern (national) monarchies in Europe, and their steady transformation into rigidly-centralized bodies, is the driving force behind the disintegration of the political order. The conflict stemming from this situation marked, on the one hand, the final decline of the ambitions of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe and, on the other hand, the rise of new European powers such as Spain and most of all France, as well as of England’s extra-European power; this rise led also to the success of a power system based on the absolute sovereignty of the states.

Europe had to face not only a political division, but also the intimate tragedy of its spiritual disgregation, to which the two other factors of change refer. The second circumstance, of a social and religious origin, consists of a widespread “awakening” of spirituality and Christian pity that led to the second element of force: Luther’s reforming activity and his battle against the ecclesiastic authorities⁴. The consequences of his

Powers. Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000, New York, Vintage Books, 1987 and Dehio L., *Equilibrio o egemonia. Considerazioni sopra un problema fondamentale della storia politica moderna*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1995.

³ Dehio L., *Equilibrio o egemonia*, op. cit., p. 39.

⁴ Luther did not mean to break with Rome and commit an act of insubordination towards the Church, but rather he attempted to stop a moral drift of the Curia and the Catholic hierarchy. Luther’s crusade against simony and corruption, however, got out of hand when the Pope excommunicated the reformer from Eisleben unilaterally sanctioning the schism within Western Christianity. Luther did not aim at this, aspiring instead to start a spiritual awakening within the Church itself, based on the individuality of faith, enlightened by all believers through the Bible. The consequences of the schism affected

actions were unstoppable and the Protestant Reformation set in motion by the Eisleben-born monk was “the great disruptive force of medieval Catholicism”⁵. The struggle of Protestants for independence had the same shattering effect as the claiming of the principle of liberty in the 18th and 19th centuries⁶.

Despite the apparent lack of correlation between the two above-mentioned contexts – although they both aim at the disgregation of an order – the relationship between secularity and spirituality becomes evident in the case of religious wars⁷. At the very heart of the old Empire, the convergence of the religious requests presented by Reformers and aiming at obtaining confessional freedom, as well as the requests from imperial cities and the German principalities, pointing at getting a good level of independence, and pre-national monarchies trying to assert themselves internationally, caused the disintegration of Europe’s social and political body.

Therefore, the scenery at the beginning of modern times is greatly unstable and Europe is torn by strong internal struggles, fostered by old ambitions to unity, and with new forces trying to conquer their own space and identity. In such a context, the principle of pluralism prevails on unity, that is to say that in both religious and political life – with obvious consequences on the social fabric – a certain tendency towards self-determination prevails, thus determining a greater fragmentation at the expense of unity. The resulting minor bodies aim at an internal unity to preserve them in the long term. This process, however, is achieved through two different

political events and dismembered the unity of European society. On the centralism of the Roman Church, see Küng H., *Cristianesimo, essenza e storia*, Milano, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 2004, pp. 389 and ff. On Luther and his reformation, see Miege G., *Lutero. L'uomo e il pensiero fino alla Dieta di Worms (1483-1521)*, Torino, Claudiana, 1946; De Michelis Pintecuda F., *Tra Erasmo e Lutero*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2001. See also Vinay V., *La riforma protestante, op. cit.*, pp. 77 and ff.

⁵ Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante, op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁶ Despite the freedom in the renewal of the Bible and the variety of researches and religious projects of the Protestant trends, the Reformation never aimed at institutionalizing a new Church, but it preserved for a long time the perception that Christianity should keep its unity, even if it needed a profound reformation. In actual fact, the Reformation originated a multifiform variety of Churches and trends; moreover, a certain exegetical freedom, as well as a marked sense of the individual spiritual space and a widespread, yet limited, confessional tolerance contributed to the rise of the ecumenical dimension of Christian unity. On the one hand, there was the unitarian tension strained by the centrality of Christ (Christology); on the other hand, there was the unavoidable diversity of the interpretations and the various possibilities of the sole vocation. Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante, op. cit.*

⁷ Lapeyre H., *Le monarchie europee del XVI secolo. Le relazioni internazionali*, Milano, Mursia, 1994; Vivanti C., *Le guerre di religione nel Cinquecento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2007.

ways of organizing the power: one is focused on its centralization and the other on its distribution. This is the background within which it is possible to detect the antecedents and ideological premises to the rising model of centralized modern (later, national) State, as well as the first federal or semi-federal religious and political experiences⁸. Beside that, both proto-nationalism and proto-federalism fall within the reorganization of political and religious pluralism in the Renaissance. Proto-federalism, however, is based on various confederal or consociative systems⁹ and is clearly distinct from actual federalism, born at the end of the 18th century in the American continent following the creation of the United States of America. In any event, there is a tight bond – and even a direct cultural and ideological descendance – between the first forms of federalism experienced in some Reformed communities spanning the 16th and 17th centuries and the more mature modern federalism.

Ultimately, it is arguable that the medieval heritage represents “an element of great importance” to understand modern federalism, reasserting once again the discrepancy between the medieval political pluralism, partially carried out until the French Revolution, and modern federalism, born with the establishment of the United States of America¹⁰. Pluralism, however, is undoubtedly a necessary achievement and an unavoidable aspect of federalism. Daniel Elazar himself emphasized this connection and stated that “pluralism is [...] intimately related to federal democracy”¹¹,

⁸ During the Holy Roman Empire many experiences of confederal and semi-federative nature took place, in conjunction with the formation of the modern states. Even the alliances, just like the national monarchies, were established to protect themselves and to get a wider independence from the Empire at first, and then with the Roman Church through the Reformation and the creation of national Churches (e.g. England). The first alliances among commercial cities in central Europe were made to provide mutual aid or assistance, as in the case of the Lombard League (1167-1250), the Hanseatic League (1158-1669), the Eternal League of the Three Forest Cantons in Switzerland (1291), the Schmalkaldic League, created by German Protestant princes with political and religious aims (1531) and, finally, the confederation of the United Provinces of The Netherlands (1579-1795), founded on “ideological and religious ‘pillars’”. Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 41). On Switzerland, Germany and Holland, see also Hamilton A., *Lo Stato federale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-98.

⁹ The most interesting and important example of consociation in modern profederalism was described by Althusius in his *Politica methodice digesta*. Besides Malandrino’s studies on Althusius, see also Duso G., “Althusius e l’idea federalista”, in *Quaderni Fiorentini*, n. 21 (1992), pp. 611-22; *Id.*, “Sulla genesi del moderno concetto di società: la ‘consociatio’ di Althusius e la ‘socialitas’ di Pufendorf”, in *Filosofia Politica*, n. 1 (1996), pp. 5-31.

¹⁰ Friedrich C.J., *L’uomo, la comunità, l’ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-307.

¹¹ Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 77. See also *Id.*, *Exploring Federalism*, Tuscaloosa (Al), The University of Alabama Press, 1991, pp. 87-91 and pp. 99-104.

whereas it may not be strictly necessary for the operation of any other type of democracy. However, it is undeniable that Protestantism made a very important cultural contribution to the genesis of modern federalism, whose assumptions can be found in late medieval pluralism. As a matter of fact, Reformation contributed to “shatter the structure of the previous communities”, thus causing a political and religious chaos¹², and making the “creation of new forms of local self-government and identification” unavoidable. At the same time, the principles of the Calvinist Reformation brought with them those needs for modernity that led to the “collapse of the old aristocratic principles”¹³, by replacing them with the republican ones and by adopting a new contractual theory of power, based on the concept of *foedus*. Thus, an alternative type of political organization of the State gradually started to take shape from the 16th century, in contrast with the then-developing unitary sovereign State (then, national), and whose most meaningful example was Althusius’s proto-federalism. Therefore, the emancipation process of the individual conscience triggered by the Reformation and bringing with it a new concept of freedom, led to the establishment of a multitude of independent communities and social and political entities that carried to the creation of modern federalist, democratic and republican systems¹⁴.

Leaving out the events related to the history of states, their conflicts and religious wars, we will therefore try to describe more accurately the implications and the connections between pre-modern federalism and Protestantism. In particular, we will focus on the social and cultural consequences of the first Protestantism and the fragmentation process that involved the Christian world; we will then highlight the political implications of some key precepts of the Reformation that point to the basis of a *forma mentis* precluding the federal thought, developed afterwards by the Calvinist religious experience.

In a sense, the protestant Reformation was a revolution because it caused, within Christianity and, as a consequence, in social relationships, the same reaction provoked by the constitution of sovereign states (well before they were national) on the political relationships within the European continent and then on the Western political culture. The Protestant schism represented a crucial moment in the quest for an individual – yet somehow universal – independence underlying today’s modern federal and democratic systems. Even if the Reformation

¹² Hueglin T.O., “The Idea of Empire: Conditions for Integration and Disintegration in Europe”, in *Publius*, XII, n. 3 (1982), pp. 11-42.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁴ Bruce S., *God is Dead. Secularization in the West*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2002, pp. 1-44.

was not a revolution in the modern sense of the term, it was surely a momentous event followed by a deep spiritual, social and political renewal. Albeit historically and conceptually questionable, François Guizot's description of that event made centuries later is still indicative of the revolutionary significance of the Reformation. According to the French historian, in fact, "la Réforme n'a été ni un accident, le résultat de quelque grand hasard, de quelque intérêt personnel, ni une simple vue d'amélioration religieuse, le fruit d'une Utopie d'humanité et de vérité". The Reformation entails a reason that was "plus puissante que tout cela, et qui domine toutes les causes particulières. Elle a été un grand élan de liberté de l'esprit humain, un besoin nouveau de penser, de juger librement, pour son compte, avec ses seules forces, des faits et des idées que jusque-là l'Europe recevait ou était tenue de recevoir des mains de l'autorité". In the French Calvinist historian's view, the Reformation was "une grande tentative d'affranchissement de la pensée humaine; et pour appeler les choses par leur nom, une insurrection de l'esprit humain contre le pouvoir absolu dans l'ordre spirituel. Tel est [...] le véritable caractère, le caractère général et dominant de la Réforme"¹⁵. Therefore, in the history of modern Europe there is a peculiar parallelism between religious and civil societies in their fortunes and revolutions¹⁶. Such a parallelism can be traced also in the thought of Guizot, who confirmed the similarities between these two societies: "quelle frappante similitude de destinée se rencontre, dans l'histoire de l'Europe moderne, entre la société religieuse et la société civile, dans les révolutions qu'elles ont eu à subir"¹⁷. However, he stressed the primacy of the religious society over the civil one, which, in his opinion, has always paved the way through the spiritual emancipation of mankind well before the prefiguration of the spiritual emancipation of citizens. According to Guizot, the Reformation represented the starting point of modern Europe because of the predominance of "le libre examen, la liberté de l'esprit humain"¹⁸ at that time. Although this interpretation may appear somewhat strained by Guizot's Enlightenment and liberal view and distorted by the Romanticism perspective, it helps us understand how much the Reformation affected the formation of the liberal thought in the early 19th century and how much crucial it was to understand the nature of the historical events linked to the passage from the Middle Ages to the modern age and its political implications.

¹⁵ Guizot F., *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'empire romain jusqu'à la révolution française*, Bruxelles, Langlet et Comp., Paris, 1938, p. 315-316.

¹⁶ Chabod F., *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998, p. 155.

¹⁷ Guizot F., *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en Europe*, op. cit., p. 328.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

The Protestant Reformation had a major impact on society, because it prejudiced the ancient political stability and clearly expressed its opposition to authority and the centralization of power¹⁹. On the one hand, the absolutist character of the Catholic Church had become an obstacle to the free expression of belief and the management of the ecclesiastical communities located far from Rome²⁰; on the other hand, the Emperor's interference in local matters clashed with the political and economic interest of the emerging classes and with the hegemonic aims of the German princes. Bainton believed that the rising system of the national states, seen as the great revolution in Europe's political structure in the 16th century, had benefited from a chequered policy implemented by the Catholic Church, which in turn supported and thwarted feudal conflicts according to its interests, thus damaging the stability of the Empire²¹. According to Bainton, Protestant movements were also not exempt from responsibilities because, in their clashes with Rome, they were in a symmetrical position in relation to the anti-imperial policy carried out by the German principalities. This fact explains why Lutheranism is generally linked to the development of German nationalism. The Reformation was able to dismantle, through new (national) states, the Roman unity that proto-Christianity could not destroy, and that was its positive value. However, as its universalistic function transcended national particularisms, this was both its first step and its first damage. The Reformation, in order to foster the consolidation of nationalities against Catholicism, became a pawn in the princes' hands and had to wait for a long time before its self-denial gave origin to its new rise²².

This hypothesis seems to be partially plausible because German Protestantism made use of the help of the German princes and played on their patriotic spirit to establish itself against Roman Catholicism. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, however, it is necessary to stress that Protestants supported all national states fighting against Rome, but not because they cultivated real national feelings²³. In fact, Bainton himself stated that Protestantism never wanted to "favour a particular state structure, but to promote the freedom to practise"²⁴ true religion. As a matter of fact, after the burning of the papal bull in Wittenberg, during the Diet of

¹⁹ Chabod F., *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, op. cit., p. 154.

²⁰ Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante*, op. cit., p. 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

²² Gangale G., "Itinerario del cristianesimo", in *Conscientia*, IV, 13 (28 Marzo 1925), p. 3.

²³ Luther, in his pamphlet *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, where he denied the Pope the right to deal with political and earthly issues, did not mean to praise the German national virtues, but rather to support the rebellion of the German princes against Rome and the Empire. Lutero M., *Scritti politici*, edited by G. Panzieri Saija, Torino, Utet, 1960. See also Miegge G., *Lutero*, op. cit.

²⁴ Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante*, op. cit., p. 210.

Worms in 1521, Luther faced and defied the Emperor with his unappealable words: "I cannot go against my conscience". Therefore, standing above the parties, he contested both Catholic and Roman-German authorities, with the intention to oppose Catholic authority not through a Germanic culture nation but through the freedom of conscience.

It is true, however, that Reformed Protestants granted their freedom of conscience, hence their religious freedom, by promoting the creation assembly-like of autonomous political and institutional bodies, where popular sovereignty and the contractual theory of government could prevail²⁵. Whilst Lutheranism remained circumscribed to the Germanic-Scandinavian area and kept its links with the feudal system, Calvinism spread all over Europe and was able to adapt itself to the system and the institutions typical of free cities. At the same time Lutheranism stayed close to the policy of the German princes, thus indirectly fuelling the rising national feelings, the dynamism and the extraordinary creativity of Calvinism, helping the promotion and the circulation of basically democratic political and ecclesiastical models²⁶. Finally, Lutheranism acted within a feudal system and had to deal with the German princes, its only supporters and counterparts, and that made the movement politically rigid and kept it away from social matters. However, it is important to remember that the idea of covenant, together with the aptitude of the German culture to accept the federal thought, was already part of the German Protestant tradition, but he also stated that such an idea had been subjected for centuries to a continuous struggle between opposing powers, which aimed at asserting the principle of authority. The history of Germany "partially reflects a struggle between liberal and illiberal forces in which covenant-related ideas were often pitted against authoritarian conceptions of 'state'"²⁷.

Calvinists, on the contrary, were citizens and not subjects, had an active participation in community issues and were asked to take part in the city government through its institutions²⁸. That allowed a deeper penetration of the Reformed movement and its ideas in the fabric of society, and Calvinism proved to be more sensitive to the calls for renewal coming from the society itself. In city-states the identity between political and ecclesiastical communities is emphasized by its being inoculated in the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-221. See also Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*; De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, *op. cit.*; Bein Ricco E. (ed.), *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*; Mesnard P., *Il pensiero politico rinascimentale*, 2 Vols., edited by Firpo L., Bari, Laterza, 1963-1964.

²⁶ On the Calvinist paradigm, see Küng H., *Cristianesimo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 564 and ff.

²⁷ Elazar D.J., "Introduction", in Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²⁸ McGrath A.E., *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore e la sua influenza sulla cultura occidentale*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002, pp. 143-71.

citizens' conscience²⁹. Calvinism was able to enter various and heterogeneous contexts also because of its ability to "permeate" people, and it gave a strong boost to the reform of both political systems and social structures. These are just some of the many political differences between the Episcopal and Presbyterian trends. As explained afterwards, the most relevant convergences with federal thought and practices took place within the Reformed movement, particularly within Calvinism and its various ramifications³⁰.

On a general level and despite the variety of theological and ecclesiastic differences, however, Protestants were always unanimous in their universalistic vocation, and provided their movement with an international impact. The Reformation mainly aimed at giving back the Church its dignity, and this would have been possible only by overcoming papal theocracy, upwards and downwards. Over the centuries, the separation between the top of the pyramid and Christians had widened so much that Luther himself replaced the word *Kirche* (Church) with *Gemeinde* (community), in order to separate the idea of Church, seen as the local expression of the universality of God's people, from the religious institution subjected to the authority of the Pope. However, the intention of renewing the Church and producing a new European society through the use of the Bible as a normative doctrinal authority and by organizing the primitive Church as an institutional model generated a wide ecclesiological and theological pluralism that was not part of the original plan of the fathers of the Reformation.

The Roman Church, for its part, claimed to be the only real Church and the only authority legitimized to rule Christian people. Protestants, instead, promoted a faith liberated from clerical absolutism and canonical laws, allowing believers to express and profess their faith freely, from Church communities to confessional and ecumenical ones. This way, Protestants could be consistent and could express their faith freely through suitable ecclesiastic institutions. It is then reasonable to say that, in consideration of the times, in the long term the Churches born during the Reformation, namely a disruptive process within the Christian world, were guided by the opposite principle of the unity of faith, namely a reconstructive process of the universal Church³¹. Such a condition had a strong impact on

²⁹ Decot R., *Breve storia della Riforma protestante*, op. cit., p. 69.

³⁰ Tourn G., "Introduzione", in Calvino G., *Istituzione della religione cristiana*, 2 Vols., edited by G. Tourn, Torino, Utet, 2009, pp. 9-56, Vol. I; Peyronel Rambaldi S. (ed.), *Giovanni Calvino e la Riforma in Italia. Influenze e conflitti*, Torino, Calaudiana, 2011; Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, Torino, Claudiana, 2012; See also Troeltsch E., *Le dottrine sociali delle Chiese*, op. cit., pp. 379 and ff, II Vol.

³¹ It is well known that the ongoing ecumenical process was promoted for the first time in an Orthodox-Protestant environment, just like the many attempts of approach and

both the ecclesiastical constitution and the organization of ecclesiastic communities, and it helped to promote a type of confessional unity in the Protestant world based on various diversities³². Here we can observe how the Reformed Protestantism has developed in two basic dimensions of federalistic social behaviour: community and cosmopolitanism³³. These two dimensions are partially referable to Protestant society as well, because they represent the cornerstones of the believers' faith, who can perceive themselves, at the same time, as members of their own Church-community organized around a confession of faith, and as members of Christ's universal Church, where all denominations unite.

It is also possible to observe that the Protestant conception of faith lacks the exclusivism claimed by a Church standing up as the sole depository of the only truth. In fact, the Medieval Church had built itself on the basis of its institutions and not on its own spiritual essence, thus transforming the truth into an instrument of power and preventing the creation of independent Christian communities able to profess their faith and to find their unity on the basis of a common vocation.

Of course it is not possible to speak of federalism, let alone ecumenism. Still, we witness the birth of a new and multiform cultural entity, in which diversity starts being perceived at first as a distinctive value and then as a constructive confrontation. In fact, the confessional independence and awareness conquered during the 16th and 17th centuries would have triggered, one century later, an opposite process aimed at the quest for a confessional convergence to be obtained not by means of a strict unitarian system, but on the basis of the principle of independence, more in line with the nature of Protestantism. Therefore, in the Protestant culture the modern idea of "unity within diversity" was steadily gathering pace; such a principle was almost integral to the mentality of Protestants and it was also the necessary condition for a federal society. Likewise, the free theological and intellectual confrontation fostered by the Protestant Reformation helped not only to create a confessional pluralism, but also to develop some of the necessary conditions for the development of modern democratic societies, including the sense of individual responsibility, transcending every strict institutional setting to settle in a broader constitutional framework, a communitarian and assembly system based on spontaneous participation; and a concept that anticipates the modern notion of laity, i.e. the relationship

interconfessional solidarity that the Protestant world tried to develop over the centuries, in an effort to find the elements of a unitarian convergence through the dialogue and the proper respect for differences. Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico*, *op. cit.*, Vols. I and II.

³² Vinay V., *La riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*

³³ See Albertini M., "Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo", *op. cit.*, p. 134.

between Church and State, where politics are independent from religious faith and vice versa. Essentially, divisions are the price to be paid to provide the confessional pluralism of Protestant Churches with a positive connotation; this seemingly negative aspect, however, may represent a distinctive feature of the Evangelical world, just like the ecumenical vocation.

From an external point of view, then, the main difference between Protestants and Catholics, before the liturgy, is of an organizational nature: Protestants are more independent than Catholics, as far as confession and liturgy are concerned, and within the Protestant world Reformed Churches tend intrinsically more towards a greater differentiation. The Reformation is different from Roman Catholicism because it does not aim at appearing as a homogeneous entity, but is founded on the differences that made it an experimental workshop projected into modernity, where the success of innovations was not due to their "bewitching power" but to the possibility to experience them in practice. What gave this world its unitary nature was not doctrine but dialectics, not preservation but debating³⁴.

Therefore, free confrontation and intellectual debating, as well as toleration towards religious rivals³⁵ and a peculiar ecclesiastical pragmatism, became some of the distinctive features of the Protestant society. These characteristics fostered the theological research and led to the ecclesiastical and confessional differentiation still characterizing the universe of the Churches born after the Reformation. Afterwards these religious values became secularized in civil society, and it is likely that the consequences of such conquests within the religious culture started appearing, properly assimilated, in political life as new social behaviours. This process also influenced the organization of civil society and the management of power, with the establishment of important institutional "inventions", strictly connected with religion – as in the case of Geneva in Calvin's time³⁶. The relationships between secular and spiritual environments often led to the

³⁴ McGrath A.E., *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore, op. cit.*, pp. 315-332.

³⁵ Within the framework of the Reformation, the use of the word "tolerance" seems to be inaccurate, at least in the modern sense of the term. Despite that, Protestantism was quite tolerant faith-wise, compared to Catholicism, which fought heresies by means of systematical persecutions, often having recourse to repressive methods and using its political power. Compared to the Roman Church, which denied for a long time any form of disapproval against the doctrine, the Protestant world immediately introduced itself as a multiconfessional and multiform reality, based on confrontation as a necessary and inborn condition. Therefore, Protestants were prepared to accept all differences and were more open to dialogue. Even the Protestant world, however, was not exempt from intolerance, as in the case of Michael Servetus, sentenced to death for heresy in Calvin's "tolerant" Geneva. Finally, one of the darkest moments in Protestant history was the persecution of the Anabaptists. Gastaldi U., *Storia dell'anabattismo*, 2 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1981-1992.

³⁶ Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico, op. cit.*

mutual exchange of patterns and ideas, thus originating new social structures and original systems of government. As in the case of the Protestants, it is not unusual to find in the cities ruled by them some political entities showing the prerequisites for a pre-democratic society and for republican-like institutions.

Following the Reformation, two different religious cultures took shape within Western Christianity, two antithetical ways to conceive their Church and, as a consequence, also the political and social life³⁷. Catholicism and Protestantism showed up as two Christian identities of a “cultural-religious” nature in mutual contrast to their mentality and religious behaviours, as well as to their relationship with the social and political world. These non-static religious identities were perceived and received as alternatives³⁸ and cast their opposite cultural characteristics over modernity: on the one hand, there was the Roman-Catholic environment with its strict ecclesiastical structure and confessional uniformity; on the other hand, Protestants promoted the idea of the differentiation of the ecclesiastic hierarchy on a denominational basis and characterized by the presence of many confessions of faith³⁹. Both, however, identify themselves in the unity of Christian people, despite some basic differences: the Catholics believed that the Pope was the only possible unifying element, while the Protestants provided the Word with an aggregative and unifying power.

Beside these tangible effects, the importance of the cultural revolution triggered by Protestantism was not limited only to the confessional and ecclesiastical diversification, but it also produced some major changes within European society, with lasting consequences on the development of modern thought, particularly through the secularisation of some of its basic theological obligations. According to Ernst Troeltsch, Protestantism was the “place” of the gestation of modernity⁴⁰ and some of its “effects” contributed to the development of modern culture and conscience by raising new questions and introducing new and fruitful values, including popular sovereignty, the separation of Church and State, the freedom of conscience, religious tolerance and finally individual independence, which all of these values derive from.

³⁷ Troeltsch E., *Le dottrine sociali delle Chiese*, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-63, and Küng H., *Cristianesimo*, *op. cit.*

³⁹ It has to be stressed that the “denominational” character of the Evangelical Churches is not always the same, because Protestantism encompasses many denominational families, each having different confessions, ecclesiastical institutions and internal organizations. Guerriero E. (ed.), *Le Chiese della Riforma*, X Vol., *Storia del Cristianesimo 1878-2005*, 14 Vols., Cinisello Balsamo, San Paolo, 2001; Long G., *Ordinamenti giuridici delle chiese protestanti*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008.

⁴⁰ Troeltsch E., *Il significato del protestantesimo per la formazione del mondo moderno*, *op. cit.*

These values, widely spread within democratic and, particularly, federal societies, led to a gap with the old order, as Troeltsch stated, whose disappearance allowed the redefinition of the relationship between religion and society, State and Church within a more diversified and pluralist Europe⁴¹.

Individual independence, theologically linked to the concept of “predestination”⁴², is not only a crucial element in Protestant theological thinking, but it is also a “matter of conscience” that had serious implications on political thought. Predestination put the stress on personal responsibility and lifted mankind’s conscience to a higher ethical plan, thus giving new dignity to the individual as a whole. Therefore, the subjective dimension of faith, together with the pivotal importance given to man by the Renaissance and humanistic culture, celebrated individualism⁴³. Protestant ethics, however, revalued the individual perspective within the framework of responsibilities, that is to say that Protestantism held the freedom of conscience directly to the law and the Word of God, without the intermediation of any authority. The consequences of such a process partially affected associated, political and economic life, where, – as Giovanni Jervis stated – the Protestant ethics gave “to lay societies the pattern of an individualist psychology giving a sense of responsibility”⁴⁴. He also added that the first examples of organizations based on the idea of individual responsibility and which gave origin to the first democratic experiments,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Predestination postulates the concept of Grace. Protestants think that Grace is a God-given gift to some chosen people independently of their behaviour and ethics. Grace, and therefore salvation, cannot be reached through actions, but only through God’s mysterious will. The idea of predestination inevitably leads to a dilemma on free will, because mankind, being chosen by God, would not be free to choose between good and evil anymore. However, the predestination is not a metaphysical, but existential concept. Divine election takes place before the beginning of history, fulfills it and ends with Judgment Day. The believer, placing himself within this space-time framework, lives free from his condition to establish himself as a responsible person before God’s call. What makes the believer an individual is the fact of being interpellated by God; therefore, predestination is not based on the rules of some kind of determinism, but on God’s intervention which manifests itself with his call. The concept of freedom without determination forms the basis of a renewed behaviour that overturns the vertical structure of the medieval order. Such structure is overlapped by a horizontal one where the individual, being given a sense of responsibility, is driven to organize himself, socially and politically, on the basis of new associative categories. Among these, the federal category is perfectly functional to the individualistic and universalistic idea of Protestant psychology. In any case, predestination is one of the most forceful rules affecting the customs and the culture of modern society. See Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Cotta G., *La nascita dell’individualismo politico. Lutero e la politica della modernità*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2002. See also Jervis G., *Individualismo e cooperazione. Psicologia della politica*, Bari-Roma: Laterza, 2002 and Adam A., *Teologia politica*, Torino, Claudiana, 2008, pp. 149 and ff.

⁴⁴ Jervis G., *Individualismo e cooperazione*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

as in the English and American revolutions, were basically related to the Puritan conception "of the relationship between the individual and the community, upon which the modern idea of democracy has been built"⁴⁵.

The Protestant Reformation freed the conscience of all believers and showed them the way to their own interiority. Each individual then became a spiritually-independent subject and claimed the right to self-determination. This event "carries the fundamental right to the freedom of conscience"⁴⁶ which, in turn, is the matrix of all other rights. In fact, the scholar continues, an individual can become free and start to create and build a political order able to protect individual freedom only through the awareness of his personal responsibility. As such, all moral individuals, independent and holding inborn and inalienable rights within a free political society, created in their own image, become citizens and lose the ancient connotation of subject. This fact gave origin, "along the path to modern world, to the great project of transformation" of individuals "from subjects to citizens, as codified in the famous 'Declarations of Rights'"⁴⁷. This document represents the founding and unavoidable postulate for the birth of the liberal and democratic State, and particularly the origin of the most important and broader expression of democracy: the federation.

Some may object that the federal idea is a political one because it refers to the political organization of people and states; but all political revolutions have to be followed by a social revolution and he finally states that a federative political triumph is impossible without a previous acknowledgement of the principle of individuality within the social field⁴⁸. It is no accident that responsible individualism, through which freedom can be obtained by the formulation of a covenant, is a key element of federal societies but its origins date back to the Reformation and its cultural elements. It is therefore possible to say that the covenant, together with the "centrality of conscience", is one of the capital consequences of the Protestant Reformation that suggested, directed and shaped the succeeding establishment of political institutional patterns within Reformed societies⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

⁴⁶ Bein Ricco E. (ed.), *Libera chiesa in libero Stato?*, Torino, Claudiana, 2005, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Elazar D.J., *Exploring Federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 and ff. See also Monti A., *L'idea federalistica italiana e i progetti di federazione europea*, Milano, Sonzogno, 1945, p. 21.

⁴⁹ The Reformed Protestantism made at least three main contributions to modernity, and particularly to the development of the concept of laity taken as the construction of a new form of state government. Firstly, the Calvinist theory according to which magistrates of a lower rank have to disobey magistrates of a higher rank or even to remove them from office in case of non-fulfillment of their duties; secondly, the Synod, or assembly of believers, set up for the government of the Church and forerunner of modern demo-

The Protestant revaluation of the covenant is due to two main reasons: firstly, the need to organize Christian communities as much as possible in line with the biblical teachings; and, secondly, the “flowering” of hermeneutics and theological researches. In the first case, the focus is on the institutional organization of communities within primitive Christianity, while in the second case these disciplines aim at studying in detail the origin and the nature of the Covenant between God and his people. The rediscovery of the covenant is then linked to another crucial aspect of the Reformation, namely the absolute centrality and the sole authority of the Bible (*sola scriptura*).

Catholics and Protestants started colliding on the ground of testamentary exegesis, which paved the way to the free interpretation of the Scriptures and to many different theological and ecclesiological remarks. The Protestants’ attitude nullified the authority of the ecclesiastic hierarchy by replacing it with the authority of the Word, thus deteriorating once and for all the Roman absolutism and the monopoly of the scriptural interpretation. The hermeneutical research became a theological tool allowing the access to the truth contained in the Word, and through which judging the teachings of the Church. According to Sergio Rostagno, using the Bible as a starting point means “denying any other authority”, getting rid of any “unreserved obedience to the dictates of a Church or a philosophy”⁵⁰. This position “will eventually take on a political significance, thus favouring democracy”⁵¹. The acknowledgement of the Word as the supreme authority encourages a vertical motion of consciences which, freed from any doctrinaire influences, can relate directly to God without invalidating their confessional connotation and the belonging to a community. In fact, the ecclesiology stemming from the Reformation envisaged different types of Churches, but they were all based on the notion of the Church, both at the local and universal level, as the consequence of the preaching of the Gospel. While the confession of faith was a sort of *ante litteram* constitution for believers and citizens to comply with, the concept of biblical covenant spread to the relationships between men and communities, and was first applied to the organization of social life. The next paragraphs will notably deal with the pivotal role of the covenant in the Reformed tradition and its systematizations in the Puritan “federal theology”.

In this regard, it is possible to make reference to Elazar, who prefigures the historical and temporal framework of the conceptual evolution – up to its political meaning – of the “covenant” in the Reformed world, starting right from its rediscovery in the Holy Scriptures:

cratic parliaments; finally, the covenant intended as the standard methodology of the Reformed Churches, either for the establishment of the Church or the setting-up of the State or, at least, of civil communities.

⁵⁰ Rostagno S., “Introduzione”, in Guerriero E. (ed.), *Le Chiese della Riforma, op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Beginning with Zwingli (1543) and Bullinger (1532), the covenant was revived in the lands of the Reformation, particularly where Reformed, Calvinist and free churches emerged (Switzerland, parts of Germany, Puritan England, Presbyterian Scotland, the Dutch provinces and Huguenot France). In seeking a basis for constructing new churches and communities, the people of those lands turned to their Bibles. Thus, the covenant was revived as a matter of not only religious but also political concern.⁵²

2. From “federal theology” to political federalism

There is a close cultural relationship between the “covenant theology”, or “federal theology”⁵³, and the ideal heritage of modern federalism⁵⁴. As aforementioned, the authors of *The Federalist* were of Protestant origin and had an unmistakable reformed-evangelic cultural matrix⁵⁵. North American federalism is characterized by a peculiar mixture of two elements: one of a theological nature and the other of a juridical and

⁵² Elazar D.J., “Introduction”, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁵³ Federal theology was an important current within Reformed theology in the 16th and 17th centuries, and had a major impact on social and political thought and actions. It is important to reassert that the core of all the ideas of modern political science is of a theological nature. Carl Schmitt claims that the most significant concepts of the doctrine of the State cannot “genealogically” prescind from their theological origin (Schmitt C., “Teologia politica. Quattro capitoli sulla dottrina della sovranità”, in *Id.*, *Le categorie del “politico”. Saggi di teoria politica*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1972, p. 27-86). Therefore, the aim of the political theology, is to prove that despite the repeated “attempts to get rid of tradition and to set things up in a new way”, modernity is strongly influenced “by what had supposedly been left behind, that is the theological models” (Armin A., *Teologia politica, op. cit.*, p. 7). The federal idea, in its contemporary political meaning, is rooted in the federal theology. The origins of modern federalism go back to the elaboration of the covenant by the Reformed exegetical tradition which, in modern times, underwent a gradual secularization process and became a key concepts of political science. On the concept of federal theology, see Malandrino C., *Teologia federale, op. cit.*, pp. 427-46; Weir D.A., *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought*, New York, Oxford University Press 1990; Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection, op. cit.*

⁵⁴ For further details on the relationship between biblical covenant and federalism, see Elazar’s works, in particular: *Federalism as Grand Design, op. cit.*, pp. 1-8 and *The Covenant Tradition in Politics, op. cit.* See also Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli, op. cit.* and McCoy C.S. and Baker J.W., *Fountainhead of Federalism, op. cit.*, and Miegge M., “Sulla politica riformata”, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-66. On the implications of Protestant thought in the various social and political events in Europe during the creation of national states, see De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani, op. cit.*

⁵⁵ In the debate on the new American Constitution, the Scriptures were not only instrumental in supporting the political vision of the Founding Fathers, but also the direct source used to support their thesis. There is a very tight link between political thought and religious principles in the reflections of the first American politicians. Dreisbach D.L., Hall M.D., Morrison J.H., *The Founders on God and Government, op. cit.* and Samson S.S., “The Covenant Origins of the American Polity”, in *Contra Mundum*, No. 10 (Winter 1994), pp. 26-38.

constitutional nature⁵⁶. The first element consists of the inspiration coming from the Puritan federal theology of the *covenant*, while the second is the tendency to consolidate such an inspiration in written records of a constitutional nature to provide the new colonial communities with stable institutions⁵⁷. Besides, the spirit guiding North American colonization was not alien to precise religious features and even to palingenetic purposes⁵⁸.

The conscience of many pastors and colonists that headed for the New World to build, in that wide and wild country, a renewed and fairer human society was guided by the moral imperative to establish the new communities on the political and religious values that had been banned by absolutism and European monarchies. The establishment and the enforcement of principles such as tolerance and religious community, freedom and virtue were perceived "as a mission – inscribed in God's plans – by pastors who were at the same time political leaders", like John Winthrop and men of faith like William Penn. Indeed, in the American *Declaration of Independence* (1776) "converged many ideas based on Protestantism, natural law and the principles of the social contract, together with utilitarian and Enlightenment theories"⁵⁹. Significant examples of the link between religious ideas and juridical principles are the studies on natural law carried out in Geneva and France in the 18th century. The Founding Fathers of the United States were influenced not only by Grotius, Locke and Montesquieu⁶⁰, but mostly by Samuel von Pufendorf and Emerich de Vattel⁶¹. The former, a German

⁵⁶ Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, op. cit., pp. 39 and ff.

⁵⁷ Federal and Covenant were strictly related, just like political and religious issues at the time of the Reformation. In fact, "in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the era when the institutions of the modern world were taking shape, federal theologians dealt with political as well as ecclesiastical issues and political philosophers concerned with societal covenants dealt also with religious issues". McCoy C.S. and Baker J.W., *Fountainhead of Federalism*, op. cit., pp. 11-12. On the *covenant* see: Elazar D.J., "The Political Theory of Covenant: Biblical Origins and Modern Developments", in *Publius*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 3-30; Strehle S., *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism: A Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Covenant*, New York, Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 1988.

⁵⁸ Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, op. cit., p. 39. Per un documento testimoniale, see Mather C., "Le grandi opere di Cristo in America (1702)", in Campi E. (ed.), *Protestantesimo nei secoli. Fonti e documenti*, 2 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1991, pp. 406-7, Vol. I.

⁵⁹ Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, op. cit., p. 39.

⁶⁰ On Locke e Montesquieu, see Casalini B., "L'esprit di Montesquieu negli Stati Uniti d'America durante la seconda metà del XVIII Secolo", in Felice D. (ed.), *Montesquieu e i suoi interpreti*, 2 Vols., Pisa, ETS, 2005. On Grozio Keene E., *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

⁶¹ On the secularisation of the juridical thought in the 17th century, see Todescan F., *Le radici teologiche del giusnaturalismo laico. Il problema della secolarizzazione nel pensiero giuridico del sec. XVII*, Padova, Cedam, 2014.

Protestant expert in natural law theory, was well-known for his work *De officio Hominis et civis*⁶²; the latter, a Swiss jurist, wrote a very important reformulation of the people's rights⁶³. To the above-mentioned intellectuals, who had inspired the authors of *The Federalist*⁶⁴, should be added the Calvinist scholar Gian Giacomo Burlamacchi, professor of natural law at the Academy of Geneva from 1723 to 1739⁶⁵, who suggested Jefferson to introduce the principle of happiness in the Declaration. In other words, in the first half of the 18th century, a Calvinist-based school of thought gained ground in Europe; this trend referred to Protestant theology for the development of the doctrines of natural law and revived the debate on the principles of freedom, human rights and the constitutions of free peoples, and the North-American colonies were the ideal cultural, religious, social and political ground to experiment on innovative political and institutional models, such as democracy and federalism⁶⁶.

The link between the genesis of modern Federalism, epitomized in the creation of the United States of America, and the Protestant culture,

⁶² Pufendorf S. von, *De officio hominis et civis, juxta legem naturalem libri duo*, New York-London, Oceana Publications Inc., Wildy & Sons Ltd., 1964. On his thinking, Welzel H., *La dottrina giusnaturalistica di Samuel Pufendorf. Un contributo alla storia delle idee dei secoli XVII e XVIII*, Torino, Giappichelli, 1993.

⁶³ De Vattel E., *Le droit des gens, ou Principes de la loi naturelle, appliqués à la conduite et aux affaires des Nations et des Souverains*, 2 Vols, Londres, 1758.

⁶⁴ Garosci A. (ed.), *Il pensiero politico degli autori del "Federalist", op. cit.* On the legal and philosophical influences related to the birth of the United States, see Goebel J., *The recognition policy of the United States*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1915. On the genesis of American political thought in the period between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of 1787, see McDonald F., *Novus Ordo Seclorum. The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1985. See also, Bravo G.M., Rota Ghibaudi S., *Il pensiero politico contemporaneo*, 3 Vols., Milano, Franco Angeli, 1987, Vol. III.

⁶⁵ McDonald F., "Founding Father's Library", in *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought*, Vol. I, No. 1, (January/March 1978), pp. 4-15; Lutz D.S., "'Appendix': European Works Read and Cited by the American Founding Generation", in *Id.* (ed.), *A Preface to American Political Theory*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1992, pp. 159-164. As remarked by Albert de Lapradelle in his introduction to re-edition of Vattel's work, Grotius, Pufendorf and Burlamacchi were the most popular and commented authors in the American colonies from 1758 to 1776. De Lapradelle A., "Introduction", in De Vattel E., *Le droit des gens, ou Principes de la loi naturelle, appliqués à la conduite et aux affaires des Nations et des Souverains*, Washington, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1916, pp. XXIX-XXX. Burlamacchi would have had a strong impact on Jefferson and Madison, while Hamilton would have referred to him as an introduction to Vattel's thought. McDonald F., "Founding Father's Library", *op. cit.*, p. 11. See also, Goebel J. (ed.), *The Law Practice of Alexander Hamilton. Documents and Commentary*, 5 Vols., New York, Columbia University Press, 1963-1981.

⁶⁶ See Giordano F.M., *L'individuo e la nazione. Federalismo protestante e origini del liberalismo italiano 1787-1848*, Comitato di Torino dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, Roma, Carocci, 2014, pp. 7-50.

seen as a precious source of ideas and experiences, is a well-established historical evidence. Moreover, the federal pactational tradition that provided the theoretical background for the birth of federal institutions, particularly in America, is entirely Protestant. In fact, Protestantism made North American federalism aware of some constitutional tools to establish a wider human society, gradually shifting the concept of covenant/contract from religion to politics. In North American colonies the notion of covenant/contract among individuals deciding to consociate to overcome the pre-political chaos of the state of nature, so to reach the highest rational order of the civil state, spreads for the first time also to communities with a well-defined political and juridical structure, thus triggering a new type of State based on an original distribution of power⁶⁷.

Let's now shift back to the biblical nature of the covenant, so to go through the steps of a conceptual evolution that has given political science a highly innovative institutional model, whose potential still remains largely unexpressed.

Elazar sets the origins of federalism in a context defined by the events in the history of Israel⁶⁸. According to him, such a political system, "established more than 3,000 years ago in the basin of the Mediterranean", was the same that had been adopted in the ancient kingdom of Israel, which was conceived as a "federation in the form of the political community of the twelve tribes"⁶⁹. Moses renewed the old covenant between God and his predecessors and set up the first society ruled by the proto-federal principle of *foedus*. This society was organized in a community of twelve different ethnic groups, each divided into families, and all of them recognized a political and religious covenant among equals. These tribes lived together as independent – yet mutually dependent – cells, according to a system of equality based on the covenant and the legislation deriving from it.

The original form of the federal idea was of a geopolitical nature, which revealed itself in the peculiar relationship between God and man-

⁶⁷ Spini G., *Autobiografia della giovane America: la storiografia americana dai padri pellegrini all'indipendenza*, Torino, Einaudi, 1968; *Id.*, "Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo", in Firpo L. (ed.), *Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali*, 8 Vols., Torino, Utet, 1987, Vol. III. See also Morton N., *New England's Memorial*, Boston, Congregational Board of Publication, 1855; Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.* and *Id.*, *Esodo e Rivoluzione*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1986.

⁶⁸ Elazar D.J., *The covenant idea and the Jewish Political Tradition*, Ramat Gan Israele, Bar Ilan University, 1983. See also Liverani M., *Oltre la Bibbia. Storia antica di Israele*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2007, p. 31.

⁶⁹ Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. XXIII and ff. Genealogy-wise, Elazar attaches crucial importance just to three federal experiences in the history of humanity: the Israelite tribal federation described in the Old Testament, Switzerland and the United States of America. All these experiences are inspired by the Bible and the principles elaborated by the religious culture.

kind, bound together by a covenant that made them equally responsible for the well-being of the world⁷⁰. This covenant concept is mentioned in the Bible and was picked up by Reformed theologians, or “federalist theologians”, between the 16th and the 17th centuries⁷¹. The concomitant revolution of political systems (in a republican sense) in modern times led to a convergence of theology and political thought, and to the practical idea of federalism as a working form of political organization. This way, the ancient idea of the covenant between God and his people, so largely spread in the Holy Scriptures and picked up again by federal theologians, unconsciously sow the seeds of a new social mentality and, subsequently, of a political and institutional mentality not based anymore on nature but on human voluntarism. In this regard, Charles McCoy clearly explains that “in covenantal relationships, the federal thought exercises pressure to expand the scope of political participation and shifts the locus of sovereignty from the ruler or state to the people. Whenever federal theology is transformed into operative federal policies, a republican order takes shape with increasing pressure toward more democratic participation”⁷². Elazar, however, suggests that even if the federal thought in its theological and geopolitical sense had already appeared in the 16th century with the Reformation, this term acquired a fully political significance only in the 18th century with the creation of the United States of America, and it was then used to connote the character of a new constitutional system⁷³.

Therefore, the origins of the federal theology can be set within the Protestant exegetical tradition. The first Reformers to deal with this issue in a systematic way were Calvin and Zwingli, but the outcome of their effort was quite different⁷⁴. Calvin just like many other theologians, approached the notion of covenant, “but because the covenant is not a basic element for his system, he is not regarded as a covenant theologian”⁷⁵; he wanted to give prominence to the testamentary quality as a promise of grace from

⁷⁰ Elazar highlights the moral nature of the covenant and describes various types of pact. He distinguishes the *covenant* (the real covenant or alliance), the *compact* (considered as an agreement without any ethical nature), the *contract* (within the private domain) and finally the *partnership* (the association). Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

⁷² McCoy C.S., “The Theology and Ethics of Johannes Cocceius”, in Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁷³ Elazar D.J., “Federalism and Covenant”, in Id. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection*, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-246.

⁷⁴ On Calvin, see Emerson E.H., “Calvin and Covenant Theology”, in *Church History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (June 1956), pp. 134-144. On Zwingli, see Hagen K., “From Testament to Covenant in the Early Sixteenth Century”, in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1972), pp. 15-24.

⁷⁵ Emerson E.H., “Calvin and Covenant Theology”, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

God, but he refrained from a broader use of this concept. Instead, for the *antistes* of the Church of Zurich, and especially for Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)⁷⁶, his successor, the covenant played a key role in theological thought. It was not a promise of grace anymore, but a condition. And, even if Bullinger thought, in line with the principle of predestination, that only God's grace could save mankind, the mutual and conditional bond of the covenant represented the postulate for the elects to mend their ways and to confess their faith as requested by the Lord. Therefore, Bullinger's theology was focused on the history of salvation and the covenant was its guiding principle and corollary⁷⁷.

Bullinger with his *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* (1534) can be considered the first theoretician of the federal theology (*covenant theologian*). Although his opinions were tied to theological principles and perspectives, in his work it is possible to see the political potential that would have developed this orientation afterwards. In *De testamento*, Bullinger again picked up the covenant tradition and reformulated the pattern of the Covenant between God and mankind in a theological way, maybe with a view – three years after Zwingli's death – to establishing theologically the foundations of Zurich's community, of which he had become the political and spiritual guide. According to the spirit of the Reformation, such a theological orientation could also be considered as the attempt to detect in the Holy Scriptures the pattern of the leading ecclesiastic structure to provide the Christian community with an institutional order as relevant as possible to the divine Law.

⁷⁶ Heinrich Bullinger is one of the most prominent figures of the Reformed world. After Zwingli's death, he was the head of the Zurich Church for 44 years and made it one of the cultural and pastoral points of reference of European Protestantism, putting it side by side with Strasbourg and replacing Wittenberg. After Calvin's death (1564), Bullinger became the guiding light of the Reformed world. The *Confessio Helvetica posterior*, written in 1566, was extremely successful and was translated into many languages. His confession of faith was well-known all over Europe and became one of the symbols of the unity of the Reformed Churches, together with the Heidelberg Catechism. McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism*, *op. cit.*; Baker J. W., *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant. The Other Reformed Tradition*, Athens (OH), Ohio University Press, 1980; Gordon B. and Campi E., *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575*, Grand Rapids (MI), Baker Academic, 2004; Campi E., "Nuovi studi su Heinrich Bullinger", in *Protestantesimo*, No. 3-4 (2007), pp. 195-220; Baker J.W., "Heinrich Bullinger, the Covenant, and the Reformed Tradition in Retrospect", in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (summer 1998), pp. 359-376. On the relations between Bullinger's and Calvin's thought, see Povero M., "Il pensiero di Bullinger e Calvino sul *Foedus* o *Testamentum Dei*", in Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-119.

⁷⁷ Bullinger H., "A Brief Exposition of One and Covenant of God", in McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

Despite Bullinger's use of the covenant mainly in a theological way, later interpretations had also political implications and consequences, and generated – in the tradition of the federal theology – a political use of the notion of covenant, which became the subject of a political reflection when, during the exegetic process, the biblical covenant gradually lost the univocal dimension of a transcendence denying the individual and gave life to the will of mankind in connection with God. Therefore, it became clear that “mutual agreement” with God which gave origin to mankind's vocation to responsibilities and freedom, and that would have modeled the patterns of social relationships and of federal-like political communities⁷⁸.

Therefore, the biblical covenant between God and mankind – a scriptural and strictly religious concept – was later developed and modified by some Reformed theologians and thinkers in the 16th and 17th centuries, including Theodore de Bèze (1519-1605), Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583), Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587), Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) and Francesco Turretini (1623-1687). In particular, Ursinus developed the idea of a previous Covenant of works, separated from the Covenant of grace, elaborated mainly by Bullinger. He combined Bullinger's covenant theory with the idea that God had made a covenant with Adam on the basis of a moral code and the law of nature⁷⁹. This idea fascinated mostly the English Puritans; and it is no accident that these two covenants merged into the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646, a systematic statement of the English Orthodox Calvinism using and referring directly to the covenant. Olevianus, instead, promoted a third type of supra-temporal covenant between Christ and God to expiate the sins of mankind. Finally, Cocceius, professor of theology at the University of Leiden, drew on Olevianus's theories and developed his own federal theology which had a large impact on the above-mentioned Catechism and Westminster Confession⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ Gordon B. and Campi E., *Architect of Reformation, op. cit.*

⁷⁹ Letham R., “The Foedus Operum. Some Factors Accounting for Its Development”, in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 457-68.

⁸⁰ McCoy C.S., “History, Humanity, and Federalism in the Theology and Ethics of Johannes Cocceius”, in Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection, op. cit.*, pp. 52-68. On the other theologians, see also Weir D.A., *The Origins of the Federal Theology, op. cit.*; Visser D., “The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus”, in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (winter 1987), pp. 531-544; Bierma L.D., *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age. The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus*, Grand Rapids (MI) Baker Academic, 1996; Van Asselt W.J., *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669)*, Leiden, Brill, 2001.

Bullinger and later Johannes Althusius⁸¹, played a crucial role in the development of the federal idea, because they took it away from the domain of religious concepts and turned it into a real political principle. A prominent part, was played precisely by Althusius who, at the beginning of the 17th century, gave rise to a new political thought based on the biblical doctrine of the *covenant* and aiming at the creation of a constitutional philosophy centred around the modern concept of *foedus*. In his *Politica Methodice Digesta* (1603), Emden's *Syndicus* outlined the passage from Covenant Theology to proto-modern political federalism; Althusius removed the category of covenant from the ecclesiastical domain and extended its use to secularized life. Mankind entered a new moral dimension, where its relationship with God and the others carried the burden of an unavoidable individual responsibility. As the covenant called the believers back to the laws of the Word and preserved them from mistakes, so the same covenant, in the political and juridical fields, brought individuals back to their responsibilities as citizens. This way, the pactional relationship deriving from the covenant became an essential category of human identity, thus setting up the model for all civil societies.

Althusius was able to develop a theory of natural law by combining a political and social analysis of reality and juridical relationships with the Bible and his own political experiences. Nevertheless, in his *Politica*, Althusius always claimed the independence of politics from religion⁸²,

⁸¹ Johannes Althusius (1557-1638) was a Calvinist jurist, philosopher and theologian. He taught at the Reformed University of Herborn and governed the town of Emden, Lower Saxony, from 1604 to his death. Althusius was deeply influenced by Calvinism and the doctrine of natural law, which turned him into an ardent opposer of monarchical absolutism. His theory of the State revolved around the difference between rulers and subjects, linked by a mutual bond of responsibility sanctioned by a covenant (*foedus*). This bond allowed the subjects to resist their king in case his government turned into a tyranny, in violation of the terms of the covenant. All relations within the State and the society were of a contractual and covenant nature. Althusius's personality has recently come to the fore in the fields of politological and juridical research, and now the Calvinist theologian and jurist is considered as one of the fathers of modern public law, as well as the first theoretician of profederalism. On Althusius, in addition to the above-mentioned *La politica. Elaborata organicamente con metodo, Il lessico della Politica di Johannes Althusius* and *Politica. Un'antologia*, see: Hueglin T., "Covenant and Federalism in the Politics of Althusius", in Elazar D.J. and Kincaid J. (eds.), *The Covenant Connection, op. cit.*, pp. 31-54; Hueglin T., *Early Modern Concepts for a Late Modern World. Althusius on Community and Federalism*, Waterloo (Ont), Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999; Malandrino C., "Discussioni su Althusius, lo Stato moderno e il federalismo", in *Pensiero Politico*, XXXVII, No. 3 (2004), pp. 425-438; Duso G., "Althusius. Pensatore per una società postmoderna?", in *Filosofia Politica*, IV, No. 1 (1990), pp. 163-175; *Id.*, "Althusius e l'idea federalista", *op. cit.*; Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*

⁸² Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*, p. 62.

even if the influence of theology on his thought is undeniable. It is important, however, to remember that Althusius cleverly avoided mixing political, theological and jurisprudential aspects, without denying their mutual bonds⁸³. On the contrary Emden's *Syndacus* used the Holy Scriptures to get his *exempla*, in an attempt to find the ideal political order whose non-existence he was then forced to admit. However, in the Books of Exodus, Joshua, Judges and Samuel, Althusius detected a pre-monarchical political structure based on federal consensus, the only organization able to overcome "human frailty and the constant threat of tyranny"⁸⁴. Therefore, in Althusius the *potestas* was "neither *absoluta* nor *summa*"⁸⁵, but it was limited by two "barriers": on the one hand, the Law of Moses (*Decalogi leges*) and, on the other hand, the federal constitution of *universalis consociatio*. In the Althusian system of symbiotic *consociationes* clearly emerges the influence of the theory of the *covenant*, which is the linchpin of the establishment of "saint" communities.

Althusius's profederalism is especially visible in the concept of *symbiosis*, "considered as the core of *pactum*", and then of *foedus* and the "mediate relationship with the federal and theological traditions"⁸⁶.

In his *Politica*, Althusius "established his federal union" founded on an underlying hierarchy of smaller unions based on the *foedus*⁸⁷. Therefore the concept of *foedus*, borrowed from the religious culture and adapted to civil life, became the archetypal structure of human sociality. Hence, sociality carries a political gene applicable to both the private and public fields. The Althusian State (*consociatio symbiotica*) relies on a broad network of private (marriage, family, etc.) and public (cities, provinces and reigns) associations intersecting each other (according to the principle of association in *collegia*, where the citizens come to an agreement to establish the rules for the association). Elazar explains how Althusius "saw all proper human relationship as being founded upon covenants, beginning with the family and extending to the creation of free policies"⁸⁸. Friedrich agrees with Althusius's vision and also adds that the covenant among "symbiotics" (i.e. those living together) could be explicit or implicit, of a sharing nature aimed at the pursuing of common interests and utilities. This long

⁸³ Maladrino C., "Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, 'sussidiarietà' e lessico politico althusiano", in Ingravalle F. and Malandrino C. (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.*, p. XXVIII; and also *Id.*, "Foedus (confederatio)", *op. cit.*, pp. 187-201.

⁸⁴ Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁸⁶ Malandrino C., "Foedus (confoederatio)", *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁸⁷ Friedrich C.J., *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

⁸⁸ Elazar D.J., "Introduction", *op. cit.*, p. 8.

chain of associations, ranging from the family to the cities and beyond, was framed around a series of "covenants" where the unity was "made of the previous lower units, so that, once the top reached, the members of the State [...] [were] neither individuals, nor families, guilds or other lower communities, but only provinces and free cities"⁸⁹. Althusius's profederalist system, however, lacked a basic concept of modern federalism, i.e. the one "considering the federal union as the combination of individuals, as well as of states"⁹⁰; in any case, this concept will be developed only after the creation of the United States of America. It must be remembered that the interpretation of Althusius's *Politica* cannot prescind from a critical analysis of his lexicon. For example, opinion is divided on the use, hence on the real meaning, of the term *foedus* in his work. It is no coincidence that some historians of juridical and political thought believe that Althusius is "the most important 'translator' of federal theology into a political and juridical doctrine", while others claim that Althusius's use of the *foedus* is referable to "the 'federal hierarchical' humanistic tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages"⁹¹.

Althusius's theory marks the crucial passage from Bullinger's *Covenant Theology* or federal theology to the first theorization of modern political federalism; to put it in Wayne Baker's words, Althusius was "the bridge between the religious covenant and political federalism"⁹², even though the latter had not yet been systematized in a purely political theory.

The biblical archetype of the covenant between God and mankind, between God and his people, was shifted in the world of human relationship with the same ethical power, and the main actors were the people and their magistrate. Such an archetype "is the figure behind the Calvinist covenant among the 'saints', in Althusius and in Puritans", both English and American; and it is the same principle "underlying the establishment

⁸⁹ Friedrich C.J., *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-293.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁹¹ Malandrino C., "Foedus (confoederatio)", *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189. For further details and explanations on Althusius's lexicon, see Ingravalle F. and Malandrino C. (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.* For a historical and political analysis of *Politica*, and an introduction to Althusian profederalism, see Malandrino C., "Calvinismo politico", *op. cit.*, pp. XVII-LI. See also Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*; Calderini L., *La "Politica" di Althusius. Tra rappresentanza e diritto di resistenza*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1995; Hueglin T., *Early Modern Concepts for a Late Modern World*, *op. cit.*; Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*; Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-8; Coffey J., Elazar D.J., Miegge M., *et al.*, "Johannes Althusius (1557-1638)", in *Studi di Teologia*, XIX, No. 38 (2007/2).

⁹² Baker J.W., "Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson", in *Publius*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2000), p. 30.

of the republics of 'saints'⁹³ as in the England of Cromwell and in the Puritans of Massachusetts.

Thanks to Bullinger and Althusius, federalism established itself in Reformed Europe at first as a theological principle with pre-political connotations and then as a political category with theological assumptions. As everybody knows, in the Old World federalism was not able to find a suitable way to be used in any constitutional structure and it was even less successful in the science of the organization of the State, where the theory of the centralization of power and of the opposite principle of national sovereign State prevailed. Bullinger and Althusius were put aside in favour of Bodin and Hobbes⁹⁴, but their insights, which were already known in Reformed Europe, crossed the Atlantic "on board of the *Mayflower*" and landed in the New World, where the idea of *covenant*, picked up in a political way by the emigrated English Protestants, was later complemented with the main arguments of the English Puritan revolution. These colonists mixed the covenant tradition with the *common law* inherited by the English law, and laid the social and cultural foundations of the new American political communities. In this sense, although this theory is yet to be clearly verified, we can agree with Miegge when he claims that "the English *Pilgrims* [...] and Emden's *Syndacus* spoke the same language", and that it was "neither anachronistic nor ideologically forced"⁹⁵. In this regard, it has to be remembered that during that turbulent period of persecutions, Althusius was at the height of his political activity and his main goal was to protect the independence of the Frisian town by forming an alliance with the United Provinces, which at that time (1620) were the favourite refuge of the dissident Pilgrims fleeing England. This is one of the crucial historical moments that marked the transfer of profederal experiences and ideas from Europe to America⁹⁶.

⁹³ Malandrino C., "Calvinismo politico", *op. cit.*, p. XXXII.

⁹⁴ Bullinger and Althusius's work has been rediscovered by the historical, theological and politological research only in recent times. As Campi notes, a "systematic scientific work about" Bullinger was carried out only in 1964. Campi E., "Nuovi studi su Heinrich Bullinger", *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197, note 1. Bullinger threw his lot in with Althusius, whose work, Malandrino explains, has started being studied "in a consistent way from the last two decades". This scientific "neglect" of Althusius was probably due to the particular nature of his thought and his differences with the general trend of some historical and political research, which were more focused on an analysis of the State from the national point of view. Today in light of the "clear crisis of the modern State", Malandrino notes, Althusius's *Politica* has become a classic in political thought. Malandrino C., "Calvinismo politico", *op. cit.*, pp. XIX-XX. See also Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵ Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁹⁶ Malandrino C., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

Around 1540, Europe witnessed the consolidation and the gradual establishment of the Evangelic faith, also as a consequence of a phase of relative tolerance and peace. The barycentre of the Reformed world was shifting northward, leaving Switzerland behind. England and the Netherlands were becoming, after various political and religious ups and downs, the central plank of second generation Calvinism.

During this period, European Protestants stopped following Luther's example and drew their inspiration from Calvin and, at Zwingli's death, notably from Bullinger, who became an unescapable point of reference within the Reformed world also thanks to the authoritativeness and the originality of his thought, which contained the dynamic element of the Reformed thought that would have characterized Calvinism in its gradual shifting northward. Bullinger's theories were particularly well received in Scotland, Holland and England, passing through the Rhine Valley, where the social context was more suitable to understand its political consequences and implications than stifling feudal Germany and Swiss conservative oligarchies.

In the second half of the 16th century, the Reformation was so widespread that it led to the creation of new cultural spaces where theologians and scholars from Protestant countries could meet and share their theological views. Besides the University of Heidelberg – where Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590), a well-known Italian Protestant, had worked as a professor – a major role, particularly as far as federal theology is concerned, was played by the Hessian city of Herborn where John VI, Count of Nassau-Dillenburg and brother of William I of Orange, founded in 1584 a high school (*Johanneum*), which soon became one of the most important cultural centres of European Reformed Protestantism⁹⁷.

Olevianus, one of the founders of the German Reformed Church and co-author with Ursinus of the famous *Heidelberg Catechism*, moved to Herborn in 1584 and taught Dogmatics there. The high school of Herborn cultivated theological as well as juridical studies, both perfectly summed up by Olevianus's investigations into the Kingdom of God and the covenant. Olevianus and Calvin were both jurists, but the former was also one of Bullinger's disciples. Just like his master, he had directed his studies towards the covenant theology and, inspired by *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno*, wrote his *De substantia foederis gratuiti inter Deum et electos* (1585) which was basically related to Bullinger's considerations on *Foedus Gratiae*. The doctrine of the covenant was then bound to become one of the cornerstones of theology in Herborn and would have then evolved in Puritanism, thus becoming the guiding light of its thought.

⁹⁷ McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-69.

Many important personalities within the Reformed world moved to Herborn; among them, the Italian Calvinist Giovanni Diodati (1576-1649), who played an important role in the development of the Reformation in Italy, and the Moravian theologians Comenius, author of the above-mentioned *Panhortosia* where he foresaw, at least in the Christian spirit, the idea of a “perpetual peace”, but lacked the clear-headedness and rationality of Kant’s thought. Much more meaningful, however, is the link between Althusius and the University of Herborn. In this regard, McCoy and Baker wrote that within the “galaxy of federal thinkers who taught at Herborn, who made it into one of the most important centres of federalism in Europe, and who were colleagues of Althusius’s, none stands out more clearly than Matthias Martini”. Martini (1572-1630) moved from Herborn to Emden in 1607, where Althusius had been Syndic since 1604.

Martini met Althusius before he moved to Herborn; as the two American scholars explain, Martini “would have been in close association not only with the federal theologians there, but also with Johannes Althusius”. It is probable that “while teaching there, he became involved in a dispute with Althusius concerning whether theologians or magistrates had the authority to distinguish between what was temporal and what was eternal in the Bible”⁹⁸.

It is therefore possible to detect a “path” through which the latest analysis on federal theology carried out in Herborn transmigrated to Althusius’s city to be finally re-elaborated by Martini within the covenant-oriented scheme of his *Politica*⁹⁹. Thanks to Althusius, the small semi-independent republic of Emden accomplished – for the first time – the passage from federal theology to political profederalism, through the transformation of the religious *foedus* into a political *foedus*¹⁰⁰. Althusius challenged authoritarianism and claimed the freedom and independence from the Prince’s absolutism, on the basis of his political federal model. Therefore, the system created by Althusius with the *consociatio simbiotica*, based on the principle of the covenant, was antithetical to Bodin’s *summa potestas*.

The Reformation spread from Herborn and Emden to the Netherlands, where the fine line between the religious nature of Calvinist postulates and the political interpretation of its principles became thinner and thinner. Also in the Netherlands, Bullinger established himself as the point of reference from the 1540s, at the expense of Luther.

The fight for the independence of the United Provinces and their republican organization was strongly affected by the democratizing ele-

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁰⁰ Malandrino C., “Foedus (confoederatio)”, *op. cit.* and *Id.*, “Symbiosis (symbiotiké, factum, confoederatio)”, *op. cit.* See also Malandrino C., “Teologia federale”, *op. cit.*

ments within the thought and culture of the Reformation established in the Northern provinces¹⁰¹. The “golden age” of the Netherlands rested on a complex political reality: on the one hand, the commercial interests of Amsterdam’s mercantile middle class mixed with Erasmus’s cultural heritage; on the other hand, the uncompromising Calvinism of a large part of the population overlapped the Orange’s political strategy; let alone the continuous osmosis of political, religious and cultural elements between Holland and England. This area was one of the cultural crossroads of the Reformation, which fostered the thought of English Protestants, whose absolute intransigence earned them the tag of “puritans”.

In the seven United Provinces independence was an ongoing process that tried to define the organizational structures for its achievement. The most suitable model for both Calvinist cities and regions on the Channel was a con-federation of republics, each with its own organizations: secretary, grand pensioner, *stadhouder*, led by the General States – in George Edmundson’s words, “a gathering of deputations from the seven sovereign provinces”¹⁰². The Treaty of Utrecht (1579) assigned the General States the control of the foreign affairs of the Union; they had the supreme control of military and naval matters. The Captain-General and the Admiral-General of the Union were appointed by them. Besides, this “super-regional” body exercised a strong supervision of finance, and sovereign authority over the entire administration of the ‘Generality’ lands¹⁰³. Actually, notwithstanding their extensive powers, the General States could be defined more as a confederation rather than a federal reality, because “the basic principle of this association was patently the subordination of the central government to the regional ones”¹⁰⁴. Even here, however, the ecclesiological model of Reformed Churches with their system based on a representative assembly (from local Consistory to Synod), undoubtedly represented a major source of inspiration for the feudal United Provinces, subject to the Holy Roman Empire and surrounded by monarchical states¹⁰⁵. Even Calvinist theolo-

¹⁰¹ Conti V., *Ideali repubblicani nel Seicento olandese*, in De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-176.

¹⁰² Edmundson G., *History of Holland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 112. On the seven United Provinces, see Israel J.L., *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* See also Rietbergen P.J.A.N., “Una confederazione come repubblica e principato. I Paesi Bassi nel periodo di Guglielmo III (1672-1702) e la questione dei valdesi”, in De Lange A. (ed.), *Dall’Europa alle Valli Valdesi*, Torino, Claudiana, 1990, pp. 49-56.

¹⁰⁴ Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁵ Logically, the United Provinces are not a federation in the modern sense of the term. However, the governmental system and the political and institutional organization of these regions were substantially different from the surrounding Catholic (and feudal-oriented) regions because of the *covenant* idea of the assembly institutions. In this regard, see the

gian Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) criticized the confederal structure of the General States because he, just like Althusius, “considered the political community as a perpetual union of smaller communities united by the *consociatio*, or union”¹⁰⁶, and not as an assembly of delegations, each representing the interests of an independent province. As reminded by Elazar, the famous Dutch jurist and philosopher put forward “the theoretical conceptualization of federalism in the state perspective”. Grotius considered federalism as a state system in its own right, and believed that “tightly bound leagues” could be functional and consistent with the principle of sovereignty¹⁰⁷. Such a theory did not distance itself too much from reality, as in the case of the United States, where the confederal league of the thirteen colonies was replaced by the federal union with the 1787 Constitution. The political and institutional choices that made Holland choose confederal-like forms of government had been strongly influenced by Calvin and Bullinger’s theories, which had anticipated and cleared the ground for Althusius’s profederalism¹⁰⁸.

Before focusing on the developments of Calvinism in England, it may be useful to consider the case of Scotland, where the *Covenanters* drew their inspiration directly from the federal theology with the intention to establish a new political society.

In 1559, a year after the death of Mary Tudor, John Knox (1513-1572), the father of the Scottish Church, came back to his fatherland to introduce there the principles of the Reformation. During his exile he had known and had relationships with Calvin and Bullinger, who made a lasting impression on him. Once he came back to his country, Knox established and organized the Scottish Church, combining both his experiences in Geneva with Scotland’s distinctive features. Besides, he had also introduced the principle of *covenant*, which perfectly fitted Scottish spirituality and its strong assembly conscience. About the influence of Bullinger on the father of the Scottish Church, it is well known that “Knox’s theology remained closely aligned with Bullinger’s views, and Bullinger’s political views remained an integral part of Knox’s political theology”. The reason for this “is mainly to be found in the major impact that Bullinger’s views of the covenant had on Knox’s theology and his commitment to the idea of

act of the Union of Utrecht (1579), which led to the birth of the United Provinces and features very modern elements reflecting the particular religious condition of the country. Campi E. (ed.), *Protestantesimo nei secoli*, op. cit., pp. 187 and ff., Vol. I.

¹⁰⁶ Friedrich C.J., *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, op. cit., p. 293.

¹⁰⁷ Elazar D.J., *Idee e forme del federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

¹⁰⁸ On the political organization of the United Provinces, see also Clerici A., *Costituzionalismo, contrattualismo e diritto di resistenza nella rivolta dei Paesi Bassi (1559-1581)*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2004.

the covenanted Christian community”¹⁰⁹. The idea of *covenant* gradually “slipped” even in the political organization. Scottish Calvinists considered organized life as the secular transcription of the Revelation. As the relationship between God and mankind is not based on hierarchies but on the covenant, this implies that even social relationships must be of the same kind. This approach marked the end of an absolutist vision of power, both ecclesiastically and politically, where the theological implications were more and more evident. This new type of community no longer foresaw the presence of the prince and the monarch, but also the Calvinist republic and the magistrate-minister of God were perceived as being too rigid¹¹⁰.

The most important political consequences of the spread of this covenant culture within the ecclesiastical sphere can be traced in English Calvinism or, more precisely, in Puritanism and its subsequent transmigration across the Atlantic. This was a crucial point in the history of Reformed Protestantism, which welcomed and elaborated the ecclesiological and theological considerations of continental Calvinism in an original and creative way, including the arguments of federal theology and their political implications. Along this path, ideally ranging from Calvinist Europe to Puritan ideology, to the English Revolution up to the North American colonies, all the political knots in the Reformed culture gradually untangled, thus enabling the later developments of republicanism as well as modern federalism.

In his Act of Supremacy (1534), King Henry VIII ratified the break with the Catholic Church, on the basis of personal and political reasons, rather than religious beliefs. Henry VIII aimed at establishing a strong national unity and a modern and independent State, because these were the essential prerequisites for England to become a great power in Europe. The ecclesiastical structure of the new national Church basically kept its episcopal nature, but opened a breach to the Reformed ideas that were establishing themselves in the regions of Western Europe from the first

¹⁰⁹ De Freitas S.A. and Raath A.W.G., “The Reformational Legacy of Theologico-political Federalism”, in Ward A. and Ward L. (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Federalism*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ On the concept of covenant in the Scottish political thought, see Smart I.M. “The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688” in *History of Political Thought*, No. 1 (1980), pp. 167-193. See also De Freitas S.A. and Raath A.W.G., “Reformation Britain, the Political Dimension of the Covenant, and the Contribution of the Scots”, in *Journal for Christian Scholarship*, No. 40 (2004), pp. 117-147; Id., “Theologically United and Divided. The Political Covenantalism of Samuel Rutherford and John Milton”, in *Westminster Theological Journal*, No. 67 (2005), pp. 301-321; Ramsey D.P., “Samuel Rutherford’s Contribution to Covenant Theology in Scotland”, in *The Confessional Presbyterian*, No. 5 (2009), pp. 115-126; Sherman I., “Samuel Rutherford and the Preached Covenant” in Vogan M. (ed.), *Samuel Rutherford: an introduction to his theology*, Edinburgh, Scottish Reformation Society, 2012, pp. 167-191.

half of the 16th century. During young Edward VI's short regency, England gave shelter to Protestant refugees fleeing the Continent after the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League. Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury sheltered Martin Bucer (1491-1551), the author of an advanced ecclesiastical reformation in Strasbourg, while Pietro Martire Vermigli (1499-1562) fled to Oxford. During this first period, England turned its attention to Zurich and Strasbourg and it was not surprising that Bullinger was the most important theologian in England because of his pre-eminence in the world of Reformed Protestantism.

After Mary Tudor's Catholic restoration (1553-1558), during the reign of Elizabeth I the political and religious conflict between the Church of England and the Church of Rome became more marked, leading to a theological and moral change within the Anglican Church.

In the meantime, a small group of Evangelicals was consolidating, putting forward new proposals for a more radical reformation of the English Church in a Calvinist way. The members of this minority often included representatives of the upper middle class and were deeply influenced by European Reformers, whom they had met during the exile on the Continent under Queen Mary's reign. In this period, many English intellectuals came into contact with Bullinger, and "many prominent people associated with the English and Scottish Reformation corresponded with Bullinger", whom these "English Reformers" considered "as a highly esteemed Reformed leader"¹¹¹.

Once these English Calvinists came back to their homeland, they immediately stood out for their absolute moral intransigence, as well as for their loyalty to the principle of the *Sola Scriptura* and the great emphasis placed on predestination and divine election. Therefore, they started being known as "Puritans" and "saints", the latter term mainly having a political and theological connotation¹¹².

The Puritans adopted a radical stance within the English religious Reformation and immediately criticized the episcopal order ruling the national Church. In fact, they rejected the *lord-bishops* model in favour of the Presbyterian system, already experimented in Holland, and characterized by the traditional assembly system and the lack of a strict hierarchy.

¹¹¹ Raath A.W.G. and De Freitas S.A., "Heinrich Bullinger and the Marian Exiles. The Political Foundations of Puritanism", in *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (2001), p. 2. The Article includes a paragraph on the relationship between Bullinger's *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* and the Puritan conception of the State.

¹¹² Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-149. On Puritanism and some of its related aspects, see Trinterud L.J., "The Origins of Puritanism", in *Church History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (March 1951), pp. 37-57; Bonanate U. (ed.), *I puritani. Soldati della Bibbia*, *op. cit.*

In addition, the radical wing of Puritans “endorsed” the Congregationalist system, which was destined to have the same success in the Protestant world and stressed the democratic and autonomous characteristics implied in the ecclesiology of Reformed Protestantism. Congregationalism was particularly successful in the organization of Reformed Churches in the New World, where the pressure of traditional structures and hierarchies was lower¹¹³.

The communities of expatriates and persecuted people scattered all over Europe cultivated their faith in a totally independent way, concerning both local political powers and their country of origin. They had therefore developed a bond of solidarity where each community had organized itself and taken up its own financial responsibilities, choosing its own ministers and liturgies. The congregation is the local community where faith is professed, but most of all it becomes a “place” to organize it: the Puritan opposes the “congregation” of the Tridentine diocese, centred on the power of its bishop, and the “parish” of the Anglican diocese.

Both the Presbyterian and the congregational models were too revolutionary for their times, particularly for the Elizabethan establishment, whose goal was the consolidation of the hierarchical structure of the Anglican Church, distancing from the extreme moral rigorism and the republican leanings of a part of its Reformed subjects.

Under the rule of Elizabeth’s successors, the situation took a turn for the worse and led to a clash between Anglicans and Puritans, with the persecution of the Puritans and, eventually, the civil war¹¹⁴. England then witnessed the accelerated modernization of its political and social systems, at first through the Puritan Revolution (1640-1660) or, in Michel Walzer’s words, the Revolution of the “Saints” and then, later, through the better-known *Glorious Revolution* (1688). During the first Revolution, connoted mainly by political and religious factors, some republican and monarchomac theories came out, thus transforming the Stuarts’ kingdom into a “Commonwealth” characterized by “a society aiming for a common point between ethical and religious ideals and a sense of reality”¹¹⁵; the second Revolution witnessed the consolidation of a social and political model substantially embodied by the constitutional regime established by the English monarchy.

Miegge, relating to Walzer’s pivotal work on *The Revolution of the Saints*, explains how the generations following the “Calvinist labora-

¹¹³ On the differences among the ecclesiastical systems set up by Protestantism, see Long G., *Ordinamenti giuridici delle chiese protestanti*, op. cit.

¹¹⁴ Carocci G., *La rivoluzione inglese (1640-1660)*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1998; Woolrich A., *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

¹¹⁵ Campi E. (ed.), *Protestantesimo nei secoli*, op. cit., p. 263, Vol. I.

torary” were characterized by a radical “ideological paradigm”, representing the key to the reading of a whole process¹¹⁶. The doctrine of divine election and the consequent vocation of the saint (the duty to act to fulfill God’s will), together with the need for reformation fall, according to Walzer, within the framework of a theology of the covenant between God and his people in which the renewal of such a covenant is expressed in a “federal” way, steering “the experiments and the unremitting fight of the ‘saints’ in the world” towards revolutionary forms¹¹⁷. In England, this ideology clashed with the traditional forms of power and the consolidating political forms, such as the national State, establishing a halfway stage that represented for a long time a shining example for European Protestants, but which was not as brave and successful as the experiments carried out across the Atlantic. On the contrary, in America this ideology found a “virgin ground” in which to carry out and fulfill its potential by developing new and revolutionary forms of social and political organization.

The Reformed English intellectuality, somehow consolidated by this ideology through the studies on the covenant theology, was made of some prelates who had studied on the Continent and made contacts with the covenant theologians in Dutch and German universities. Dudley Fenner (1558-1587) and Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) were particularly interested in the federal theology and were also the main individuals responsible for its spread across the Channel¹¹⁸. While exiled in Europe, Cartwright met Ursinus, at that time professor of theology at Heidelberg University, and Bèze, who both introduced him to the principles of federal theology. The two scholars, together with other cultural protagonists of English Reformation such as William Perkins, William Ames and John Preston, would have later revised and systematized the ideas related to covenant theology, thus creating some of the necessary conditions for the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646.

In fact, the characteristics of the theological covenant can be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith (notably, in chapters 7, 8 and 19), as

¹¹⁶ Miegge M., “Introduzione”, in Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-28. The other generations are the “Marian exiles” and the “Huguenot Monarchomachs” in the 16th century, and the “Puritan clergy” in the 17th century.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁸ Some scholars agree that the doctrine of the Covenant of works was first developed in England by Dudley Fenner and Thomas Cartwright. The latter “studied in Heidelberg and Fenner spent some time in the ambience of Dutch Calvinist pastors who were establishing the Reformed Church in Zeeland, where the influence of Heidelberg can be demonstrated”. Visser D., “The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus”, *op. cit.*, p. 534. In the article Visser follows the demonstration of this thesis, but we will only focus on the link between British and continental federal theologians.

well as in the works of the British theologian John Owen (1616-1683)¹¹⁹, in his biblical studies and in the explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews. To those and the previously mentioned Cocceius and Turretini, should be added some 16th-century classic commentators belonging to the British tradition, such as Herman Witsius (1636-1708), who wrote *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*¹²⁰, and Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)¹²¹.

It may now be useful to highlight a passage that helps to explain the substantial difference determined by the concept of federal theology on social behaviour and political thought, respectively in the Anglo-Saxon world and in the rest of continental Europe. Furthermore, this observation allows us to detect the reason for the tight relationship between theology and politics which had a strong impact on Puritan thought and behaviour.

Ursinus and Olevianus, the American scholar explains, after careful consideration on the various aspects of covenant theology, stated a theory proposing a pattern of *covenant* focused on the "Covenant of works" between God and Adam. The concept of *Foedus Operum*, widespread in Europe, was placed beside the concept of Grace as previously elaborated by Bullinger, thus determining the theological prerequisites for the rise of a binding moral, civil and religious code for all mankind: "elect or non-elect, regenerate or unregenerate, professedly Christian or pagan". Federal theologians simply focused on and integrated the whole contractual theory of the State into the *covenant*. Therefore, it was a natural consequence, Trinterud writes, that "the natural law of the contract of the state was also the natural law of the covenant of works". On the Continent, however, "the practical applications of this new covenant scheme were never fully exploited"¹²². In England, instead, the Puritans inherited the unexpressed potential of the federal theology and applied its principles, going one step further towards the practical and political use of the concept of *covenant*.

Giorgio Spini explains this concept in his work *Il pensiero politico americano*, where he outlines the differences between Calvinism and Puritanism. He detects the common aspects of the two trends and asserts that their sub-

¹¹⁹ Owen J., *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 7 Vols., Edinburgh, Ritchie, 1812.

¹²⁰ Witsius H., *De oeconomia foederum Dei cum hominibus*, 4 Vols., Leeuwarden, Jacobum Hagenaar, 1677. For the English edition, see Witsius H., *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man. Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, 2 Vols., translated by W. Crookshank, Edimburgh, Thomas Turnbull, 1803.

¹²¹ Edwards J., *Puritan Sage. Collected Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 Vols., edited by V. Ferm, New York, Library Publishers, 1953. See also Bogue C.W., *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace*, Cherry Hill (NJ), Mack Publishing, 1975.

¹²² Trinterud L.J., "The Origins of Puritanism", in *Church History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (March 1951), p. 48.

stantial difference relies on the concept of covenant. For the Puritans, Spini writes, "the covenant of salvation was logically followed by the covenant among the elects themselves, in the presence of God", which committed mankind to living like brothers. Such a covenant "originated both the Church and the Christian *Res Publica*", thus giving rise to "a voluntaristic and contractualistic concept of the State"; the Christian *Res Publica* "arises from the will of the elects, freed by the Grace, and therefore from the covenant they make among themselves"¹²³.

In Puritan thought, such a vision of associated life goes together with the monarchomach concept of power. It was based on the right of the subjects to resist their king's power; the foundations of such principle lay in the reduction-return of the power from the divine to its human nature. Therefore, the subjects were allowed to rebel against the cruelty of their king, up to regicide. Puritans thought that all powers were limited because of the Covenant, and the magistrates had limited power, because God himself limited it through the Covenant; those who claimed to exercise unlimited power gave offense to God. Therefore, the citizens were entitled to rebel against the tyrannical prince and to reprimand the magistrates who abused their authority¹²⁴.

This theory was developed for the first time in the treatise *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* published in Basilea in 1579¹²⁵, probably written by French Calvinist Philippe de Mornay. According to the *Vindiciae*, the right to resistance was based on a series of political and religious *covenants* which "made the civil ruler responsible not only to God, but also to the people, who held ultimate political sovereignty". It is highly probable that the French Calvinist knew well Bullinger's *covenantal thought*, but the political implications in his thought, "were more radical, because he structured his political thought around the concept of popular sovereignty"¹²⁶. In substance, Mornay not only theorized the principle of the destruction of power, but he also connoted such principle ethically by putting it within

¹²³ Spini G., "Il pensiero politico americano", *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5. The monarchomach theory could be found also in Althusius who, in his *Politica*, entrusted the ephors, the guardians and the defenders of the consociation, with the task of keeping everything under control. The powers within the *consociatio* were always limited, from a natural and juridical point of view. This establishes a crucial difference between the juridical thought deriving from Lutheran Protestantism and the thought of Reformed Protestant origin. Whereas in the Lutheran doctrine the rule of obedience to the power is limitless (as deduced from Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* 13), *de Mornay's Vindiciae contra Tyrannos provides Calvinism with a revolutionary tool for limiting power*. See Baker J.W., "Faces of Federalism", *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30.

¹²⁵ Brutus S.J. (ps.), *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, sive De Principis in Populum et Populi in Principem, legitima potestate*, Edimburgh (d.i. Basel), 1579.

¹²⁶ Baker J.W., "Faces of Federalism", *op. cit.*, p. 28. See also Bainton R.H., *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

the federal theology, and transformed it into a natural mechanism of the political systems based on a *foedus*.

Undoubtedly, modern political culture has to credit Puritanism with having laid and consolidated, at least culturally, the foundations of one of the key moments in modern history, and it was instrumental in developing the republican and democratic principles in Europe, and the federal principles in America. While Puritanism in England was able – through revolutions – to give the nature of the country's political tradition a radical twist in a republican way, but without establishing itself completely, across the Atlantic the spirit of Puritanism established itself as a crucial factor and introduced the patterns on which to build the new society with more freedom than anywhere else.

Let's now analyze the outcomes of this European experience on the American continent.

The Puritan migration to North America involved the transfer not only of people, but also and especially of ideas¹²⁷. The community of the exiles, characterized by a strong eschatological tension, was led by an unfaltering faith in God and by the hope of achieving in the "promised land" the religious living conditions that were precluded in their homeland. The founders of the colonies of New England had a palingenetic vision of their mission, confirmed by their firm feeling of being the chosen ones, and wanted to establish the new Israel in America.

These men fled England to leave behind the miseries and the iniquities of the Old World – to remain faithful to the principles of the "federal theology"¹²⁸; in fact, these pioneers gave immediately concreteness to all the institutions of federal theology and Congregationalism¹²⁹. Puritans played a crucial role in the birth of the United States of America and left a big cultural and religious heritage to that great federal society. Tocqueville was one of the first scholars to detect in the Puritans of New England the first, authentic germ of American national identity, democracy and federalism¹³⁰; as the French historian wrote: "The emigrants or, as they called themselves, the *pilgrims*, belonged to that English sect called Puritan, for the austerity of its principles. Puritanism was not just a religious doctrine, but on many issues it merges also with the most absolute democratic and republican theories"¹³¹.

¹²⁷ Tocqueville A. de, *La democrazia in America*, 2 Vols., Milano, Fabbri Editori, 1996.

¹²⁸ Spini G., "Il pensiero politico americano", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹³¹ Tocqueville A. de, *La democrazia in America*, *op. cit.*, p. 44, Vol. I.

The first wave of emigration dates back to the early 17th century, under the reign of James I of England, when the persecuted Puritans, who initially took refuge in Holland, later decided to sail to the New World in search of greater religious freedom. This event is epitomized by the myth of the Mayflower, which sailed from the port of Southampton in September 1620 to land in November on the coasts of North America; there, the Pilgrim Fathers founded the first colonies in Plymouth, New England, and set up a political and religious organization based on the covenantal principle implied in the Puritan contractualism¹³².

The covenant made by the Pilgrim Fathers implied that the religious community should have been followed by a political community with its own structure and rules. In the declaration, the religious and the political-social aspects merged and found their highest accomplishments in the the testimony of God before the oath, signed by the the Pilgrims: "solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick, for our better ordering and preservation"; and finally, "by virtue hereof" they "do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony"¹³³.

The Mayflower Compact (November 11, 1620) was followed by several covenants of various origin among the communities born on the North American coast¹³⁴.

¹³² Morton N., *New England's Memorial*, *op. cit.*

¹³³ Lutz D.S., "The Evolution of Covenant from and Content as the Basis for Early American Political Culture", in Elazar D.J. (ed.), *Covenant in the 19th Century. The Decline of an American Political Tradition*, Lanham (MD), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994, pp. 35-36. See also Bradford W., "History of the Plymouth Plantation", in Miller P. and Johnson T.H. (eds.), *The Puritans*, 2 Vols., New York, Harper and Row, 1963.

¹³⁴ Commager H.S., Cantor M. (eds.), *Documents of American History*, 2 Vols., Englewood Cliffs (NJ), Prentice Hall, 1988 (10th ed.), vol. I. In the first decades of the 17th century, many other commitments were signed and it is the Bible that underlies these covenants, rather than the Magna Carta of English common law tradition. Lutz D.S., "The Evolution of Covenant", *op. cit.*, p. 43. Among the most relevant covenants, it is worth mentioning: *The Cambridge agreement* (26 August 1629), *Covenant of Portsmouth* (7 January 1638), *The New England Confederation* (19 May 1643), *Foundamental Orders of Connecticut* (14 January 1649) and *The Cambridge Platform* (1648). Acquarone A., Negri G., Scelba C. (eds.), *La formazione degli Stati Uniti d'America*, *op. cit.* In this perspective, the Constitution of the United States and its popular government was not a sudden and unexpected event, but it was the consequence of a long historical evolution of political institutions, invariably based on some consensus theory. Lutz D.S., *Popular Consent and Popular Control. Whig Political Theory in the Early State Constitutions*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1980, pp. 31-32. For a critical list of the commitments, see also Elazar D.J., *Covenant and Constitutionalism: The Great Frontier and the Matrix of Federal Democracy*, New Brunswick (NJ), Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp. 33-37.

The voyage of the Mayflower marked the beginning of the “real” Puritan emigration, started in 1630 and led to America by John Winthrop¹³⁵, the charismatic political and religious guide of his community. The Massachusetts Bay Company was then established, and it became the initial ground on which to develop the first forms of representative democracy, turning these colonies (trade companies owned by the colonists, who were also their shareholders) into religious communities at first, and then into political ones, structured and organized around a covenant. These colonies witnessed the shift from “federal theology” to democracy, both religious and political, also because of the lack of a strong historical influence. New England then became an ideal laboratory for the “saints” to prove the soundness of the political and theological prerequisites of their ideology¹³⁶.

The guidelines of New England’s culture are the traditional foundations of Puritanism: on the one hand, there is the covenantal doctrine; on the other hand, the congregationalist-like organizational system¹³⁷.

Let’s now analyze the covenantal theory and the theological use of the covenant between God and his people as the founding principle of a Church whose believers sign a binding public contract before God. The members of this Church are not part of the whole of Christendom, but they are the “chosen ones”, the “saints” or the elects, i.e. those who already proved on earth that they have received the divine Grace. These people could consider themselves the only authentic Christians and therefore create a free Church based on a double covenant: one made with God and the other with their brothers. Puritan Churches were born in the American colonies through the reunification of the “saints” in a freely signed covenant. This led to the establishment of a growing number of related, yet independent and autonomous, Puritan Churches, each having its own characteristics. Such a background was very different from that in England, where Anglicanism claimed the uniqueness and a certain uniformity of the Church in the whole Kingdom.

¹³⁵ John Winthrop (1588-1649) was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the chief figure among the Puritan founders of New England. He was a deeply religious man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. During his trip to North America, he wrote the famous secular sermon “A Modell of Christian Charity”, in which he urged the Massachusetts colonists to establish a community based upon divine law. He founded a city according to theocratic and rigidly conservative concepts. In 1630, he founded Boston and in 1643 he was one of the founding fathers of the New England Confederation. On Winthrop, see Bremer F., *John Winthrop: America’s Forgotten Founder*, New York, Oxford University Press 2003.

¹³⁶ Spini G., “Il pensiero politico americano”, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹³⁷ Morton N., *New England’s Memorial*, *op. cit.* For a political and religious overview, see also Fragnière G., *La religione e il potere. La cristianità, l’Occidente e la democrazia*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008, pp. 127-164.

However, this parcelling out of the Churches had gradually led to a state of anarchy menacing the independence and the survival of all Churches; therefore, it was necessary to set up an organizational concord able to coordinate these various entities. A system was then set up where – always with some appropriate distinctions – it is possible to detect a religious-like anticipation of the 1787 federal system. In fact, around the 1630s-40s, these Church-communities, while still fully independent and free, set up a *super partes* “special Synod with few and specific functions”¹³⁸ made of ministers representing each community.

The “saints” are bound in a covenant with God and with one another; the concept of covenant, however, was not limited only to the world of the “saints”, but it spread over the whole society. Puritan theologians used the covenant to renovate the human world by reading it as a network of relationships. According to the Puritan thought, every society was based on the will to undertake a mutual engagement, founded on a free and mutual agreement, which encompassed the whole network of social relationships: from princes-magistrates to subjects-citizens, from masters to slaves, from husband to wife.

Therefore, the ecclesiastical covenant was of a social and political nature. The colonists’ religious and social point of reference was the organized Church, around which a political community inevitably grew and adopted, almost in spontaneous fashion, some ecclesiastic-like forms. The need for a practical and political organization within the colonies arose from their great territorial fragmentation and the intense decentralization of the system. In the first phases of the colonisation, the central power was usually absent, if not almost non-existent. Therefore, the only element of cohesion and identity was the covenant, both religious with God and moral and political with all the members of the same community.

So the Puritans built their colonies according to structures that did not belong to any traditional form of power organization, but that brought forward once again – from a political and institutional viewpoint – the models of their own confessional tradition. As in the case of many congregations belonging to different Churches that joined together voluntarily to form broader confessional entities, the cities themselves joined together to form broader entities, thus contributing to the development of the practical experience of “making a covenant”, which was a key element “for the American tradition in the drafting of a constitution”¹³⁹.

¹³⁸ Morton N., *New England's Memorial*, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

¹³⁹ Sabetti F., “Teoria e pratica del federalismo nord-americano”, in Alberoni E. and Ganci Siracusa M. (eds.), *Federalismo, regionalismo, autonomismo. Esperienze e proposte a confronto*, 2 Vols., Palermo, Ediprint, 1989, vol. II, p. 300.

This gave origin to the Puritan contractualism, which is believed to have had a crucial influence on the pattern of development of the communities during the first American immigration and succeeded in moving the "protofederal behaviours" from a religious to a social and political level, anticipating customs and mentality. The spread of this culture would have led, about 160 years later, the participants in the Congress of Philadelphia to find out, maybe unconsciously, the key elements of the federal mechanism.

The social and political covenant, founded on two basic principles, stemmed from the Calvinist culture: on the one hand, the free consensus underlying a government's power and *raison d'être* (Geneva); on the other hand, the moral right-duty of the people to rebel against the government in case of betrayal of the terms of the covenant. These Reformed principles merged one century later in the Declaration of Independence (1776), which stated that "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government". Naturally "such a republican form of government was far from the minds of Bullinger and Mornay, but it was their federal framework that formed the roots of American federalism and made possible the modern federal republic"¹⁴⁰.

Therefore, these aspects of the social, political and religious behaviour of the Anglo-American Puritanism represented the living part of the cultural fabric that led to the idea and the creation of the federal system of the United States of America. American federalism, that is modern federalism the way we mean it, is part of a covenantal culture spanning from Calvin to Anglo-American Puritans. Puritans firmly believed in the presence of a covenant between God and his people, and of a similar, descending principle that tied a man to another man according to a morally-binding contract, so it was almost natural for them to think in a similar way about a process which aimed at joining broader territorial and public entities, such as towns, regions or states.

Some scholars have pointed out that this covenantal and associative spirit, first of a religious then of a social and political nature, developed in the American colonies well before its theorization by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. *Covenant* and contractualism were real instruments in Puritan America and not mere theories. In North America, the federalist experience is based on this everyday covenantal negotiation. The principle of making a covenant to fix the terms of government was extended from the original settlements to the associations of settlements. The agreement freely signed by citizens formed at first the basis of the state government

¹⁴⁰ Baker J.W., "Faces of Federalism", *op. cit.*, p. 41.

and then of a new national community that was given the name of United States of America¹⁴¹.

As stated before, New England was the cradle of the first forms of organized political life, which gathered around municipalities. Between 1630 and 1650, Massachusetts witnessed the birth of a dozen little towns, built according to the "township system" pattern, which consisted in gathering a group of colonists by means of a covenant, similar to the ecclesiastical one, to create a stable community oriented towards the fulfillment of common interests. The foundation of a town was subjected to the approval of the General Court of Massachusetts, the central government, to which the towns sent one representative. Local governments were ruled by a public officer appointed by the General Court, but who was given full powers over key sectors such as education, transport network, training of local militias, tax collection, etc. In addition, the town organized the life in the surrounding areas according to federal principles, by making covenants with the villages scattered all over the territory. Finally, in 1636, the Court of Massachusetts sanctioned the self-government of the towns, investing them with the appointment of officers and entrusting further legislative tasks and areas of interest to the local government.

The town government enjoyed a strong independence that the colonists had been able to integrate, through the principle of subsidiarity, with the central government of Massachusetts which, given its – quite faint – bond with London, kept the last word on public order and the relationships with the neighbouring colonies.

The migratory flux from Europe came to a temporary halt in conjunction with the civil war in England, and it deprived the colonies of regular supplies of men and resources, as well as of a solid point of reference across the Atlantic. Following this situation, around 1640, Anglo-American settlements started to feel the need for a common defence on the one hand, against the Indians in the internal parts of the territory; and on the other hand, against the nearby Dutch and French settlements. This state of necessity led Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Haven and Plymouth to create the New England Confederation in 1643¹⁴². By means of their own General Courts, the above-mentioned colonies ratified their association through the stipulation of a solemn covenant before God, which was the constitutive act of the United Colonies of New England. Following the experience of the township system, the four internally-confederated colonies (united *cum foedere*) had a united vertical development (covenantal relationship)

¹⁴¹ Ostrom V., Ostrom E., Bish R.L., *Il governo locale negli Stati Uniti*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità 1984, p. 40.

¹⁴² Morton N., *New England's Memorial*, *op. cit.*

based on the example-model of Congregationalist Churches, according to the confessional and cultural nature of Puritanism¹⁴³.

This event laid the foundation of the political American system, partially based on the complex Puritan ideology of the covenant and on the heritage of the English tradition that the colonists inevitably carried with them. The complex structure ranging from the town to the General Court of the colony, to the New England Confederation, includes all the stages of the first American attempt to bring together many complex political realities with a federal-like method. Needless to say, this system had a crucial influence on the later developments of the American federalism, until and beyond the Philadelphia Convention.

The contribution of other colonies, founded as free settlements in the centre and south of North America, was less relevant. These colonies, based on the township system, were created by free colonists who – lacking the example of the Congregationalist Churches – could not develop a profederal-like political and social reality, based on the use of the covenant and showing how deep the influence of the confessional system on the social and political system was.

If the township system represented the condition for the birth of the American federalism, where the concept of covenant was tied to the pragmatism of the first Anglo-American Puritans, the Philadelphia Convention was its natural epilogue. In fact, modern federalism was based on a covenant and the compromises agreed to by various institutional members during their constitutional works. However, these compromises were not

¹⁴³ Each of the Puritan settlements of New England were founded on a covenant. Connecticut, New Haven and Rhode Island adopted a profederal system right from the start. Instead, the *Plymouth Agreement* and its annexed *Pilgrim Code of Law* written by the settlers of Plymouth in 1636 can be considered the first real American Constitution based on the federal ideas of the covenant and the first example of a political constitution stemming directly from the covenantal tradition of the Reformed Protestantism. Elazar D.J., *Covenant and Civil Society: The Constitutional Matrix of Modern Democracy*, London, Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp. 39-41. Connecticut was founded upon a solemn covenant made in 1638 among the towns of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield. Their union originated a new political subject with an independent government – the General Court – representing the three towns. They abandoned some of their prerogatives in favour of the central governing body, while keeping their powers on some specific fields outside the authority of the Court. The preamble to the constituent document (*Foundamental Orders*) made express reference to a confederal unity, namely a unity founded on the covenant made before God. The same happened with the creation of New Haven in 1643, when the towns of New Haven, Stamford, Guilford and Milford made a covenant and set up a federal-like association. They created a General Court, made of town representatives, and assigned the areas of expertise of the constituent bodies. Finally, Rhode Island was the result of a series of covenants made in 1643 among the towns of Providence, Warwick, Portsmouth and Newport, all having their own founding covenants. Lutz D.S., “The Evolution of Covenant”, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-47.

the consequence of theoretical speculations, but of the right concerns about practical issues¹⁴⁴. The participants to the congress got out of the impasse by drawing on the “common sense” developed over the decades that followed the foundation of the first colonies and rooted in the political, social and religious culture of the Puritan pragmatism, spurred on by a strong spirit of association and accustomed to the everyday use of both covenantal and contractual practices.

The above-mentioned covenant culture had such a major influence on the American history that it is hard to imagine a different historical epilogue if this revolutionary principle had not permeated every aspect of life in the colonies, thus creating the necessary conditions for its future development and having such a great impact on the thoughts and actions of North American people.

3. Some aspects of Reformed ecclesiastical constitutionalism

On the basis of the above-mentioned developments of the covenant, at first in the history of Reformed Protestantism and then in modern political thought, it can be affirmed that there is a link between the juridical and institutional systems established in an ecclesiastical environment and the secularized systems established at a later stage, even if it is not possible to make a direct comparison among ecclesiastical and political/constitutional organizational structures¹⁴⁵. It is also likely that today's modern states are founded on institutions deriving from ancient ecclesiastical arrangements. As a matter of fact, the elaboration of new institutional structures and forms within a political organization is often the consequence of the secularized transposition of previous similar religious models.

Despite the impossibility of comparing political and ecclesiastical institutions, it is nevertheless possible to detect some distant ties based upon some functional principles and mechanisms, as with the similarities between the synodal and parliamentary systems. However, the two levels are separate as for the specific purposes according to which each system shapes its institutional apparatus, using its own tools and models. It would be improper to overlap *tout court* some institutions, bodies or political systems and concepts of ecclesiological origin. It is quite clear, however, that there is a “sediment of religious culture”, sometimes even a matrix, in the political thought and the root of modern institutions, due to a historical and evolutive consistency where religious institutions anticipate the secularized political ones. As Pietro Rossi remarked, “modern capitalism and

¹⁴⁴ Friedrich, C.J., “Il fondamento europeo della costituzione americana”, in Bolis L. (ed.), *La nascita degli Stati Uniti d'America*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1957, p. 36.

¹⁴⁵ See Rostagno S., “Ordinamenti umani e Koinonia nelle discipline riformate”, in *Nicolaus. Rivista di teologia ecumenico-patristica*, fasc. 1/2 (2000), pp. 217-238.

the modern state, with its rational right and its bureaucratic administration [...] are [...] the outcome of a centuries-old freeing process from religion; more precisely, from that particular religion – Christianity – representing its postulate and historical background”¹⁴⁶. In short, there exists some kind of continuity between secularized and religious worlds.

Therefore, if we agree with Rossi and Schmitt, who stated that “all the most pregnant concepts of the modern doctrine of State are secularized theological concepts”¹⁴⁷, it is possible not only to accept the theological origin of the federal idea and its relationship with the constitutional law of the federal State, but also to place it within the Protestant culture, particularly within Calvinism. This is thinkable not only in light of the historical development of some of these concepts, which shifted from theology to the doctrine of the State, but also and above all in light of the practical consequences that followed the use of these concepts both in ecclesiastical and political constitutionalism.

If we agree that the meaning of the religious principle of the covenant between God and his people – once received a political connotation – became a tool used by the then-forming political entities, which can be considered the practical outcome of the transposition of the covenant in the historical reality? It is necessary to note how the idea of the covenant or *foedus* gradually influenced the ecclesiastical structures and disciplines of the Reformed communities so as to direct and suggest an array of similar or equivalent political choices. In other words, does the Reformed ecclesiastical organization show any tangible evidences of the practical use of the concept of covenant? And, if so, how much and how have these evidences been politically used by the same societies that had previously created them in ecclesiastical terms?

Sometimes this system is criticized for being a copy of the democratic parliamentary system, while historically and chronologically speaking it is quite the opposite, because the forms of parliamentary representation and federal structure are inspired by the government system of the Reformed Churches.

¹⁴⁶ Rossi P., *Max Weber. Un'idea di Occidente*, Roma, Donzelli, 2007, p. 179.

¹⁴⁷ Schmitt C., *Le categorie del "politico"*, op. cit., p. 61. On this issue, see also the reflections of Reinhard W., *Storia del potere politico in Europa*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2001; Löwith K., *Significato e fine della storia*, Milano, il Saggiatore, 2010; Prodi P., *Homo europaeus*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2015. See also Schilling H., “L'Europa delle chiese e delle confessioni”, in Visceglia M.A. (ed.), *Le radici storiche dell'Europa. L'età moderna*, Viella, Roma, 2007; P. Prodi, “Il patto politico come fondamento del costituzionalismo europeo”, in *Scienza & Politica. Per una storia delle dottrine*, Vol. 17, n. 32 (2010), pp. 5-23. For an opposite theory, see Peterson E., *Il monoteismo come problema politico*, Brescia, Queriniana, 1983.

Let's now look for the reasons for the above-mentioned arguments within the Protestant experience and the "turning points" in the establishment of the ecclesiastical tradition of Reformed Protestantism: from the refusal of the medieval institutional Church to the Church-community, from the ecclesiastical Reformation of Swiss cities to the Presbyterian system, from the Huguenot Synod to congregationalism, already adopted by the Anglo-American Puritans. This overview of the salient moments of the Reformed constitutionalism aims at briefly outlining its influence on modern political institutions¹⁴⁸.

Protestants gave importance back to the local aspect of the Church and organized the life of believers in small local communities, in contrast with the hierarchical and pyramidal structure of the Roman Church. These communities were structured around the local Church, seen as a part and an accomplished expression of the universality of the Christian people; the Reformation revolutionizes the form and the practice of religious life, from the communities (*Gemeinde*) in German towns and villages to the Swiss *poleis*. According to Zwingli, the Church is no longer the institution, the political theological juridical apparatus that rules, directs and dominates the life of the believers, but rather the community of believers itself or, even better, the gathering of the elects¹⁴⁹, in compliance with the principle of predestination. These communities were the forerunners of the "republic of the saints"¹⁵⁰.

Before continuing, however, it is important to remind the difference that characterized the Reformation since the very beginning, that is, the diversification between Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism in the development of the Church-communities, both at a confessional and organizational level. The *Confessio Augustana* was the "product" of German Protestantism, which gathered the German princes around itself, but it was not the confession of faith of the Swiss and Rhenish cities. Whereas in the area of present-day Germany the Churches were often part of a feudal context and were scattered over a wide territory ruled by a prince, in Switzerland political life was independent and revolved around its time-honoured communal traditions. These geographical differences within Protestantism led to the first confessional schism, occurring in 1529 during the Marburg Colloquy between Luther and Zwingli to resolve the

¹⁴⁸ On the ecclesiastic constitutionalism of the Reformed Churches, see Long G., *Ordinamenti giuridici delle chiese protestanti*, op. cit.; *Id.*, *Le confessioni religiose "Diverse dalla cattolica"*. *Ordinamenti interni e rapporti con lo Stato*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1991.

¹⁴⁹ Campi E., "Ideali repubblicani nella Zurigo riformata dell'età protomoderna", in De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, op. cit., pp. 73-96.

¹⁵⁰ Walzer M., *La rivoluzione dei santi*, op. cit.

dispute over Eucharist¹⁵¹. Later on, in 1549, an agreement was reached with the *Consensus Tigrinus* within the Reformed world. Thanks to this agreement between Calvin and Bullinger, the Swiss cities acknowledged a mutual theological, cultural, geographical and political affinity, and laid the foundations for the creation of the Reformed world, thus distancing themselves from the Lutheran Protestantism.

That having been said, it is necessary to highlight two important aspects of the Reformed psychology that may be useful in the analysis of the characteristics of the Protestant political behaviour in comparison with previous mentalities. These aspects deeply influenced the social and political evolution of the old medieval municipalities that changed over to the Reformation and transformed the communities. These towns, which became a real experimental laboratory in the 16th century, anticipated some key principles of modernity such as the laity of the State or the assembly representative system.

The former comes from the vocational nature of Reformed faith, in close connection with the theory of predestination from which the freedom and the consequent responsibility of the Christians towards the world originate. At the social level, the formulation of these terms results in a broader involvement of the Evangelicals in public life. This voluntaristic militancy was the consequence of a different idea of life that can be defined a real conceptual revolution. This new structuring of existence led to the shift of "vocation", hence also of its concept, from religious to secular life; every Christian was then called to live the fullness of the Gospel in the world, taking up the responsibilities of their actions towards the society of believers and the political power. The same was true for princes and magistrates with relation to subjects and citizens¹⁵².

The second aspect is based on a biblical concept and stems from the first aspect, because it deals with the nature and use of power. As aforementioned, even those who exercise an authority are subject to these values/principles: in fact, the vocation of the Evangelical prince is inspired by Paul's exhortation in his *Letter to the Romans*, the pillar not only of vocationality, but also of the ministeriality of the Statesman¹⁵³. Through this

¹⁵¹ An agreement between Lutherans and Reformers was reached only a few centuries later, in 1973, following the Leuenberg Agreement, an ecumenical theological agreement.

¹⁵² On the nature and the social implications of the Protestant *vocatio*, see Miegge M., "Sulla politica riformata", *op. cit.* and Id., *Vocazione e lavoro. Due trattati puritani. William Perkins e Richard Steele*, Bologna, Italo Bovolenta, 1985. As to the Puritan doctrine of the "calling", in which public and private sectors shared the goal of an active reformation of the Church and the State, see Perkins W., "A Treatise of the Vocations or Callings of Men", in Breward I. (ed.), *The Work of William Perkins*, Appleford, The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970, pp. 250-269.

¹⁵³ Fragnière G., *La religione e il potere*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-117.

passage, the holder of power is invested not only with the responsibility and the dignity to govern, but also becomes “a ‘ministry’ of God”, and all that follows. This is a “keystone of the political doctrine of all Reformed communities in the 16th century”, and it is instrumental in developing a new idea of the politician and of the independence and responsibility of his actions and, implicitly, of his limits too¹⁵⁴.

Therefore, in Calvinian *polis* the magistrates rule the city according to God’s laws, in agreement with the confessional principles set by the ecclesiastical authority and accepted by the citizens with a public oath¹⁵⁵. The two fields mix and overlap, in a continuous dialectical confrontation¹⁵⁶. According to Calvin, the magistrates, God’s ministries, are in charge of “monitoring” the fulfillment of the law and the citizens’ obedience to the Christian principles. In Geneva, during the Reformation, the magistrates were given the task of assisting civil society to understand the divine laws and to apply them. As for the Church, it represented the real community of believers at the basis of the town itself. It was, Calvin said, the *compagnie des fidales*, a special association of companions, of free men having equal dignity and responsibilities, of *fidèles*, that is of men tied by the *fides*, by the covenant, in a relationship of cooperation and sharing the same intentions. The whole organization of these towns revolved around the Church, whose aim was the creation of the “republic of the saints”, on the understanding that civil and religious orders had to be separated.

Even if this scheme corresponded more or less to the city of Geneva at the time of Calvin, it is possible – taking into account the obvious differences – to transpose it to the other Swiss and Rhenish towns where the Reformation had led to a reorganization of the Church and its institutions¹⁵⁷. The most advanced Reformation dated back to Strasbourg and Bucer, and it was based on the enforcement of the model of community within the New Testament. The Schlettstadt-born theologian, referring to Paul’s Ephesians, divided the various ministries into four categories: the doctors, responsible for teaching; the pastors, in charge of preaching; the presbyters or “elders”, responsible for monitoring discipline, and the deacons, in charge of aiding the poor and the people in need. In Bucer’s

¹⁵⁴ For a commentary on Saint Paul’s letter, see Barth K., *L’epistola ai Romani*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2002. See also Vinay V., “Il cristiano e lo Stato. Commento a Romani XIII”, in *Gioventù Cristiana*, V, No. 56 (Sept.-Dec.1936).

¹⁵⁵ See Calvin J., *Les ordonnances ecclésiastiques de l’Eglise de Geneve. Item l’ordre des escolles de ladite cité*, Genève, Artus Chauvin, 1562. See also Calvino G., *Istituzione della religione cristiana*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1197 and ff. (fourth book).

¹⁵⁶ McGrath A.E., *Il pensiero della Riforma*, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-260 and *Id.*, *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore*, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-165.

¹⁵⁷ Turchetti M., “Poteri rappresentativi e ideali ‘repubblicani’ nella Ginevra riformata”, in De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-126.

thought, a pivotal role was played by the presbyters, who were responsible for discipline and the local Christian community. In Swiss towns, however, the appointment of the elders was the prerogative of the town council, thus restricting the independence of the Church. This condition lasted until the birth of the Huguenot consistory¹⁵⁸. Later, this type of ecclesiastical organization became the point of reference of Dutch, German and Swiss Reformed towns, as well as of Calvinism in the English-speaking world, and evolved into the Presbyterian system.

In contrast with the Reformed *polis* and the Presbyterian system, the episcopal system established itself in England with the Anglican Church, and in Germany and Scandinavia with Lutheranism, also by reason of a more effective symbiosis between the Churches and the historical monarchies. The confessional trends developed in a very different environment from the Swiss and Rhenish cities, where freedom and independence pre-dated the Reformation. The fortunes of the Churches in these regions were often linked to those of the states they were in, and this led to the alignment of the ecclesiastical organization with the political power, thus seconding their needs. As a consequence of this evolution, the Anglican and Lutheran Churches were tendentially stricter and more centralized, as in Sweden, Norway and Denmark where Lutheranism had a more traditional character, fostered by local monarchies and kept some Catholic ecclesiastical structures, including the episcopate. For example, the Episcopalism is based on a hierarchical structure ruled by the bishops; at the territorial level, it is divided into dioceses, which are made of parishes; in the Church of England the authority of the bishops is based on the apostolic succession, while the Lutheran world has not kept the historic episcopate. The Presbyterian system, instead, is founded on the independence of the Churches, whose members elect a college of presbyters in charge of the discipline of the local Church. The elected "elders" then assemble in the presbytery, a higher assembly body, charged with the government of all the communities of a particular region. All the posts are elective and time-limited.

Even if this type of organization underlying the Reformed *polis* was still limited to the "saints", and even if it did not clearly show the future developments of the trends within this "incubator" of modernity, it is nevertheless possible to clarify some potential in the model of the Calvinist town: first of all, the birth of a social entity (*compagnie des fidèles*) which was the cradle of revolutionary principles in 16th-century Europe, such as

¹⁵⁸ On Calvin's thought about the government of the cities and the so-called Calvinist "theocracy", the *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques* and the role of the *Consistoire*, see McGrath A.E., *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore, op. cit.*, pp. 141-148 and 191-220. On some important aspects of the Protestant political thought, see *Id.*, *Il pensiero della Riforma, op. cit.*, pp. 231-236 and Malandrino C. and Savarino L. (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico, op. cit.*

equality, political freedom, public responsibility; secondly, the development of important concepts anticipating some ideas of modern political science, such as the social contract and the covenant. Finally, the Reformed communities are characterized also by the sense of independence and self-government of confederal unions and leagues¹⁵⁹.

When Calvinism came to France, local Protestants (the Huguenots), organized themselves following the example of Protestant towns and created congregations all around local Churches¹⁶⁰. The origin of the term Huguenot, defining French Protestants, likely comes from Geneva and in all probability comes from the German word *Eidgenossen*, meaning confederates or conspirators¹⁶¹. This term implies an ethical value, because it refers to a union based on an oath and a covenant. The tradition of the *covenant* involves therefore also the French Calvinists, who not only had a very important religious stature in France, but also strongly influenced the culture and the politics of their country¹⁶².

In 1559, French Calvinists called a secret assembly in Paris, which was attended by preachers and representatives of the local Reformed communities scattered all over the Kingdom of France. Their main goal was to reach an agreement on the organizational structure, mainly because they had to determine the coordination of the action of Reformed Church-communities as well as the position of the Huguenots with respect to other Anabaptist-like currents. Making use of the evangelical traditions, the Huguenots set the theological principles in a Confession of faith and established an ecclesiastic discipline with political-organizational purposes. There was a crucial difference, though: the Parisian assembly was not attended by princes or theologians but by God's people; this "consultation" will give rise to the new structures of the Reformed Protestantism: the Consistory and the Synod.

French Calvinists were then able on the one hand to become fully independent from political power and, on the other hand, to put an end to the

¹⁵⁹ Baker J.W., "The Covenantal Basis for the Development of Swiss Political Federalism: 1291-1848", in *Publius*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (spring 1993), pp. 19-41 and *Id.*, "Church, State, and Dissent. The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536", in *Church History*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (June 1988), pp. 135-152.

¹⁶⁰ On Huguenot political thought, see Testoni Binetti S., *Il pensiero politico ugonotto. Dallo studio della storia all'idea di contratto (1572-1579)*, Firenze, Centro editoriale toscano, 2002. On the history of the Huguenot Synod and on its development, see Garrisson-Estebe J., *Protestants du midi, 1559-1598*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶¹ The term *Eidgenossen* is much older than its French derivative and is rooted in the history of Switzerland, whose name in German is *Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft*.

¹⁶² The Huguenots were instrumental in spreading not only Calvinism in France, but also many protodemocratic and profederal ideas all over Europe. See Spini D., *Diritti di Dio, diritti dei popoli. Pierre Jurieu e il problema della sovranità (1681-1691)*, Torino, Claudiana, 1997.

clerical monopoly on the administration of the Church¹⁶³. The French *consistoire*¹⁶⁴ kept watch over the private lives of the believers, intervening in all the spiritual and practical issues of the community. It was a college of laymen (presbyters), which imitated the one in Geneva and added the electivity of the "elders" by the assembly of the members of the community; the Synod, instead, was a real institutional innovation, which was not only largely enforced in the Reformed world, but also had a tangible influence on the future development of democratic-like political institutions¹⁶⁵.

In a little urban republic where the population is circumscribed, the unity of the people is a visible and everyday fact; but how was it possible to create it on a much bigger scale and with a bigger population? The answer was simple, because it was only necessary to give an institutional nature to the spontaneous events that took place in Paris in May 1559. This led to the establishment of a "general assembly" gathering all communities at a higher level, and representing them through their own elected or appointed delegates. This type of Synod became a new and revolutionary institution in 16th century Europe, and was characterized by a great religious and civil flexibility. This happened despite the fact that this institution was deeply rooted in the ancient ecclesiastic tradition, where Synods and Councils were regularly called to solve theological disputes. In conclusion, the transformation of these ancient ecclesiastical institutions in prospective modern entities was due to the dynamic and forward-looking nature of Calvinism, as well as to its values. In that sense, the Huguenot experience was crucial in France for the development of Reformed thought and for the organization of the Churches through the synodal system, but it was also very important for the spread of such "improvements" all over Europe, following the Huguenot diaspora caused by measures taken by Louis XIV against the Protestants¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶³ The Huguenots placed the Christian community as an independent reality within the framework of a civil society, where all spiritual decisions would have been made by the Church and no longer by the princes, as in Germany, or by the citizens' councils, as in Switzerland. The Huguenot pastor was fully responsible for leading the believers, who are a "congregation", a free gathering of men and women in the name of Christ.

¹⁶⁴ McGrath A.E., *Il pensiero della Riforma*, op. cit., pp. 231-233.

¹⁶⁵ Dodge, G.H., *The Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Dispersion: with Special Reference to the Thought and Influence of Pierre Jurieu*, New York, Octagon Books, 1972 (1st ed.1947).

¹⁶⁶ The *refuge huguenot* is characterized by two distinct moments among the religious wars in France. The first *refuge* dates back to the 1530s and is smaller and geographically more limited. The second *refuge*, also known as *grand Refuge*, was larger and took place after the Edict of Fontainebleau which forced roughly 200,000 French Calvinists to flee to Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, the United Provinces, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, up to Saint Petersburg and across the Atlantic, to Southern Africa and the British colonies in North America. Birnstiel E. (ed.), *La Diaspora des Huguenots. Les réfugiés protestants de France et leur dispersion dans le monde XVIIe-XVIIIe*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2001; Van Ruymbeke B., Sparks R.J. (eds.), *Memory and Identity*.

As in other historical moments, the Huguenots got the right answer on the one hand from the circumstances that led to a compromise, and on the other hand from the Calvinist aptitude for assembly culture, somehow anticipating the mechanism of the representational systems. It is therefore no coincidence that the creation of complex institutional systems came almost spontaneously from the traditional constitutionalism of Reformed Protestantism in case of an *impasse*.

Another example, this time related to the compromise in the political field, was the Philadelphia Convention, in which representation was extended not only to all the citizens, but also to state entities. Therefore, the establishment of constitutional, religious and political structures related to the developments of societies influenced by the Reformed tradition, shows a consistent approach and linearity towards the principle of freedom and independence – both supported by the inborn sense of responsibility of the Protestant culture. Such developments were often contradictory; however, they could find a functional common denominator in the compromise and the contractualism of subjects characterized by a strong religious, cultural, political and social identity¹⁶⁷.

The Presbyterian system was resumed by Protestants in England in contrast with the Anglican episcopatism. However, the English Calvinism witnessed the creation of a highly motivated minority of independents, alternative to both systems. This intransigent wing enhanced the value of local communities, that is the first level of the ecclesiastical system of the Reformed Churches. The above-mentioned movement sets itself as a congregation of believers that is completely independent from civil power and therefore against both the episcopal system and the Presbyterian solution.

This situation gave origin to the ecclesiology of the “congregation”, based on the autonomy of local communities, seen as independent and self-sufficient cells. This particular way to organize and manage the Church was very successful within the Puritan colonies of New England. The authority of both presbyters (the government council of a community) and Synods was not recognized anymore; so, the Puritans set the congregationalist system to the Calvinist Presbyterian system, and defended the “independency” of each congregation¹⁶⁸. Within such a system, the individual responsibility of each member grew parallel to the level of independence of the Church, because each local congregation held the fullness of the universal Church

The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora, Columbia (SC), University of South Carolina Press, 2003. See also Pitassi M.C., “Refuge and esprit républicain”, in De Michelis Pintecuda F., Francioni G. (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani*, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-192.

¹⁶⁷ Weir D.A., *Early New England. A Covenanted Society*, Grand Rapids (MI), W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005.

¹⁶⁸ Spini G., “Il pensiero politico americano”, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

and could not be subject to any other authority but the one coming from the congregation itself.

Then, an innovative principle arose, bringing with it the prospect of future political institutional developments, and established itself as the foundation of a certain type of society where individuality and independence but also the ethics of power and the principle of subsidiarity coexisted in harmony, thus anticipating the creation of federal systems.

These congregations were jealous of their independence, but they were also scattered over a wide territory and therefore had to reach a compromise with the other communities to cope with common problems and difficulties. That is why congregations started to take care of common issues through Synods or "Conventions"¹⁶⁹. These assemblies were given some limited general and circumscribed competencies by the communities themselves. This way, the congregations could preserve their independence, particularly on the most important community issues, and could also deal with problems that could not have been resolved locally. Therefore, these congregations were able not only to keep their independence, but also to develop a federal-like functional unity through a high level of mutual solidarity and a subsidiarity-based mechanism.

With the Cambridge Platform in 1648, the great family of the "congregations" formally endorsed their "constitution"¹⁷⁰, thus paving the way to political federalism. The declarations including and showing the principles, the government and the disciplines of congregationalist Churches fully retained the tradition of the covenant and of the Puritan contractualism, which had a major impact on the culture and the societies of the colonies of New England. As a matter of fact, in the Constitution of the Congregational Churches it is possible to detect a confessional antecedent of the future American political federalism; the Cambridge covenant includes and anticipates some typical aspects of federalist thought and practice that indirectly inspired the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, that is to say through a now-consolidated cultural tradition¹⁷¹.

The preliminary declaration, together with the guidelines for every Church, is followed by the various forms to be adopted: "saints by calling

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Emmons N., *The Cambridge Platform or Church Discipline and the Confession of Faith. A Platform of Ecclesiastical Government*, Boston, Congregational Board of Publication, 1855; Walker W., *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, Boston, Pilgrim, 1960 (1st ed. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893). See also Acquarone A., Negri G., Scelba C. (eds.), *La formazione degli Stati Uniti d'America*, op. cit.

¹⁷¹ Allen B., *Tocqueville, Covenant, and the Democratic Revolution. Harmonizing Earth with Heaven*, Lanham (Md), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005; Dreisbach D.L., Hall M.D., Morrison J.H., *The Founders on God and Government*, op. cit.

must have a visible political union among themselves" (c. IV, a. 1 in Walker 1893, p. 207). The Church is then a "company of people bound together by covenant for the worship of God" (c. VI, a. 1, *ibid.*, p. 210); such a covenant must be voluntary and consensual (c. IV, a. 4, *ibid.*, p. 208). In fact, its very essence lies in a "real agreement and consent of a company of faithful persons to meet constantly together in one congregation"; an "agreement" that the members of the community have to express "by their constant religious practice in coming together for the public worship of God and by their religious subjection unto the ordinances of God" (c. IV, a. 4, *ibid.*). The charter reasserts the independence of each individual, the electability of the posts and their possible removal in case of "manifest unworthiness and delinquency" (c. VIII, a. 6-7, *ibid.*, pp. 214-215). Finally, the government of the Church, subject to Christ and delegated to the elected representatives, must be invested "with sufficient power for its own preservation and subsistence" (c. X, a. 2, *ibid.*, p. 217).

It is interesting to note the careful integration between the models of the classical political tradition and the ones coming from previous Reformed ecclesiastical experiences, from which the members drew their inspiration to express their idea of a "company of professed believers, ecclesiastically confederate" (c. X, a. 1, *ibid.*). The structure of the Constitution was framed around the three traditional forms of power: monarchical, aristocratic and democratic, in accordance with the Presbyterian system. Christ, head and king of the universal Church, holds the "sovereign power", which then goes down to the "body or brotherhood of the Church" that Christ "granted unto them" by means of a covenant. The community, invested with such a power, "resembles a democracy", within which the power is aristocratically exercised by the presbytery (c. X, a. 3, *ibid.*, pp. 217-218).

These key principles were common to all congregations and followed the principles relating to the structuring of the union of the congregations into a confederation of Churches, whose main goal was the preservation of the principle of independence of each community and the superstructural unity of the congregations. Such a constitution anticipated, at least in principle, the later – and more political – covenants, thus foreseeing the modern federal system. Infact, the mutual communion of churches kept each church separated "and therefore may not be confounded one with another, and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only as a mystical, but as a political head; whence is derived a communion suitable thereunto" (c. XV, a. 1, *ibid.*, pp. 229-230).

This communion of churches was based on the principle of "mutual care [...] for one another's welfare" (c. XV, a. 2.1, *ibid.*, p. 230) and was enforced

by means of two tools: first of all, the establishment of common institutions for the enforcement of the “consultation one with another”. The Synod had an advisory role; the elders gathered “to consider and argue the points in doubt or difference” to find, by mutual consent, “the way of truth and peace”. The unity lay within the Word, whose authoritativeness would have guaranteed the unity itself. There was also a second tool: a pseudo-coactive instrument which could lead either to the formal condemnation of an “impenitent” Church or to its removal from the union (c. XV, a. 2.2, p. 230)¹⁷². The chapter on the definition of the common ecclesiastical system touches on the rights of participation to the common government by all communities, and of solidarity and subsidiarity (c. XV, a. 2.4 and 6, *ibid.*, pp. 231-236).

The successive chapters define once again the prerogatives and the functions of the councils and the general Synod (c. XVI, *ibid.*, pp. 233-234), as well as the relationship between ecclesiastical and civil powers (c. XVII, *ibid.*, pp. 234-237).

At first glance, the communion of churches looks like a confederal, rather than a real federal, system because there predominates the principle according to which the “churches have no more authority one over another” (c. XV, a. 2.3, *ibid.*, p. 231). However, there are some significant points not to be underestimated¹⁷³.

Firstly, this constitution shows an unprecedented level of modernity in Europe, where at that time both monarchic and confessional absolutism ruled. In other words, as Barbara Allen noted, “from the Synod producing the Cambridge Platform to the convention producing the Articles of Confederation, wide differences had been bridged in public forums. No one seemed to believe that disagreements could be resolved by mere fiat in a republic. Federalism, in its eighteenth-century sense, as in its earlier expressions, rejected absolutism on principle in favour of mutuality, negotiation, and consent”¹⁷⁴.

Secondly, the above-mentioned ecclesiastical system of government adopted by congregationalist Churches in North America experimented and started a new type of “political union”, which adopted democratic principles and mechanisms to manage the general issues of many small, independent, under-articulated, republican-like structures¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷² Here the principle stating that Paul cannot assert his authority over Peter is applied, even though he can always reprimand him on the basis of the Word (see 1 Cor. 9,14-16; Gal. 1,8).

¹⁷³ On the influence of the *Cambridge Platform* on the culture of the Founding Fathers, notably on John Adams, see Allen B., *Tocqueville, Covenant, and the Democratic Revolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-100.

¹⁷⁴ Allen B., *Tocqueville, Covenant, and the Democratic Revolution*, *op. cit.* p. 98.

¹⁷⁵ Maloy J.S., *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Finally, such a constitutional architecture reflected and complied with the social organization of North American puritan colonies, directing the political design of civil institutions. In the New World, on the one hand the separation of Church and State¹⁷⁶ becomes more marked, while on the other hand the extraordinary growth of the colonies and the steady evolution of the secularization process challenged the adaptation and the creative skills of the civil institutions, which continuously borrow models from their reference confessional communities, creating an osmosis between these two fields. Elazar presents an evocative picture of the associative practice in North American colonies, where the covenant system imbued the whole North American society. Initially, Elazar wrote, "the basic covenants of town and congregation united individuals and families. Parallel to those covenants there developed the network of voluntary associations – commercial, social, church, and civic – which represent the nongovernmental aspects of a civil society founded on the principles of free contract". Finally, on the basis of this branched juridical, institutional, public and private structure, "[the] networks of communities were united as colonies, then states" and "ultimately, the network of states was linked in a federal union. Always paralleled by a similar network of associations"¹⁷⁷.

To conclude, let's go back to Europe where some Reformed theologians, scholars, explorers and statesmen sketched out some Utopian unitarian projects, each spurred on by a peculiar vision of life and the world, despite their being inspired by republican and (pseudo) federal principles. Notwithstanding this, it is always important to consider that these unitarian projects looked like a prospective Utopian-like order, described as a simple league rather than a form of government¹⁷⁸.

4. The Protestants and the idea of Europe

In Europe, the federal thought was never as successful as it was in North America, nor is it possible to see the positive effect of the idea that the Puritan pragmatism of the American colonists had used for their own practical purposes. Notwithstanding this, the federal thought, even before its spread in America, had led some representatives of the first European Protestantism to study Europe's political order, raising hopes of a united and peaceful Europe. This statement, however, needs some preliminary remarks to avoid possible misunderstandings; as a matter of fact, the theories briefly explained hereafter are connoted by a hint of federalism, which was theoretically anticipated by Kant and practi-

¹⁷⁶ Morgan E.S., *Roger Williams. The Church and the State*, New York, Harcourt, 1967. See also Miegge M., "Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius", *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71.

¹⁷⁷ Elazar D.J., *Covenant and Constitutionalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁸ Friedrich C.J., *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

cally implemented only with the birth of the United States of America. Therefore, we will analyze the political projects involving (pseudo) federal, or even confederal, aspects¹⁷⁹.

In the century of the Reformation, the idea of Europe still coincided with the *Res Publica Christiana* where the concepts of *imperium* and *sacerdotium* were identical and both concurred in looking for the unity of Christians¹⁸⁰ within the *Res Publica Christiana* itself. The birth of sovereign states from the end of the 15th century led to the disintegration of the common universalistic Utopia of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Roman Church, depriving the idea of Europe of a precise meaning. However, Christian thought was still fostering strong unitarian hopes and wishes for harmony among Christians in Europe. The Catholic idea of Europe was still burdened with Constantine's heritage, which was the foundation of the mixture of the secular and spiritual power of the Church, and which stated the superiority of the autonomy of the Pope over the Emperor; but the hegemony of Rome and the exclusivism of its universalistic vision of European society had been weakened not only by the ever-growing resistance of the Emperor, the princes and the town councils that asserted their role and a definite power, but also by the coming of the Protestant Reformation, bearing the idea of the separation of Church and State, and of a new idea of Europe.

The first Reformation was marked by German theologian Philipp Melancthon (1497-1560)¹⁸¹, the first Protestant with a con/federal vision of the unity of the European nations within the Roman Empire.

¹⁷⁹ From now on, whenever the federal and confederal stance represent the combination of a more general pactual trend, the term con/federalism will be used.

¹⁸⁰ On the idea of Europe, its roots and evolution over time, see Chabod F., *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, op. cit.; Curcio C., *Europa. Storia di un'idea*, 2 Vols., Firenze, Vallecchi, 1958; Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, op. cit. See also Du Réau E., *L'idee d'Europe au XXème siècle. Des mythes aux réalités*, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1996 (re-print: Bruxelles, Complexe, 2001); Febvre L., *L'Europa. Storia di una civiltà*, op. cit.; Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, op. cit.; Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, il Mulino, Bologna 2002; Rolland P., *L'unità politica de l'Europe. Histoire d'une idée*, Brussels, Bruylant, 2006; Rossi P., *L'identità dell'Europa*, op. cit.; Chabert G., *L'idee européenne. Entre guerres et culture: de la confrontation à l'union*, Brussels, PIE Lang, 2007.

¹⁸¹ Timothy J.W. and Graham M.P. (eds.), *Philip Melancthon (1497-1560) and the Commentary*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997; Scheible H., *Filippo Melantone*, Torino, Claudiana, 2001 (translated by L. Scornaienchi). See also Ricca P., "Pietas et eruditio. Melantone a cinquecento anni dalla nascita", in *Protestantesimo*, LIII, No. 1 (1998), pp. 3-13; Vv. AA., "Studi su Melantone", in *Protestantesimo*, LIII, No. 1 (1998), pp. 14-25; Scheible H., "L'importanza di Melantone nella storia e nel presente", in *Protestantesimo*, LVI, No. 2 (2001), pp. 110-23. On his political thought, see Miegge M., *Il sogno del re di Babilonia. Profezia e storia da Thomas Müntzer a*

Melanchthon's thought shows the convergence of humanistic historical thought, linked to classical tradition, and Protestant biblicism. Melanchthon stated that the knowledge of history was crucial to get a deeper knowledge of the prophetic texts because history is the depositary of the hidden meanings of the biblical message. Moreover, the Lutheran theologian believed that "the prophecy cannot be referred exclusively to a single 'time', but that it applies to the whole history of the world"¹⁸². Hence, he believed in the existence of a "cosmic-historical" sense established by prophecies and theology, prefiguring the Augustinian model of the "two histories": the political history of the Empires with their charges, and the ecclesiastical history of the *historia salutis*, where the former is ruled by the latter. Finally, Melanchthon believes that the ethical and political – hence educational – value of history can find much more openness in the vocational doctrine of the Reformation than in Augustine, and it also takes on more secular connotations¹⁸³.

On the basis of these assumptions and through a biblical allegory, the German Reformer saw the unity of Europe as a *foedus*. To support this idea, Melanchthon referred to the statue dreamed by the Babylonian King Nabucodonosor, described in Daniel's prophetic book and used by the German theologian in his commentary¹⁸⁴. In his dream, the King saw a big statue made of many different parts and materials: the golden head symbolized his kingdom; the chest and the silver arms represented the Median and Persian kingdoms; the bronze thighs and pelvis symbolized Alexander The Great's kingdom; the iron legs represented the Roman Empire, while the feet, made of clay and iron, announced a fragile yet strong kingdom, the heir to the Roman-Christian tradition. Luther identified this kingdom with the Roman-German "Reich", the sole kingdom able to preserve the Roman-Christian roots of the Empire from the chaos of its disintegration. According to Melanchthon, the original matrix lay instead in a new idea of Europe, based not on univocal elements but on all its parts together¹⁸⁵.

Melanchthon was Luther's closest collaborator but, unlike him, he had republican sympathies which brought him nearer to Zwingli¹⁸⁶. Melanchthon

Isaac Newton, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1995, pp. 49-66. On Melanchthon, see Melantone F., *Scritti religiosi e politici*, edited by A. Agnoletto, Torino, Claudiana 1981.

¹⁸² Miegge M., *Il sogno del re di Babilonia*, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Melanctone P. (ed.), *In Daniele prophetam commentarius*, MDXLIII, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, MO, 65, *Scripta exegetica*, V, p. 831.

¹⁸⁵ Miegge M., *Il sogno del re di Babilonia*, op. cit.

¹⁸⁶ Miegge M., "Teologia della storia e 'storia della libertà'", in Rostagno S. et al. (eds.), *Dio e la storia*, Torino, Claudiana, 1990, pp. 53-84.

also had an irenic spirit, as well as a moderate and conciliatory nature, and was constantly aimed at looking for peaceful and balanced views in the face of the political and religious fights that disrupted Europe at that time. In fact, Melanchthon can be considered the great conjunction between the Lutheran Reformation and German humanism¹⁸⁷, because he brings together the political tradition and the aristocratic and republican models of classical antiquity¹⁸⁸, and the Sinaitic systems of the Ancient Covenant¹⁸⁹. The German Reformer meshed these two traditions and was a forerunner of the federal theology. Many of Melanchthon's implicit considerations were perpetuated by German Protestants and later by the Swiss and Dutch Protestants, whose *Foederaltheologie* adopted the concept of covenant (*foedus naturae*) to define first of all the relation between God and mankind, then the relation between believers and finally civil relations themselves¹⁹⁰.

In addition to the importance given to the idea of *foedus* and to his republican preferences, Melanchthon developed an idea of Europe that differed from Luther's vision, because the father of the Protestant Reformation considered Europe as the continuation of the Roman-German Empire on the basis of the theory of the *translatio imperii*; as a matter of fact, Luther had a sort of veiled patriotism which made him identify the Germans as the true continuators of the Roman imperial tradition. Melanchthon, instead, placed the Germans on the same level as "national" entities sharing the same Roman Christian heritage. According to Miegge, Melanchthon, by placing the Roman Christian heritage in opposition to the Turkish menace, introduced a new concept of "Europe" as a religious and geopolitical entity distinct from the Orient. Moreover, Melanchthon urged the German princes to put an end to their "private strifes" and suggested the "corporate" system implemented in the Germanic Empire with the "Senatus" of the Voters to carry out a "European alliance able to face the Turkish barbarism and the tyrants who wage unjust and dangerous wars against all European

¹⁸⁷ On the influence on Reformers by Melanchthon, and other humanists, see Gordon B. and Campi E., *Architect of Reformation, op. cit.* See also Maag K. (ed.), *Melanchthon in Europe: his work and influence beyond Wittenberg. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, Grand Rapids (MI), Baker, 1999; Schofield J., *Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.

¹⁸⁸ Cuttini E., *Unità e pluralità nella tradizione europea della filosofia pratica di Aristotele. Girolamo Savonarola, Pietro Pomponazzi e Filippo Melantone*, Roma, Rubbettino, 2005.

¹⁸⁹ The *preceptor Germaniae* was the conjunction between the two main wings of the Reformation: the wing of the Lutheran Princes and the wing of the Reformed "republics". He devoted all his life to pursuing the rapprochement and the reconciliation of these two trends. Miegge M., *Il sogno del re di Babilonia, op. cit.*, p. 62; McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism, op. cit.*, pp. 34-39.

¹⁹⁰ McCoy C.S. and Baker J. W., *Fountainhead of Federalism, op. cit.*, pp. 35-36. See also De Freitas S.A. and Raath A.W.G., *The Reformational Legacy of Theologico-political Federalism, op. cit.*

people”¹⁹¹. As Miegge pointed out, the German theologian substantially suggested to overcome both external and internal menaces through a con/federal system, rather than the restoration of the traditional monarchic and imperial models. Melancthon claimed that the “nations” of Europe should endorse a federal tool, based on a corporate government, to ward off the tyranny of the Turkish Islamic Empire as well as of the Papacy, which perversely mixed spiritual and political orders¹⁹².

Within the Protestant culture, a first and concrete project for the reorganization of the political system in Europe according to con/federal principles was carried out by Maxmilian de Béthune, Duke of Sully (1560-1641)¹⁹³. He was the ambassador and minister of Henry IV, King of France; as the Head of Finance, the Duke of Sully carried out an intense reforming activity, brought into the public administration a new spirit and made important provisions, particularly in the agricultural field¹⁹⁴. His crucial role in the transformation of France into a modern State was not limited to economic initiatives, but it also covered the project of a con/federal Europe.

Maxmilian de Béthune was a Huguenot and was strongly influenced by the Reformed culture, which in France was particularly dynamic and propositional; he also supported the religious pacification among the many Christian trends all over Europe. After Henry IV’s death, the Duke was dismissed by Louis XIII and between 1620 and 1635 wrote down a political project titled *Grand dessein d’Henri IV*, which he attributed to the King¹⁹⁵.

Sully’s “master plan”, despite its religious implications and “the incertitude between the ideas of Europe and of Christianity”¹⁹⁶, represented an original project based on the principle of equality among member states. According to the Duke, there should have been 15 founding states, includ-

¹⁹¹ Miegge M., *Il sogno del re di Babilonia*, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁹² Maag K. (ed.), *Melancthon in Europe*, op. cit.

¹⁹³ Lefèvre L.R., *Mémoires de Sully*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1942. On his political ideas about Europe, see Duroselle J.-B., *L’idea d’Europa nella storia*, op. cit., pp. 138-140; Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un’idea e di un’identità*, op. cit., pp. 51-53.

¹⁹⁴ Pitts V.J., *Henri IV of France: His Reign and Age*, Baltimore (MD), Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009; Garrisson-Estebe J., *Enrico IV e la nascita della Francia moderna*, Milano, Mursia, 1987; Basevi G., *Enrico IV*, Milano, Corbaccio 1932.

¹⁹⁵ De Béthune duc de Sully M., *Mémoires de Sully, principal Ministre de Henri le Grand*, 9 Vols., Paris, A. Costes, 1814, pp. 267 and ff., (Chapter XXX, Vol. 5). For an in-depth analysis of *Dessein*, see Puharré A., *Les projets d’organisation européenne d’après le grand dessein de Henri IV et de Sully*, Pau, Éditions Marrimpouey Jeune, 1954. On the plan, the contents and the historical circumstances behind the drafting of the project, see also Saitta A., *Dalla “res publica christiana” agli Stati Uniti d’Europa*, op. cit., pp. 23-35; Poirson A. M., *Histoire du règne de Henri IV*, Paris, Didier et C., 1867, pp. 104-114; Pfister C., “Les ‘Oeconomies royales’ de Sully et le grand dessein de Henri IV”, in *Revue historique*, Vol. 54 (1894), pp. 300-314.

¹⁹⁶ Duroselle J.-B., *L’idea d’Europa nella storia*, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

ing six hereditary monarchies (France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden and Lombardy)¹⁹⁷, five elective monarchies and an aristocratic government (Empire, Papal State, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and Republic of Venice) and finally three sovereign republics (Switzerland, Belgium and Italy)¹⁹⁸. The above-mentioned European nations should have periodically gathered in a "highly Christian council", together with a permanent organ (a senate) having an even number of representative for each member State¹⁹⁹. Such an assembly, aimed at discussing common issues, most likely also acted as a supreme "court" of arbitration for all member states to settle their mutual disputes²⁰⁰. Moreover, the European "senate", a real unitary organ, would have also been in charge of collecting taxes and keeping a common permanent army²⁰¹.

Therefore, the 15 European States "formaient ensemble une grande confédération nommée République chrétienne"²⁰² which featured some of the necessary conditions for a federal State: from a common army to the direct taxation of the central government; from the upper house, where all states were equally represented, to the prohibition of secession.

Sully's project relied on three basic strategical reasons that he considered necessary to assure peace in Europe. The first reason was of a religious nature, because Sully believed that a pacificated European confederation could hold down any confessional strife, thus warding off all religious internecine wars. Secondly, Sully believed that a redistribution of powers, lands and wealth could have undermined the Empire. He basically wanted to balance and stabilize the European and State systems by means of a political unity and the dislocation of the Hapsburgs' power, which was perceived as a menace²⁰³. The third reason was the creation of a great

¹⁹⁷ The latter included the Duchies of Savoy and Milan.

¹⁹⁸ Switzerland would later include, besides its traditional cantons, also Tyrol, Franche-Comté and Alsace; Belgium would regroup the United Provinces with the Spanish Basque Countries, while Italy would witness the birth of a confederation of states including the Republics of Genoa and Lucca, the Duchies of Florence, Mantua, Modena, Parma and Piacenza, and the other smaller principates.

¹⁹⁹ In Sully's projects, the senate was made up of 60 representatives, four per State.

²⁰⁰ Sully also set the administrative cities of the confederation; the senate would have been based in Metz, Nancy or Cologne. The capital cities change in each of the six different versions of Sully's *Mémoires*.

²⁰¹ Such an army would have been made up of 270,000 infantrymen, 50,000 cavalrymen, 200 cannons and 120 ships and galleys. On the other characteristics of the confederation, see Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia, op. cit.*

²⁰² Poirson A. M., *Histoire du règne de Henri IV, op. cit.*, p. 107.

²⁰³ As Duroselle explained, according to Sully's redefinition of the borders "the House of Austria would have lost Bohemia and Hungary, while the King of Spain would have lost the Netherlands and all possessions in Italy". Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia, op. cit.*, p. 140.

Christian alliance or, as Erasmus said, of a “Christian brotherhood” to oppose the external enemy, represented by the Oriental powers. Therefore, Sully identified the enemies of Europe with the Ottoman Empire and all the states that had not embraced one of the three Christian confessional trends – Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist – allowed within the confederation²⁰⁴.

Sully’s European project had an ideal and utopian dimension. More expressly than any other plan for peace ever conceived in Europe, he attempted to combine the medieval ideals of an Empire and a Christian community involving all Europe with the idea of a policy based on the balance of powers between sovereign states and a monarchical regime²⁰⁵.

Another important, yet often underestimated, European protagonist of the Protestant world was Johann Amos Comenius and his work on the previously described universal reformation of the world. This wandering theologian was the father of modern pedagogy and a member of the Reformed Church known as Union of the Bohemian Brothers; he personally experienced the tragedy of the Thirty Years’ War and religious persecution, and lived as an expatriate in Poland, England, Sweden and Holland, where he finally died. Comenius’s pansophical vision, together with his being exiled and persecuted for confessional reasons, made him develop a strong irenic spirit on which he based his idea of life and the world. The Moravian humanist realized the importance of education in social development and based his system on the school, which he believed should have “unified the processes of civil and cultural growth of all nations”²⁰⁶; hence, his general reformation of humanity in the fields of education, religion and politics, which anticipated the Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and the idea of a universal and perpetual peace prelude the Kingdom of Christ.

In the *Panorthosia*²⁰⁷, his political work, Comenius states that the reformation of human institutions can be possible only through “pansophia”, or Reason. His idea of a universal State transcends Europe itself and sets this continental reality into a broader political institutional framework, following an intense rational thought. Despite the Utopian nature of Comenius’s universal State, the *ante litteram* “Enlightenment” and cosmopolitan aspect of his project should not be neglected. Notwithstanding that, we will briefly

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

²⁰⁵ Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un’idea e di un’identità*, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

²⁰⁶ Monda D., *Amore e altri despoti. Figure, temi e problemi nella civiltà letteraria europea dal Rinascimento al Romanticismo*, Napoli, Liguori, 2004, p. 243.

²⁰⁷ The *Panorthosia* is just a part of the *Consultatio*, which is the widest collection of cognitive and sapiential tools within Comenius’s extraordinary work. The *Consultatio* features also the *Pansophia*, which not only occupies two thirds of the collection, but is also the postulate for the other parts to become true (owing parts: *Autognosia*, *Panautonomia*, *Panautocrateia*, *Panautarkeia*, *Pampaedia*, *Panglottia*, *Panenosia*). Comenius J. A., *Panorthosia*, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

mention some of the main characteristics of the universal State; however, we would like to focus on some ideal postulates.

As to the institutional architecture explained in his project, in which the European perspective and the cosmopolitan dimension merge, Comenius's reformation revolved around three criteria: the new universal philosophy, the new universal theology or religion and the new universal State, encompassing all. The universal State included the universal "Council of Light", in charge of philosophical and sapiential issues to contribute to the intellectual edification of Christians. It had the task of taking care of education, schooling and culture. The second institution was the "Ecumenical Consistory", dealing with the Church, theology and ethics in general. On top of these bodies, and in charge of assuring the civil order and the respect for the laws, there was the "Ministry of Peace" (*Dicastero*), which Comenius defined as the "universal link among the states". It was in charge of preserving the human society "with its trades, that is to say to supervise justice and peace"²⁰⁸.

The *Dicastero* was assigned many important tasks, some of which were typical of con/federal structures, such as: supreme justice, universal laws, the duty to supervise the juridical process "as it is conducted by one and by the others" (Comenius meant the minor states) and the "interpreters of the law" (a sort of modern Constitutional Court), to provide for weights, measurements, public roads and even the currency. Within this structure there were some minor entities structured independently according to their traditions and joining the universal State as explained by Comenius: as the things scattered around the world were collected in various "syntheses" and minor synthesis groups around major syntheses up to a final synthesis or sum, so the colleges of scholars, the Synods of the Churches, the meetings of the provinces and the kingdoms would do; even minor meetings might sometimes end up in a *plenum*, that was the synthesis of the synthesis: a congress, a college, a council and some meetings on this earth representing the world²⁰⁹. Following these gatherings, people and nations would be represented in an ecumenical council made of big continental colleges (Europe, Asia, Africa and America), each made of a president and an elective senate bringing together the delegates of all the nations as member-assistants. Finally, it is interesting to note that Comenius suggested to look for a universal language to make the interaction among people easier in vast assemblies.

As to the ideal postulates, Comenius writes, the world State is "valid for the whole world if it takes account of all people" and if it commits itself "to keeping peace and order, always and in every place"²¹⁰. The ultimate

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

goal of such a State is to assure peace and to “remove the ‘precise’ cause preventing its keeping: *the war*”. To that end, he believes that the use of the reason and the “light of the intellect” is functional to the construction of both the regional states and the universal State, in respect of “the freedom of those who govern and those who are governed”, as without freedom “constraint and violence follow, and it is therefore impossible to achieve the aims underlying the existence of the State”²¹¹. However, the State governing the universal order has to prevent the use of violence and to take “mankind, as a microcosmos, back to laws of order similar to those of the macrocosmos”²¹² where the “universal right” rules. To that end, Comenius provides the universal State with its own initiative to carry out against those who menace the established peace, and he also states that all “principles of violence that could not be tamed either with the light of the reason, or with love or the fear of God” will have to be stopped through the “coactive action of a supreme authority”²¹³.

Comenius strongly believed in Reason because he thought that “it is peculiar to human nature that men *act rationally*”²¹⁴ without being overcome by passion, wrath and violence. Such an attitude would belong to animal irrationality rather than to supreme human virtue, but the creator of the world State, despite his refusal of brute force, is also spurred on by a strong pragmatism preventing him from leaving the management of civil relationships to the “natural” human sociability and to the Christian *Áγάπη*²¹⁵.

Comenius’s universalistic and cosmopolitan vision anticipated some postulates of the rationalist and Enlightenment culture which Kant would later use to elaborate his project of a “perpetual peace”. The Moravian theologian, despite the lack of a concrete institutional example to relate to, appealed to Protestant experience and culture, which allowed him to think in a confederal way about the structure of the civil society and the “nations” included in his world State, structuring its unity around a *continuum* of free minor organizations. The “ecumenical” perspective emerging from Comenius’s description of his ideal world clearly shows this protestant and cosmopolitan spirit:

Not Austrian, Spanish, French, etc., but all equally good politicians, citizens of the free republic in the world; [...] and just as the terrestrial globe is unique and neither mountains, nor rivers, nor the seas themselves can separate it, but bind it instead, so the rulers of the different lands and their inhabitants must

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²¹⁵ On this concept, see also Kant’s perspective: Kant I., *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-44.

form a unique body, brought together to promote peace and harmony, without contending anymore for any part of the earth, as it was subject to them.²¹⁶

Such a conceptual idea of the world, which stemmed from a political, philosophical and religious vision linked not only to humanism but also to the Protestant culture, might have influenced also the English Quaker William Penn who, in the late 17th century, elaborated a project to establish a durable peace in Europe. His plan, inspired by a federal idea as well as by a philanthropic aim and a strong idealistic drive, was imbued with the principles of peace and tolerance that he had incubated following the persecutions he endured because of his religious beliefs²¹⁷. Moreover, Penn's project, despite its lack of theoretical ground to fully understand the mechanisms of sovereignty and the policy of power, was quite pragmatic because of his direct experience in the government of North American colonies, particularly in the province (later known as Pennsylvania) entrusted to him by the English King Charles II Stuart.

William Penn was the founder of the first predominantly Quaker colonies in America, and was not only instrumental in the drafting of the Pennsylvania Constitution in 1681 as a legislator, but was also one of the first theoreticians of American political thought. The Quaker colonies made a very important contribution to the creation of America, with their systems on religious freedom, and therefore to the separation of Church and State, with their democratic, pacifist and humanitarian inspiration²¹⁸. In this sense, the pacifist radicalism of the Quakers made him devise a plan to put into practice the principles of his religious movement, first in the North American colonies of West Jersey and then in Pennsylvania. Penn's thought was still related to the political tradition of his time and swung between the democratic ideas promoted by the Quaker movement and the conservative trends of the English society he belonged to. After being given by the King the task of governing a part of West Jersey in 1677, Penn gave the new province highly democratic grants and concessions because these regulations gave decision-making powers to a free and sovereign assembly, elected by the people without any confessional bias, reserving the appointment of the governor to the "owner" of the colony. A basic principle of the future American constitutional tradition was then established, that is the custom according to which no subsequent

²¹⁶ Comenius J. A., *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

²¹⁷ Penn joined the Quaker movement in 1667 and this had a deep influence on his political thought and his vision of mankind and the world. On Quakers' radical pacifism, see Fox G., Jones R.M., Kelly T.R. *et al.*, *La società degli amici. Il pensiero dei quaccheri da Fox (1624-1691) a Kelly (1883-1941)*, Milano, Linea d'ombra, 1993; Weddle M.B., *Quaker pacifism in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

²¹⁸ Spini G., "Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo", *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

law could contradict the fundamental charter. It anticipated the principle of the supremacy of the written constitution over any other law. Moreover, the regulations stated that the mandate of the assembly members should be renewed every year by means of new elections and, as to justice, that the citizens had the right to a fair trial in front of a jury. As for Pennsylvania, in the mid-1680s its founder related to the constitutional rules set for the properties in West Jersey, but he introduced an elective council acting as an Upper Chamber. In Penn's mind, Pennsylvania should have been a "saint experiment" of the pacifist idealities of the Quakers. However, the presence of the Indians and the external pressure of the French settlements forced Pennsylvania to revise its systems. Presented with the danger of a war and the risk of a conservative regression within the government of the colony, Penn proposed that the British provinces of North America should join together to provide a shared defence. His proposal – which was soon rejected – included the establishment of a con/federal-like Congress where all the colonies, equally represented, would have formulated a common strategy for defence and the relationships with the colonies of other European states²¹⁹.

As a matter of fact, despite his being a "son of England" and keeping a strong bond with Europe, Penn elaborated some political institutional projects aimed at the government of the American provinces under his control. Penn's struggle with the everyday and practical problems arising from this government allowed him to develop a theoretical political project for Europe, focused on international law and to be achieved through a con/federal system.

From the 17th century, the notion of Europe started being more clearly associated with the policy of the balance of power, religious tolerance and the commercial expansion of sovereign states²²⁰. Penn was obviously sensitive to confessional issues, but he also firmly believed that a peaceful order among European states should have been imposed through the use of laws to stop the havoc caused by a century of bloody religious wars; this way, it would have been possible to establish a supernational order able to guarantee a stable and lasting international balance, and to inhibit the policy of power of continental states. The considerations on the conditions of Europe, his American experiences and the belief in the soundness of the con/federal principle led Penn to write in 1693 his *Essay toward the Present and Future Peace of Europe*²²¹, where the founder of the city of brotherly love (Philadelphia) elaborated a vaguely con/federal system for

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, op. cit., p. 53.

²²¹ Penn W., "Discorso sulla pace presente e futura dell'Europa", in Archibugi D. and Voltaggio F. (eds.), *Filosofi per la pace*, op. cit., pp. 11-35 (Italian translation).

Europe aimed at restoring the political structure of the Old Continent on the basis of a rational and pragmatic pacifism, partially based upon the principle of safety. In this "Quacker" vision, the idea of a supranational instrument was already linked to that of pacifism. A similar stance was adopted by another Quacker intellectual, John Bellers (1654-1725), who wrote *Some Reasons for an European State proposed to the Powers of Europe* (1712)²²².

Penn's project was based on an agreement among the European sovereigns to constitute an assembly, known as "Imperial Diet, Parliament or State of Europe", that enacted some binding rules for the European states to adopt. This assembly, whose limited prerogatives assured each State the preservation of their own sovereignty over internal issues, would have had the task of settling any international disputes through law and arbitration. The decisions taken by the assembly would have been immediately enforced all over the territory of the "European Confederation or League", as Penn calls it; should a State refuse to submit itself to the common will or to the umpirage, the ruling body would have had the right to order out troops to impose the rules deliberated by the assembly²²³.

Penn did not mean to redraw the political map of Europe, but he wanted to preserve the international *status quo* through the establishment of a "European parliament", founded on a balanced voting system with a two-thirds majority for the passage of the initiatives and made up of the non-elected representatives of the European princes. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in Penn's project the number of the members of parliament per State has to be determined according to economic and non-political criteria. The importance of each State is represented by its domestic product, deriving from an estimate of its imports and exports, of the charging and the national assets²²⁴.

The states adhering to the "confederation" would have kept their sovereignty over all internal issues, but – by giving up the power to wage war and, therefore, to the maintenance of their army – they could have concentrated their resources on the development of agriculture, commerce and science, and on the development of sectors such as education and communications. Penn explained to those fearing the loss of power by the

²²² Bellers, J., "Some Reasons for an European State proposed to the Powers of Europe", in Clarke G. (ed.), *John Bellers, His Life, Times and Writings*, London, Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1988, pp. 141 and ff. On J. Bellers, see Traniello F. (ed.), *Dai quaccheri a Gandhi. Studi di storia religiosa in onore di Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1988, pp. 41-69.

²²³ Duroselle J.-B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, op. cit., pp. 173-177; Melchionni M.G., *Europa unita sogno dei saggi*, op. cit., p. 39; Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, op. cit., pp. 53-57.

²²⁴ Mikkeli H., *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, op. cit., p. 54.

European “nations” following their entry into the above-mentioned “alliance for peace”, that the princes in their own country would have kept their sovereignty as they always had and he also added that if we can call it a decrease in sovereignty, it is only because each country will be protected against any misuse of power and it will be incapable of committing any misuse of power²²⁵.

Penn also believed that the creation of an alliance for peace, founded on the right and institutionalized through a “federal-like” structure, could have brought a series of advantages, both concrete and ideal, to Europe. First of all, it would have put an end to the useless and absurd religious wars and raised the prestige of the Christian faith; secondly, the member states would have saved considerable sums of money, thus allowing the European states to improve the standard of living of their people. Following a continental peace, the European sovereigns would have formed strong alliances, with huge benefits for travels and commerce. Finally, such a system would have at first moved close to, and then co-opted Turkey onto the great European assembly, warding off permanently the Ottoman threat at the Oriental borders.

In the face of so many advantages, Penn was a partisan and supporter of an original project having the con/federal principle as a key element, and – despite his yet-to-be-refined consideration of federal tools as the insufficiency of the coactive mechanism – the fear to be criticized on a practical level pushed Penn to mention the example of the United Provinces of Holland²²⁶. He makes reference to a model that was largely influenced by Reformed Protestantism, which Penn considered as an antecedent and a prototype for the unification of more states, and effective for the whole of Europe. He probably related to William Temple (1628-1699), English ambassador in The Hague, who in 1672 wrote the essay *Observations upon the United Provinces of Netherlands*, where he analyzed the institutional structure of the United Provinces starting from the principle of the organization of sovereignty on various levels²²⁷.

In conclusion, Penn’s work shows that at the end of the 17th century a relevant part of European culture and society of Protestant origin did not accept the war as an ineluctable event, but investigated into the causes and the remedies²²⁸; it identified the goal in the European Union and the tool to reach it in the federal principle, even if it had not been fully and clearly expressed yet.

²²⁵ Penn W., “Discorso sulla pace presente e futura dell’Europa”, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

²²⁶ Guglielmetti C., “William Penn”, Introduction to Penn W., “Discorso intorno alla pace presente e futura dell’Europa”, in *Il Federalista*, XXXVII, No. 2 (1995), pp. 123-125.

²²⁷ Temple W., *Observations upon the United Provinces of Netherlands*, London, 1672.

²²⁸ Guglielmetti C., “William Penn”, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

II. Pre-federal Aspects in Waldensian Culture and History

1. Territorial and confessional identity of a “popolo-chiesa”

Having defined the cultural and social aspects of federalism, having traced back its origin within the theological and ecclesiological tradition of reformed Protestantism, and having described the secularisation process of the federal thought that gave origin to the institutional features of modern federalism, it is now time to investigate into the presence of such political and religious aspects in the history and culture of Reformed Waldism.

Considering that the scope of our work does not revolve around a thorough investigation into the nature of the Waldensian movement – which took place outside the historical context and the intrinsic reasons underlying the Reformation – we have decided to focus on its progressive approach to Calvinism in the first half of the 16th century¹. In fact, during this period the Waldensian Church joined the Reformation movement and also manifested the intention to conform not only the ecclesiastical structure but also that of the Waldensian community itself, to the organizational principles of the Calvinist Church. We will therefore focus on the transition of the Waldensian movement from heretical community to real Church, rather than on its pauperistic origins and the subsequent evolutions of Waldism in its passage from the South of France to the Po Valley, until its partial settlement in the area of the Cottian Alps². The creation of a Church was instrumental for Waldism to create its own confessional

¹ On the history and the events of the Waldensian Church and communities, see Selge K.V., *Die Ersten Waldenser*, 2 Vols., Berlin, De Gruyter, 1967; Molnar A., Armand-Hugon A., Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, 3 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1974-1980; Merlo G.G., *Valdesi e Valdismi medievali. Itinerari e proposte di ricerca*, Torino, Claudiana, 1984; Gabriel A. *The Waldensian Dissent. Persecution and Survival, c.1170-c.1570*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999 (French edition: *Les vaudois. Histoire d'une dissidence, XIIe-XVIIe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1998); Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, Torino, Claudiana, 1999; Papini C., *Valdo di Lione e i poveri nello spirito. Il primo secolo del movimento valdese. 1170-1270*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002.

Tourn G., *I valdesi, identità e storia*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003. For a bibliography of the texts published on the history of the Waldensians, see also Gonnet G. and Armand-Hugon A., *Bibliografia valdese*, Torre Pellice, Tipografia Subalpina, 1953.

² Jalla G., *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte fino alla morte di Emanuele Filiberto, 1517-1580*, Torino, Claudiana, 1982 (anastatic reprint, ed. Firenze, Claudiana, 1914).

identity, as well as its own ecclesiastical structure (based on the Genevan model) and a confession of faith; always in this period, the first evidences of a profederal attitude within the Waldensian ecclesiological culture started to come to the surface³.

Therefore, this chapter aims at delving into some aspects of the history of the Waldensians and of the setting up of their identity, bringing out clearly the links with the federal thought, together with its development in the history of Reformed Protestantism. It will be therefore possible to highlight the genesis of a “federalist conscience” or, even better, of a *forma mentis*, to understand in a positive way a federal-like organization, both at its ecclesiastical and social-political level. This does not mean that Waldensians were plain “federalists”, but rather that their culture features some aspects, referable to the reformed theological and ecclesiological tradition, which can be related to the federal thought and action. It is also natural that, over the time, many Waldensians spontaneously seconded or even positively welcomed such news when confronted to a federal-like social and political stimulus; likewise, many Waldensians naturally put up resistance to political situations undermining – sometimes only culturally – the traditional freedom and independence of the Church and its institutions.

On the basis of these assumptions, it is therefore possible to interpret a series of “federal” or profederal events and behaviours within Waldensian history, from Reformation to modern times, both of religious and socio-cultural nature. In fact, the Waldensians were able to make good use of their natural aptitude to establish the structure of their internal organization, thus developing – just like in some other parts of the Reformed world – a real federal-like behaviour. Such aptitude settled into the conscience and the culture of the Waldensians, who were spontaneously inclined to use it as a practical “tool” in the creation and establishment of reality, and repeatedly drew part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia* closer to federal-like political projects or having a tighter connection with the federal ideology. Over the centuries, some Waldensians showed a natural inclination towards federal-like organizational forms both at the ecclesiastical (federation of Churches) and political levels, hoping for the unity of the European continent on the basis of the respect for identities and differences through a covenantal and associative instrument able to provide for this type of union. The Waldensian point of view was supported by its

See also Jalla G., *Storia della Riforma religiosa in Piemonte durante i regni di Carlo Emanuele I e Vittorio Amedeo I (1580-1637)*, Torre Pellice, Claudiana, 1936.

³ On the evolution of the legal and constitutional system of the Waldensian Church from its origins to its emancipation, see Bertolè L., *La costituzione giuridica della Chiesa valdese nella sua formazione storica*, dissertation, 1930-31 (IX) discussed at the Royal University of Turin, Faculty of Law, deposited at the Archivio Storico della Società di Studi Valdesi (hereinafter, ASSV).

religious output, in which the Protestant Churches pursued the quest for unity on the basis of federal principles.

The long path taken by federal thought through the history of Reformed Protestantism up to a fully-achieved political federalism has often prevented this principle from emerging as a cultural product in a clear and autonomous way within the framework of a political reality, thus generating a dyscrasia between what is considered to be “federalism” and the use of this term. It may be therefore possible to lose sight of both its ethical nature and the cultural and sociological meaning closely related to it, releasing federalism from its root and pushing it into the background, without any ideological consistency. It is also possible, however, that in a federal-like society, i.e. a society with a con/federal conscience and culture, the use of its terminology is not explicit and it is implicitly evident only in the social and political thought and behaviour of most of its members. This is the first outcome of a first analysis of the Waldensian history: the term federalism is rarely mentioned in a direct way by Waldensian representatives about their history, because it is an integral part of a consolidated practice, despite its objective presence within the Waldensian culture, such as in the practical use of some of its principles in the ecclesiastical organization and in the constitutional tradition of the Church itself, as we will see later.

It is reasonable to say that the cultural assumptions of the Waldensians rely on a federal *forma mentis*, aside from the technical political meaning of the term and from any ideological reasons; this “mentality” – which comes from a consolidated tradition within Reformed Protestantism – is a constant presence in the Waldensian culture. In fact, it manifests itself mainly as a practical attitude within confessional and social life. We could even say that the Waldensians, just like the Protestants, are part of a historically determined con/federal society, where the federal nature is the expression of a particular social and religious condition, rather than of a political reality. Obviously, being the Waldensians a religious minority within a centralizing political context – at first, the Savoyard State and then the Kingdom of Italy – they could not affect at all the federal development of the Italian institutions and society. In spite of that, the federal vocation of the Waldensians in the political field was still able to emerge in modern history.

It is now time to focus on the most important profederal aspects within the history and the cultural identity of the Waldensians, which have contributed over the time to promoting the setting up of a conscience and, later, of a culture based on a federal pattern.

Firstly, it is crucial to detect the moment in which a confessional identity connected to a territory was established, because it had a major impact on the gradual integration process of the Waldensians into the Italian social

and political fabric as a cross-border entity able to provide a link between the culture and the civilization of Mediterranean and Western and Central Europe. Such a condition, linked not only to geographical reasons, but mainly to specific cultural and religious characteristics, led on the one hand to the development of an autonomist conscience and on the other hand to cosmopolitanism, which are both at the core of the Waldensian identity. In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the Waldensian Valleys, owing to their geographical location (among France, Italy and Switzerland), played a major role in the historical development, as well as in the political, social, economical and religious events of the three above-mentioned countries which, in turn, influenced various aspects of the life of the Waldensians, including their language.

Secondly, we would like to put the emphasis on some important "cruxes" of the establishment of the new Reformed Waldensian Church featuring some federal-like elements, such as the use of the covenantal tradition in the ecclesiastical constitution and the synodal-presbyterial element within the institutional structure of the Church itself. For example, it should not be forgotten that in the 16th century the synodal-presbyterial form evolved into a democratic system and a federal-like organization, at first in the organization of the religious communities and then of the political ones. It developed in France within the Reformed Church, in England and Scotland among the Presbyterians, in Germany in the Reformed regions, from England to Holland and then in the New World, and in Italy with the Waldensians⁴.

The covenant, as in the rest of the Reformed world, is the linchpin of a Church-community, and the adoption of assembly structures, in line with the ancient Christian tradition deriving from the Reformation, shows the means used to express the evangelical unity⁵. We also have to take into account the "germ" of congregationalism⁶, which was already an integral part of the first Waldensian orders in the 16th century, and tilting the balance in favour of the principle of independence.

Finally, the Waldensian model is a very peculiar one because it has achieved a balance between presbyterial vocation and congregationalist tension, thus creating a wide and well-structured federal constitution with other Evangelical Churches by means of covenants and agreements aiming at integrating or joining independent and pre-established ecclesiastical

⁴ Giampiccoli F., "Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà", in *Protestantesimo*, LII, No. 1 (1997), p. 35.

⁵ Rollier E., "Riflessioni sul governo della Chiesa", in *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, No. 22 (5 Ottobre 1945).

⁶ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, Torino, Claudiana, 1990, p. 110.

entities and bodies. As Giorgio Feliciani explains – without getting to radical congregationalism, where the federal form prevails – “there are confessions having a federal structure” where “the local community has all the powers, except those given and/or delegated to the national organization”⁷. Beside this system, the Waldensian ecclesiastical constitution features a series of hybrid and original conventions pursuing an integration respecting both diversities and autonomies.

Following their adhesion to the Reformation and its consequences, the Waldensians became a “*popolo-chiesa*” (people-Church, territorial identification of a people with an ecclesial community) and expanded their confessional and territorial identity. According to Armand-Hugon, “the origin of the *plebs sacra*, as Farel called the people of the Valleys”⁸, dates back to that period, when the Waldensian Valleys witnessed the overlapping and the identification among the believers of the new Church and the population of the villages scattered all over the surrounding areas (Synod of Chanforan, 1532).

In this connection, at the beginning of the 16th century, the people of the Valleys had their own official delegates, pastors and laymen, whose signature was valid and binding, almost representing the entirety of the population living in a region where the ideas of the Reformation had asserted themselves and had therefore circumscribed a particular territory, considered to be a land of heresy. On the one hand a minority entity was finally acknowledged; on the other hand, the same happened to the identity of *popolo-chiesa* established by the Waldensians. This fact gave origin to a real equation between a confessionally independent ecclesiastical entity and a population strongly linked to its territory⁹.

This confessional, territorial and identity-based nature, corroborated by the subsequent historical facts and by the long and terrible persecutions endured by the Waldensians, helped them to develop a strong sense of independence as well as a cosmopolitan open-mindedness.

The struggle of the Waldensians for their religious freedom and their European vocation, particularly after their adhesion to the Reformation, helped the Waldensians to increase the double nature of their identity, which was so strongly cohesive and aware of its own role as well as of its implicit role, that it gave origin to a strong independent conscience¹⁰. It was no accident that at first the Piedmontese public opinion, and later the Italian public opinion, linked the Waldensian minority with the struggle

⁷ Feliciani G. (ed.), *Confessioni Religiose e federalismo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2000, p. 43.

⁸ Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, II Vol., *Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, 3 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1989, p. 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30

¹⁰ Tourn G., *I valdesi, identità e storia*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

for freedom and that such minority was considered a non-national reality, because of its many undeniable cultural and confessional links with Central and Northern Europe.

The Waldensian reality cannot be reduced to a limited religious phenomenon within the Savoyard Kingdom; on the contrary, it is very important to consider its real European scope from the 13th century, when the Waldensians living in many European countries became a major element of Christianity. Later on, they became an integral part of European Reformed Protestantism and investigated their confessional nature, thus establishing a special bond with the Reformed countries based on a supranational-like solidarity¹¹.

In this regard, Salvatore Caponetto said that “the adhesion to the movement of the Reformation led the Waldensians out of a sectarian destiny”, because it prevented them from being exiled “in the *ghetto* of the Alpine valleys” and opened them up to “the dynamics of the new European culture”¹². From that very moment, their destiny got bound on the one hand to Protestant Europe, and on the other hand to the events happening in Italy.

Let’s now briefly analyze the second aspect, entailing the establishment of the territorial identity of the Waldensians, before their adhesion to the Reformation and the consequent opening to Europe and the development of a cosmopolitan vocation.

Waldism was, at first, a movement promoting itinerant preaching and was rooted in the region of Lyon¹³; then it progressively spread to Italy, particularly in Lombardy, where it became a movement whose aptitude and confessional features differed from its original characteristics, due to a difficult political and social situation¹⁴. After a phase of separation and differentiation from French Waldensians, Lombard and French Waldensians decided to join again the two trends of Waldism together during the *Colloquio di Bergamo* (Conference of Bergamo) in 1218 to face the outbreak of Catholic persecution. At that time, despite the religious

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7 and 49.

¹² Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell’Italia del Cinquecento*, Torino, Claudiana, 1997, p. 149.

¹³ Poverty which is often associated with Waldo’s movement resulted from itinerant preaching as it perfectly suited it.

¹⁴ The so-called “friends of Waldo” chose exile following their excommunication and the expulsion from the city of Lyon between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, and travelled everywhere, from Burgundy to Lorraine, and the imperial cities of Metz, Toul, Liège and Strasbourg; many of them settled in Provence and Languedoc, and then in the Po Valley in Italy. Later on, they moved to the Alpine Valleys named after them. See Molnar A., *Storia dei valdesi*, I Vol., *Dalle origini all’adesione alla Riforma*, 3 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1989; Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*

differences, the two trends were not geographically separated yet. Such split would have occurred later and in various phases, when the methodical suppression of the heresy carried out by the Inquisition with the support of princes and lords, as well as the large spread of mendicant orders recognized by Rome (Franciscans and Dominicans), gradually reduced the number of Waldensians in Northern Italy, and forced them to look for shelter outside Lombardy and the Po Valley.

The Waldensians moved, at various times, to the Alpine valleys of Western Piedmont and created a solid and stable outpost in the north-west of the Italian peninsula. There, the Waldensians established a large community, stood by their French "coreligionists" in the Dauphiné, and found a suitable ground for the clandestine profession of their faith. Furthermore, such a process was favoured by the previous evangelization of the area by travelling preachers and conventicles of "friends"¹⁵.

This event marked the beginning of the territorial identification of this Evangelically-Reformed minority with the Alpine valleys it lived in, and where its ever-growing presence in the region became a distinctive feature, as well as an identity element. It was a slow and wide-spread process which took place in conjunction with the struggle between mountaineers-peasants and local, die hard Catholic rulers, and with the Dulcinian uprising in Valsesia; and only at the end of the 13th century the Inquisition noticed that the Waldensian movement was very widespread in the region¹⁶. Therefore, thanks to their struggle to emancipate from feudalism and to the link with their land, the Waldensians gradually became a sedentary population in the Valleys, able to set up a civic organization and to form alliances whenever needed¹⁷.

Alpine passes have always represented a preferential corridor for the passage of people, goods, armies and ideas. The valleys of Western Piedmont are no exception, and from there the ideas of Zwingli, Luther and Melancthon filtered through to Italy; the same role was played by Northern Lombardy, Trentino and Istria, the commercial passage between the Mediterranean and Central and Western Europe. This situation gave origin to small groups of supporters of the ideas of the Reformation, but the Valleys witnessed the largest and best organized concentration of heretics: in fact, as Caponetto wrote, the Catholics feared mostly "the danger of the

¹⁵ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 44-49.

¹⁶ Comba E., *Histoire des Vaudois: de Valdo à la Réforme*, Paris, Fischbacher, 1901, p. 357.

¹⁷ Molnar A., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., p. 94, Vol. I. According to Molnar, the split between Waldensians and Catholics corresponds to the separation among peasants, lords and villagers; the emancipation of the peasants through the gradual concession of privileges keeps step with and merges into the adhesion of the country to Waldism. See also Armand-Hugon A., "Popolo e chiesa alle Valli dal 1532 al 1561", in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, No. 110 (1961).

adhesion to the movement by about 8,000 people living in the Waldensian Valleys¹⁸. This created the necessary conditions for a sedentary population with its own specific community and religious characteristics, rooted in a circumscribed and easily recognizable territory. Those were the premises for the establishment of a “small republic [...] well structured and decentralized, free in debates and expert at self-governing”¹⁹. Over the time, these postulates created the necessary condition for an “ethical distinction” between Catholics and Waldensians, and strengthened the territorial identification of these heretics with the land they lived in, thus developing the conscience of their independence²⁰.

Such a territorial identity is not the most relevant feature of Waldism, despite its importance in comparison with the entities born following the emigration to Latin America and the evangelisation in Central and Southern Italy. However, the centuries-old presence of the Waldensians “in a geographical context marked by territorial continuity” among France, Switzerland and Italy facilitated “the establishment of a ‘bridgehead of European Protestantism’ in Piedmont”²¹. Therefore, the territorial and confessional elements are indissolubly intermingled, and also the language played a crucial role in the consolidation of the Waldensian identity. The French language, spoken on both sides of the Alps and in Geneva, was very important in spreading the ideas of the Reformation and in keeping contacts with the Churches beyond the Alps²². For centuries the Waldensians were forced to relate more to Geneva, Amsterdam or London rather than to Milan, Florence or Rome; even the use of the Italian language was a relatively recent conquest that took place during the Risorgimento²³. “Those mountaineers of the Valleys”, Spini writes, used “their Occitan *patois*, while French prevailed over Italian as to the written language”. Waldensians were European, rather than Italian. According to Spini, “Protestantism represented a global European element in a place where people used to live with both doors and windows firmly closed by the powerful bars of the Counter-Reformation”²⁴. Notwithstanding this, the Waldensians were not uninvolved in the Italian reality, but they gradually played an active part in it and were present in the most important events of the history of Italy since its unification.

¹⁸ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., p. 145.

¹⁹ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 139.

²⁰ See Tron D., “La definizione territoriale delle Valli valdesi dall’adesione alla Riforma alla Rivoluzione francese”, in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, No. 189 (2011), pp. 5-26.

²¹ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., p. 154.

²² Peyrot G., “Bilinguità tradizionale”, in *L'Appello*, IX, No. 1 (Jan-Feb 1944), pp. 25-29.

²³ Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002, p. 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

However, the cultural and confessional identity of the Waldensians is so evident, compared to the Italian and Catholic environment, that it is possible to retrace what Bouchard defined "a small 'republic of culture and faith', an 'independent region' occupying a 'social' and 'cultural' territory"²⁵. Bouchard added that the peculiarity of Waldism lies in its cultural connotation, rather than in its geographical or ethnical features²⁶. Therefore, culture is the distinctive element of Waldism in Italy, and such a connotation is not only the outcome of its centuries-old history, but also the result of a confessional convergence towards the ideas of the Reformation, which made the medieval Waldensian communities scattered in Piedmont the most advanced outpost of Reformed Protestantism in the Catholic country *par excellence*.

Undoubtedly, the evangelical origin and the affiliation to the Waldo-Ussitan International had a major impact on the cultural background of the Waldensians and on their historical identity; however, the adhesion to the Reformation represented a turning point in Waldensian history, thus making the identity of its *popolo-chiesa* even stronger and more evident²⁷.

In Piedmont, the valleys surrounding Pinerolo witnessed the birth and the development of an independent and almost "integralist" religious community, as written by Armand-Hugon; therefore, from a certain moment on, the edicts issued by the Dukes of Savoy were not addressed to an "ecclesiastical organization, but to the people, the majors and the towns of the Valleys", almost seen as "a foreign body within the 'Catholic' State because of their being totally, or almost totally, Reformed"²⁸. Gradually, the Calvinist influence led to the establishment of the governing bodies of the Church (Synod and Board), which were more and more different when compared to its medieval origins. The people of the Valleys identified themselves with the above-mentioned bodies to express the unity of the Waldensian Churches-communities. The single "unity" deriving from it started acting as a real "State": it signed the treaties of peace debated by the Pastors, but also the most important decisions were made by the Synod, even on issues not dealing strictly with religion. With time, even the authorities of the Savoyard State identified the Waldensian people with the Waldensian Church²⁹.

²⁵ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-87, and Molnar A., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-178, Vol. I.

²⁸ Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.*, p. 44, Vol. II.

²⁹ Ribet G., "Dei rapporti fra la Chiesa e il Popolo Valdese", in *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, No. 21 (28 Ottobre 1945).

Such a process helped to outline a main Waldensian identity, which cannot prescind from an organic set of religious, cultural and territorial factors. The distinctive features of the Waldensian identity can be actually epitomized in their belonging to a community rising above the people surrounding them, because they belong to the Church; in substance, the real, juridically acknowledged Waldensian people coincide with the Waldensian Church and they draw their main features from ethnical and religious elements.³⁰

The adhesion of the Waldensians to the Reformation was a "major event", notably because the subsequent development of Italian Protestantism was filtered through this reality, and played an instrumental role in the spread of the scholars and the most revolutionary ideas of the Calvinist Reformation in the rest of Italy³¹. Therefore, the Valleys provided a real link among Europe and the Mediterranean, Protestantism and Catholicism.

Among the Waldensians, the most educated and competent *barba*³², readers of Erasmus and Luther, perceived the great religious innovations and the social changes brought forth by the Reformation in Europe, and felt the need to know its thought as well as its doctrine. This way, the Waldensians came into contact with the ideas of the great Reformers living in the Swiss-Rhenish area, from Guillaume Farel (1489-1565), born in the Dauphiné and close collaborator of Calvin in Geneva, to Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531), supporter of the Reformation in Basilea; from Martin Bucer to Pierre Olivétan (1505-1538), author of the first Protestant translation of the Bible into French.

The Waldensians were almost immediately interested in the Reformation. The first attempt to send a delegation of Piedmontese Churches to Germany dates back to 1526, when a Synod of 140 *barba* representing the local Waldensian communities gathered at the Laus, in the Chisone Valley. Two delegates were sent to Germany to interlace relationships with the German Reformers. This event boosted the new congregations in the rest of Piedmont, all united by a common faith to the congregations living in the Valleys and beyond the Alps³³. The contacts made with the German Reformers were re-established during the Synod of Mérindol, Provence, in 1530. This assembly paved the way to the crucial gathering of Chanforan (1532), where the decision of adhering to the Reformation was made³⁴.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-172.

³² This term was used to call the elders; in Northern Italy *barba* means "uncle", that is, the oldest and wisest person in the community. Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-84.

³³ Jalla G., *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁴ Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, II Vol., *op. cit.*

The “encounter” between medieval Waldism and the Reformation was not of a disruptive nature: in fact, the Waldensian movement initially preserved some of its peculiarities which made the adhesion to the precepts of the Reformation very easy and almost spontaneous (a one-of-a-kind event in the history of medieval heretical movements). The Waldensians spontaneously adopted the Protestant principles known as *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fides* and *Sola Gratia*, and considered the Scriptures and Christ respectively the only source of truth and the redemption of mankind³⁵. As Caponetto explained, in Piedmont, as well as in the traditionally Waldensian localities the shift from medieval sect to reformed movement was welcomed quite cautiously, yet with great enthusiasm: “there was no interruption between Waldism and Reformation”³⁶. Although it was a convinced decision, the transition to the Reformation was actually not painless and the Waldensians were forced to break with the previous tradition. Medieval Waldism was abandoned in all its characteristic features, such as oaths, itinerant preaching, poverty and the rejection of the death penalty. There was continuity on one single issue: the primacy of the Scriptures.

Therefore, the Reformation imbued – theologically and culturally – the whole Waldensian society, which then formulated its own Confession of faith and consolidated its internal ecclesiastical organization, on the one hand under the influence of the Calvinist cities – as in Calvin’s *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques* – and on the other hand by following the Huguenot example – as in the synodal organization promoted among the Calvinist communities in France³⁷. Even the covenant became a common instrument to define the establishment of a Church and its people in relationship with God, and whose theological foundations can be found among the pillars of the Reformation. The Waldensians made large use of the covenant, which was instrumental in establishing – also for organizational and defensive reasons – a con/federal-like free union of Churches.

The continuous exchanges, relationships and movements between the Valleys and Calvinist Switzerland on the one hand, and Huguenot France on the other hand, made the Protestants of the Valleys part of a great international circuit of reformed Protestantism, and literally “plunged” them into the European culture. Therefore, the Waldensians became “a little tessera in a Europe-wide mosaic”, and this condition allowed them to live their vocation not only in the secluded spaces of their valleys, but

³⁵ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., pp. 145-150.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 152. See also Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 95.

³⁷ On the Waldensian confession of faith, see Vinay V., *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati, con documenti del dialogo fra “prima” e “seconda” Riforma*, Torino, Claudiana, 1975.

also in the vastness of a whole continent³⁸. Over the centuries, the relationships with the French Reformed Churches breathed fresh life into the small Waldensian community and allowed it to get in contact with new cultural ideas and concepts, and to exceed – or, at least, to integrate – the perspectives of the “national” reality the Waldensian culture was part of.

Therefore, whereas the Reformation prevented the medieval Waldensian movement from atrophying and being absorbed by the Roman Church, the cultural cosmopolitanism, filtered through the ideas of the Reformation, helped to establish a European vocation within the conscience of the Waldensians. Such a conscience was very important in preserving the community and the Church from any excessive severity.

The cosmopolitan inclination of Waldism, however, received a major boost in the 18th century with the rising of a mercantile and intellectual middle class. During this period, the Waldensians showed a peculiar cultural and economical energy and started moving away from their traditional land-related condition³⁹. The young Waldensians were excluded from Savoyard Academies, so they were forced to open themselves up to what was known as “the Great Europe”. There, they came into contact with the ideas of the new Enlightenment and liberal cultures, and spread them as soon as they got back to Piedmont⁴⁰.

In the first half of the 19th century, the Waldensians were “seduced” by the Swiss religious movement called *Réveil*⁴¹, whose evangelizing tension converged towards the enthusiastic contribution made by the Waldensians to the Risorgimento. It is now necessary to make a digression to look into a seemingly incongruent element: the involvement in the battles of the Risorgimento and the “patriotic afflatus” of the Evangelicals did not compromise at all their cosmopolitanism because these two aspects were strictly related. In fact, the involvement of the Waldensians in the Risorgimento relied on three main reasons, related in turns to the cultural and confes-

³⁸ Tourn G., *I valdesi, identità e storia*, op. cit., p. 60.

³⁹ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴⁰ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

⁴¹ The *Réveil* (Awakening) is a spiritual movement originated in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and largely spread all over Europe in the 19th century. The *Réveil* opposed Enlightenment rationalism, and was influenced by Pietism and Methodism. It was open to other religious trends, and was characterized by a subjectivistic idea of faith and a strong spirit of devotion at the basis of their missionary longing, which then enshrined in social engagement. See Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, III Vol., *Dal movimento evangelico italiano al movimento ecumenico (1848-1878)*, 3 Vols., Torino, Claudiana, 1980 and Spini G., *Risorgimento e protestanti*, Torino, Claudiana, 2008 (1st ed. Milano, Il Saggiatore, 1956). On the spirit of the *Réveil* and its influence on Italian Protestantism, see Gangale G., *Revival*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1991 (1st ed., *Revival. Saggio sulla storia del protestantesimo in Italia dal Risorgimento ai nostri tempi*, Roma, Doxa, 1929).

sional survival of their community. The first reason is inspired by the feeling of gratitude of the Waldensians towards Savoyard kings, from Charles Albert onwards, who granted them civil rights with the enactment of a Statute in 1848, followed by a certain religious tolerance. The second reason deals with the policy implemented by Cavour to hold back the Catholic influence in the Kingdom of Sardinia ("a free Church in a free State"), as well as with the subsequent political and military actions against the Papal State after the unification of Italy (the capture of Rome and the Law of Guarantees). The second and the third reasons overlap, because national unity implied the dispossession of vast regions of the states of the Church to the future Kingdom of Italy, thus exposing the central and southern parts of Italy to reformed evangelisation.

Because of the last goal, during the Risorgimento the *popolo-chiesa* became "a missionary community, marked by a high sense of social responsibility", and which embraced the "patriotic cause", perceived mainly as an opportunity for a moral and civil renewal of Italy rather than a strictly ideological need⁴². Therefore the Waldensians, just like their Piedmontese countrymen, "choose Italy" with a romantic passion and as a real mission⁴³. Besides, this is the historical period where the universal values of Enlightenment and its cosmopolitanism gave way to the values of Romanticism and to the historical discovery of the idea of nation and of the principle of nationality (historicism). The clash between those new values and the historical and political conditions of that time resulted, in some cases, in a distorted perception of their meaning and of the negative values that would have given origin to nationalism between the 19th and the 20th centuries. However, their Reformed cultural matrix partially sheltered the Waldensians from the exclusivism of a patriotic perspective, linking national and European ambitions. The Waldensians could keep their points of reference steady, all equally European and crucial for their confessional and cultural identity; besides, the main points of reference of the Waldensian thought between the 19th and 20th centuries are still "English liberalism", "German discipline" and "French culture", together with the Swiss influence⁴⁴.

The Reformed conscience, the international connections and the responsibility of living in a Country towards which the Waldensians hold a link of parenthood, despite its Catholic majority, led them to develop a strong pacifist and "pro-European" feeling. In conclusion, the destiny of the Waldensian Church and its people is written in its own identity: on the one hand, the Waldensians showed an unquestionable European vocation,

⁴² Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

stressed by their ecumenical vocation; on the other hand, they were deeply integrated in the reality of Italy, where they carried out their mission at the religious, cultural and social level⁴⁵.

2. The use of the "covenant" in the history of the Waldensian Church

The value and the meaning of the covenant are inextricably linked to the nature and the development of the ecclesiological concept implied in the Waldensian Constitution and its juridical system. The covenant made the Waldensian Church, or better, the "Union of the Waldensian Churches", a real profederal reality where the federal element not only outlines the face of the unitary body of the Church, but also the very essence governing each "Church-community" deciding to join other Churches to create a superior "entity" through a new covenant, representing and governing them as to general issues.

The covenant is the founding element of the whole Waldensian ecclesiological tradition: it ratifies an ecclesiastical Union, based on the Word of God, ruled by the living presence of its Lord, but unable to establish a steady centralized institution characterized by solid hierarchies⁴⁶. In fact, Waldensian ecclesiology is an open and ever-moving entity, yet firm in its key principles. Finally, the covenant is the original principle of modern Waldensian Church, which helped it – from far-off times and through countless persecutions⁴⁷ – to preserve itself and to create an unity system made of many independent Churches, so to call itself, in the words of Pierre Gilles (1571-1646), an old Waldensian historian, an "ecclesiastical federation [...] characterized by spirit of freedom and sense of independence, in opposition [...] to the notion of absorbing unity"⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Peyrot G., "Vocazione del popolo valdese", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IX, No. 1 (Gen-Feb 1940).

⁴⁶ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologicalo insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese. Relazione sulla genesi della formula di definizione della chiesa contenuta nel primo articolo della vigente costituzione ecclesiastica predisposta dall'ufficio legale della tavola valdese*, Roma, Tip. Ferraiolo, 1957, p. 11. It is a report on the genesis of the formula used to define the "Church" included in the first article of the current ecclesiastical Constitution arranged by the legal office of the Waldensian Board.

⁴⁷ Motto resumed from Article 1 of the Waldensian Constitution, quoted in the general Discipline of the Waldensian Evangelical Churches. See Chiesa evangelica valdese (Unione delle Chiese Valdesi e Metodiste), *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologicalo*, op. cit., p. 51. Gilles's thought is here resumed and interpreted by the Commission charged by the Synod to carry out a constitutional review, under the supervision of William Meille, in 1891. See also *Progetto di costituzione presentato al Venerabile Sinodo del 1894*, Torre Pellice, 1894 (a copy of this document is kept in the Waldensian Library of Torre Pellice).

Let's now introduce the most important historical events that made the covenant a constitutive source of the modern *corpus* of disciplines in force in the Waldensian organization.

The use of the covenant made by the Waldensian communities partially differs from the use made by English Puritans, particularly for incidental historical circumstances, both to face impending difficulties and dangers, and to renew their internal institutional structure and in relationship to external ecclesiastical entities, and, again, to strengthen and consolidate their relationships with national and international Protestant organizations.

The covenant was an integral part of the Waldensian tradition well before the movements originated by Reformed Protestantism developed the potential of the covenant itself from the theological and political point of view, as shown by the Agreement of Bergamo in 1218 and the Pacts of Union in 1561, 1567, 1571, 1647 and 1658, even if the last ones belong to the evolutionary phase of the Waldensian Church in a Reformed way⁴⁹.

The Agreement of Bergamo ratified the union, for defensive reasons, between the Lombard *societas* and the Waldensian community living north of the Alps⁵⁰; it represented "a turning point towards an ecclesiastical structure"⁵¹, which aimed at uniting the two branches of Waldism and their communities with "an external organization showing some elements of discipline"⁵². The encounter between Lombard pragmatism and Waldensian missionary vocation gave origin to a new movement, based on the common origin, the brotherly solidarity, the respect of their two different sensitivities and a detectable, yet not fully structured organization. The model of Church originated by the theological research of these Waldensians was antithetical to the catholic one, and it was also a

⁴⁹ These are pacts of union among the Churches of the Valleys, but the Waldensian covenantal custom contains some formulas differing from the idea of "union" or "confederation" reported at that time in documents. In fact, many formulations have been adopted all along the history of the Waldensians to define internal orders and processes following the relationships among the Waldensian Church and all the others Evangelical Churches established afterwards; or, among the Waldensian Church and other Christian denominations. It is therefore possible to speak not only of "unions", but also of agreements, integrations, arrangements and even of real federations, but only at religious level; the agreements with the State are obviously very different, but this topic is beyond the scope of this essay.

⁵⁰ The original document, Molnar explains, "makes us think that both groups adopted a by-then traditional assembly procedure". This procedure partially originated from the Christian tradition, but was also influenced by the communal world the Lombard Waldensians were already used to. Molnar A., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., p. 71, Vol. I. On the history, the evolution and the differences between the Lombard and French movements, see Molnar's aforementioned work (pp. 9-74) and Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 11-50.

⁵¹ Molnar A., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., p. 73, Vol. I.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

forerunner of the Reformed model: on the one hand, there were Rome and the centralizing power of its hierarchies, on the other hand, there was the increased self-governing conscience of the Waldensian Church-communities agreeing on the pre-eminence of the evangelical message, where the bond was based on the Word and the mission, rather than on the Church-institution and the sacrament.

The Agreement of Bergamo anticipated a constitutive element of that part of Waldensians who had accepted the principles of the Reformation. In fact, the sudden spread of the use of the covenant in Reformed Waldism goes hand in hand with the presence of a previous "federal conscience" in medieval Waldism, which had established its first organization with the most consentaneous forms to the biblical tradition and the primitive Church. Waldism can be considered the forerunner of the successive developments of the con/federal culture elaborated by the Reformation, thus conforming the title *Mater Reformationis* always given to the Waldensian movement by Protestant Churches. Despite the lack of knowledge of the actual doctrinaire, disciplinary and ecclesiastical links among the various Waldensian groups existing before the Reformation, it is well known that a General Council (later known as Synod) existed, where the common interests of the different groups were examined and with regard to the above mentioned common interests, the most appropriate decisions were taken⁵³. According to Giorgio Peyrot, "there is no evidence of a united ecclesiastical centralization" in the organizational structures of the first Waldensians, while it seems clear that such an organization was based on a profederal pattern, closer to the organization of the ancient tribes of Israel, founded on "a pluralistic form of coordination of the representatives of each group, which then gather to take common decisions"⁵⁴.

Gilles himself, in his *Histoire ecclesiastique des églisese reformées*, explained that the Waldensians "s'assembloyent aussi extraordinairement selon les nécessités survenantes, mais de temps en temps, pour conserver l'union entre eux, et maintenir l'uniformité de leurs églises, ils s'assembloyent par députés de tous les quartiers de l'Europe, où se trouvoient des églises vaudoises, qui en pouvoient avoir le moyen"⁵⁵.

However, Waldensians believed that the covenant was not only a way to set the terms of an alliance and a closer union in the face of the religious persecution, but it was also "an inspiring principle" which found its

⁵³ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, op. cit., p. 22.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Gilles P., *Histoire ecclesiastique des églisese reformées recueillies en quelques Valées de Piedmont, autrefois appelées Vaudoises*, 2 Vols., Pinerolo, Chiantore & Mascarelli, 1881, p. 26, Vol. I (1st ed. Genève, J. de Tourmes, 1644).

raison d'être in the Holy Scriptures. It was part of the establishment of a Church-community, according to the covenant of Grace, and stated that the Gospel was the one and only principle of loyalty on which to create a Church able to live its faith as a mission, within history and in an environment of fraternal solidarity. Therefore the Waldensian Church did not become neither a centralized organization (the way it was in Geneva) nor a "political-confessional" movement (as at the time of the Huguenots), but it was a free union of Churches and believers, all bound by a mutual engagement of fraternal solidarity⁵⁶.

It is now time to focus on the birth of Reformed Waldism, which shows more clearly the profederal aspects related to the use of the covenant and which is referable to the connection between, on the one hand, the characteristics of the original Waldensian communities in Piedmont and, on the other hand, the Waldensian ecclesiastical organization inspired and matured by French-Swiss Reformed thought and action. In fact, the pacts that followed the Agreement of Bergamo were still characterized by the principles, the regulations and the institutions used by the Waldensians to connote the legal system they were starting to use in their ecclesiastical and religious life between 1550 and 1560⁵⁷. In this crucial period, the Waldensians adhered to the Reformation and were subjected to its marking influence.

First in Merindol (1531) and then in Chanforan (1532), "*en pressencia de tutti li ministri et eciandio del populo*", the Waldensians scattered in various independent Church-communities gathered to reform their Church and to adhere to the principles of the Reformation⁵⁸. Such gathering was a sort of "constituent assembly", an extraordinary "public" Synod open not only to the entire population of local communities, but also to the delegations of the *barba* coming from the far-off regions of Apulia, Calabria, Provence and Dauphiné. The gathering of Chanforan was also attended by Guillaume Farel and Antoine Saulnier, two of the most prominent and competent champions of the Swiss Reformation, who played a pivotal role in "shifting" the Waldensian movement and its bonds with the Catholic pity from medieval religiousness to the more solid theological and ecclesiological Calvinist structure.

⁵⁶ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 136.

⁵⁷ Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", in Balmas E. (ed.), *I Valdesi e l'Europa*, op. cit., p. 205.

⁵⁸ Subilia V., "Chanforan 1532 e la presenza protestante in Italia", in *Protestantesimo*, XXXVII, No. 2 (1982); Falchi M., "Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan (12-18 settembre 1532)", in *Il Testimonio*, XLIX, No. 8-9 (Settembre 1932); Jalla G., *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, op. cit., pp. 14-43. On the Declaration, see Vinay V., *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati*, op. cit., pp. 139-151 and Campi E. (ed.), *Protestantesimo nei secoli*, op. cit., pp. 230-234, Vol. I.

The Declaration of Chaforan shows how the Waldensians accepted the teachings of the Reformation, confirming their definitive breaking-off with Rome and the acceptance of a radical renovation of the Church on a theological basis. Therefore, Waldism lost the typical features of medieval *pietas*; therefore, the “oaths are allowed, and the secular authority and the legitimacy of Christians to take part in political life are acknowledged, [...]. The private properties of preachers are not [considered anymore] as being against apostolic communion; the only good deeds are the ones commanded by God himself. Cult forms are simplified and spiritualised”⁵⁹. Besides, the Waldensians theologically accepted the concepts of predestination, “bondage of the will” and election of Grace, and started establishing themselves at the local level, breaking cover and installing a permanent pastor in each community, introducing public cult and building the first temples. From 1532 to 1559 (the year of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis), Reformation spread fast throughout Piedmont, until the return of the House of Savoy and their Saint Inquisition. During this period, the Waldensian Church was able to structure and organize itself according to the model of the French-Swiss Churches; moreover, they also conformed to the synodal-presbyterial system.

This allowed the principles of the Reformation not only “to take roots firmly in the Valleys”, but also to be part of a radical change of both the Waldensian thought and society; this little Reformed Alpine community became “the backbone”⁶⁰ of a European organization constantly linked to Geneva, whose pastors, masters, Bibles, propaganda tools, ideas and models were resumed and adapted in Italy, as in the case of Calvin’s *Institutio Christianae religionis*, which had a direct influence on the establishment of the ecclesiastical system of the Waldensian Church⁶¹. The Waldensians also “borrowed” their synodal structure, as well as their Confession of faith, directly from the Reformed Churches of France. This was the evidence, “on the one hand, of the supranationalism of the Church; and, on the other hand, of the brotherhood of the believers in the Reformation established on a common faith”⁶².

The Synod traced the constitutional, doctrinal and religious guidelines for the Reformation of the Waldensian Church, in order to face the political and religious threat coming from France, the House of Savoy and the

⁵⁹ Vinay V., *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati*, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

⁶⁰ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., p. 153.

⁶¹ On the influence of Geneva on the establishment and the structure of the Waldensian Church, see Peyrot G., “Influenze franco-ginevrine nella formazione delle discipline ecclesiastiche valdesi alla metà del XVI secolo”, in Cantimori D., Firpo L., Spini G. et al. (eds.), *Ginevra e l'Italia*, op. cit., pp. 217-285.

⁶² Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., p. 16, Vol. II.

Roman Church. It was therefore necessary, Mario Falchi explains, to transform the heretical circles into “a unique and well-defined body”, because “the resistance to a very powerful adversary, who aimed at crushing all Christian religious life” standing outside Catholicity, implied the gathering of “isolated units”, scattered all over a hostile territory, “into an organism where each part completed the others”, where the different parts cooperate in harmony, “functionally divided and coordinated”⁶³. Such an organization relied on the synergy among the various parts, but it also prefigured an internal structure dramatically different from the structure of the Roman Church, where the ecclesiastical hierarchy was in contrast with the assembly of the believers, and the principle of the Church-authority with the primacy of the Word as a source of absolute truth-authority.

In Chanforan, the Waldensians developed a new conscience and dropped the idea of keeping themselves within the boundaries of Catholicism to reform the Church from the inside, and adhered to the Calvinist Reformation. Hence, they became an independent group with a new confessional identity, but also with a more and more territorial and political character. The period between 1536 and 1556 was marked by a relative tolerance, favoured by the French occupation and their opposition to the feudal interests of the Piedmontese aristocracy; the people of the Valleys were then able to get out of secrecy to preach the Gospel and organized into independent communities⁶⁴.

The French presence in Piedmont led to a temporary disgregation of the feudal system and favoured the success of new unifying forms including the establishment of municipalities and new local Waldensian Churches⁶⁵. The Valleys were peripheral to the French territories and out of the control of the Dukes of Savoy, and there – also thanks to the weakening of the central power – new communal units with a certain decisional independence were established⁶⁶. The surprising event, however, was the overlapping of the new Waldensian Churches, based on the Reformed French-Swiss model, to the first, emergent forms of communal independence. Therefore, this almost integral alliance between emergent Churches and the innovative structures of civil society at the local level laid the foundations of a stronger territorial empathy of the Waldensians with their Valleys and progressively widened the gap between the new ecclesiastical structures and those of the ruling political society⁶⁷.

⁶³ Falchi M., “Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan”, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁶⁴ As is known, Francis I's army moved to Piedmont, defeated the troops of the House of Savoy and took over some of its territories, including part of present Waldensian Valleys.

⁶⁵ Peyrot G., “Il Patto dell'unione del 1561”, *op. cit.*, p. 206-207.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

This led to the progressive identification among ecclesiastical structures and municipal organization, civil and religious authorities. The new social and religious climate allowed the development and the gradual establishment of the assemblies of the heads of the families. These gatherings dealt with issues of common interest, both at the religious and civil levels; there, majors and elders (presbyters) were elected, and the management of ecclesiastical affairs was given to the emergent consistories, attended by majors and councillors of the new communal structures. Therefore, the ecclesiastical ruling class, with the exception of pastors, actually coincided with the local ruling class charged with handling civil issues in the new municipalities⁶⁸. The years between the Synod of Chanforan and the Pact of Union (1561) witnessed – Peyrot wrote – a more precise connotation of the role of the general assembly, or Synod, as to the management of issues of common interests, with laity progressively defining their own role, and taking on or sharing responsibilities. Likewise, this period marked the establishment of a Central Executive, the Board, or, at least, a moderator, supposedly, the eldest pastor⁶⁹.

Such a process, Peyrot explained, led to the concurrence of the emergent local Churches within their own territory with the communal districts that were then taking shape; it was therefore common that “religious and civil interests and issues concerning local economic needs and organization” converged in a single assembly. The ordinances and the resolutions made by the Waldensians dealt not only with religious issues, but also with civil life and, over the time, they ended up having an impact, whenever necessary, “on the military defence of territories, goods and people”⁷⁰.

This led to the prefiguration of a State within the State or, even better, of a subject having its own political and juridical independence on a territory and a population which, at that time, lived within the borders of many states. The newly established Waldensian Church had its own original right⁷¹ – owing to the history of its institutions – and was starting to get an independent position within its political and territorial environment. As a consequence, the Waldensian Church, despite its “smallness”, transcended “the territorial limits of a State and the sphere of its internal right”, and asserted itself juridically as an original and independent institution “bear-

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

⁷¹ It is interesting to notice how the Waldensian Church, established as a religious society since its very beginning, defined itself as an “institution”, and historically placed itself as a self-determining legal system, equal to any other legal system. Peyrot G., *L'ordinamento giuridico della chiesa Valdese. Principi generali, le fonti, la costituzione ecclesiastica del 1929, Dispense del Corso tenuto nel XCVII anno accademico 1951-1952*, 2 Vols., Roma, Facoltà valdese di Teologia, 1952, p. 7, Vol. I.

ing" a primary legal system⁷². Such an event, together with the development of communal self-governments, prefigured an original background, far from any strict and traditional definition⁷³.

It is also important to remember that the ecclesiastical structure of the Reformed Waldensian Church – still in the making, yet clearly inclined to the synodal-presbyterial system – was settling itself democracy-wise, and relied on the criteria of representation and direct consultation. Besides, the Synod was the bond among the various communities, where independent local Churches gathered to decide on public interest issues⁷⁴.

The Synod of Chanforan was followed by other important general assemblies in 1557 and 1558. The latter played a crucial role because there a unitary ecclesiastical discipline was established encompassing the Waldensian Churches on both sides of the Alps (stated in the *Articles faits et arrêtés*, later known as *Articles sinodaux*). The above mentioned *Articles* left an indelible mark on the union of the Waldensian Churches, even when they were separated by different political destinies⁷⁵. The *Articles* were also the first example in Europe of a Reformed ecclesiastical synodal-presbyterial system⁷⁶.

Chanforan was a turning point in the Reformed history of the Waldensian Church because it shows the peculiar features of Calvinist theology and ecclesiology, and it represents, "the most relevant event having a Christian-Evangelical ecumenical character" in the history of the Waldensians⁷⁷.

After Chanforan, the Waldensians "come out into the open" and abandoned Nicodemism once and for all. They decided to challenge directly the laws of the State to keep their Evangelical consistency; such a stance triggered a new wave of persecutions, and even real military campaigns.

In 1556, during the French occupation, the Parliament of Turin issued an edict to stop the Waldensian religion; the Valley dwellers refused to obey and sent a Confession of Faith to the Parliament. Henry II issued a new edict against the Waldensians; nevertheless, they withstood the enemy and structured their community according to the synodal-Presbyterian system. In 1558, the Waldensians finally embraced an ecclesiastical discipline which was similar to the one adopted by the Swiss Churches. Meanwhile, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis assigned Piedmont to the House of Savoy,

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 11, Vol. I.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 34, Vol. I.

⁷⁴ Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁷⁷ Falchi M., "Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan", *op. cit.*, p. 137. See also Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

and the region became once again the “war theatre” for the harsh persecutions unleashed by Emmanuel Philibert against the “heretics”, which ended only with the Treaty of Cavour (June 5th, 1561). For the very first time in Europe after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the victory of the Waldensian rebels and their acknowledgement by the Duke of Savoy openly denied the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. It was therefore acknowledged the right to exist of a Protestant minority, made of Protestants-Waldensians⁷⁸; according to Armand-Hugon, it represented the first act of tolerance in Europe, a sort of *magna charta* of the juridical existence of both the Church and the Waldensians⁷⁹.

The Waldensians were able not only to stand the military campaign launched by the Duke of Savoy, but also to consolidate their unity, thus strengthening their confessional identity and international solidarity with European Protestantism. This crucial moment in the history of the Waldensians was marked by the presence of the covenant within the formal act used by the Reformed Waldensians to ratify their unity as a “tool” to fight the persecutory will of Emmanuel Philibert and the Jesuit Antonio Possevino, as well as in the formulas used by the Protestants in Chisone and Pragelato – who were still under French control – to bind themselves to the Protestants living in the Marquisate of Saluzzo and in the Luserna Valley, ruled by the Dukes of Savoy. In fact, a popular assembly called on the hills of Bobbio Pellice on January 21st, 1561, approved, with the so-called *Patto del Podio (Puy)*, the highly evocative “Pact of Union”. It had, on the one hand, an implicit link with the medieval tradition of the Waldensian movement and, on the other hand, it related to the covenant-based tradition of Reformed Protestantism, thoroughly adopted by the Waldensian Church⁸⁰. The above-mentioned pact marked indelibly all the future history of Waldism, oriented its internal reforms, shaped its disciplines, influenced the external developments and relationships with other confessional entities. It is still nowadays the foundation of the Union of the Waldensian Churches and the linchpin of Articles 1 and 5 of the General

⁷⁸ Caponetto S., *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁷⁹ Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.*, p. 30, Vol. II.

⁸⁰ The meeting of the representative of the Churches in the hamlet of Podio on January 21st, 1561, actually followed two previous close meetings; the Pact of Union was then ratified by all parties during a third meeting, on February 2nd, 1561, at Comba Villar. The gathering that formally set up the Pact, however, dates back to January 21st, when some ministers and heads of the above mentioned Churches of the Dauphiné were invited to the Lucerna Valleys to check if they agreed on considering the confederation as a given and set entity. *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 52. For a detailed account of the three phases, see Peyrot G., “Il Patto dell'unione del 1561”, *op. cit.*

Discipline ratifying the union of the Waldensian Churches on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as of the other Churches who later joined them⁸¹.

The *Patto del Podio* was ratified by the representatives of the Waldensian communities located in three different Countries, and it gave origin to an ecclesiastical union in which the Waldensian Churches established in the Alps became aware of their independence and responsibilities⁸². For the first time in European history “a farming community ruled by a bunch of intellectuals, side by side with their ministries”, decided to rebel against the power of the sovereign; such a resistance was not a “medieval *jacquerie*, but a well coordinated juridical and military action”⁸³. The union adopted a confederal structure, in order to set up a common defence and to claim the right to reform the Church, thus leading to the birth not only of a new confessional subject, but also of a legal and somehow political entity. Article 1 of the document reported by Scipione Lentolo states: “The Waldensian people, on both sides of the Alps, will establish a perpetual and inviolable confederation”⁸⁴.

⁸¹ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 52. The Pact signed in 1561 is formally recalled and united to the *Discipline dell'organizzazione ecclesiastica valdese*, under *Fonti generali*, alongside other basic Acts of Union, such as the “*Unione delle Valli*” (1571) and the “*Patto di integrazione globale tra le Chiese valdesi e metodiste*” (1975).

⁸² Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa, op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 53. This document, reported by many contemporary authors, is never quote directly in its entirety, but always as a part of a story and interpolated with commentaries. Therefore, this has given origin to many non-coinciding formulations. Among the main authors quoted in the collection of Waldensian disciplines: Scipione Lentolo, the Reformed historian who wrote the *Historia delle grandi e crudeli persecuzioni fatte ai tempi nostri in Provenza, Calabria e Piemonte contro il popolo che chiamano valdese* (1562); the anonymous author of a *Histoire des persécutions et gueres faites depuis l'an 1555 iusques en l'an 1561 contre le peuple appelé Vaudois* (1562) and, finally, the aforementioned Pierre Gilles, author of the *Histoire ecclesiastique des églises reformées recueillies en quelques Vallées de Piedmont, autrefois appelées Vaudoises* (1644). Hereunder, the other two versions will follow, in order to allow a comparison. The anonymous author of the *Histoire des persecutions* writes: “qu'alliance seroit faite par tout le peuple Vaudois demeurant aux Vallées et montagnes de Piémont et Dauphiné”; while Pierre Gilles introduces the event as follows: “renouvelée et derechef jurée la très ancienne union, qui avoit toujours continué de père en fils entre les Vallées Vaudoises du Dauphiné et du Piedmont”. Gilles's version is very interesting because it seems to put this Pact into the framework of a consolidated custom (“renouvelée [...] la très ancienne union”) and makes an indirect reference to previous agreements or pacts and other public demonstrations of the common will of the Waldensian communities. See *Ibid.*, pp. 51-54. On the *Histoire des persecutions*, see Anonymous [Étienne Noël], *Storia delle persecuzioni e guerre contro il popolo chiamato valdese che abita nelle Valli del Piemonte, di Angrogna, Luserna, S. Martino, Perosa e altre, a far tempo dall'anno 1555 fino al 1561*, edited by E. Balmas and C.A. Theiler, Torino, Claudiana, 1975 (this is the Italian unabridged

After the public approval of the unitary ecclesiastical discipline of the *Articles faits et arrêtés*⁸⁵, the Waldensians could have lost their cohesion if they had not appealed again to the unity of their Churches, which were then scattered and persecuted. Therefore, the meeting and the agreement between the people of the Dauphiné and Piedmontese Waldensians outlined more clearly the unity of these Evangelical people, as well as their will to affirm their mutual bond to reassert their religious view and overcome all the geographical difficulties caused by the political borders of the states. Indeed, the need for a union of the Churches was so strong and shared that Gilles, 80 years later, still felt all its fascination and relevance⁸⁶.

Besides, through the ratification of the covenant, the Churches approved a series of operative rules on the use of weapons, the directions of defence and the establishment of the so-called "*compagnia volante*" (flying company)⁸⁷. Ultimately, the *Patto del Podio*, together with the *Articles faits et arrêtés*, not only ratified the federative will of all the Waldensians

translation, including an appendix with a copy of the original book). The *Historia delle grandi e crudeli persecuzioni* is a manuscript, two copies of which are kept in the Bürgerbibliothek di Bern (Ms. 716) and in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ms. Barlow 8) respectively. On Lentolo, see also Fiume E., *Scipione Lentolo, 1525-1599. "Quotidie laborans evangelii causa"*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003.

⁸⁵ The *Articles faits et arrêtés* and the *Patto del Podio* became part of the *Articles sinodaux*, later included in the *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques*, set by the Synod in 1563 and ratified by the Synod that took place one year later. The *Ordonnances* granted the independence of the Churches until the 19th century when, at the end of the Napoleonic era, the rules approved by the Synods that took place in 1833 and 1839 were adopted. These rules, following the emancipation in 1848, led to the approval of the first *Constitution de l'église évangélique vaudoise* in 1855, then followed by a new Constitution in 1902 and its subsequent amendment in 1914 and 1929. Finally, after a long preparatory phase started in 1559, the Constitution was definitively replaced by the *Disciplina generale*, in 1974. The Discipline, approved by the Italian and Rioplatense synodal sessions, is still in force and "represents the unity of faith and regulations of the Waldensian Churches located in the European and American continents". *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁸⁶ Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", *op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁸⁷ Peyrot recalls that the tactical criteria of the troops included the defensive-only use of weapons; the refusal to exploit a successful condition after having driven back the enemy attack; and, finally, the custom of praying before a battle. The *compagnia volante* was a special unit in charge of intervening whenever needed. This *élite* unit usually skulked on the hills above the battlefield. Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", *op. cit.*, p. 234. It is certainly reckless and improper to compare the *compagnia volante* to Cromwell's *New Model Army*, because of the many differences as far as experiences, places, structures and organization are concerned; let alone the historical, cultural and confessional conditions. There is, however, a link. As Tourn wrote, the *New Model Army* was characterized not only by a peculiar technical and organizational level, but also by an ideological one. The comparison between the Waldensian unit and Cromwell's army of "saints" relies on the "cohesive unity deriving from the fact that its soldiers fought for an ideal and no one ever doubted

and set the principles upon which the Union of the Waldensian Churches would have relied from then on, but also fully expressed the principle of resistance to the prince for religious reasons (and integrated it within the Waldensian juridical and ecclesiastical tradition). Despite this principle being relegated to a spiritual context, the temporal consequences were very important, because they paved the way to later protests and "legitimate rebellions" against the excessive power of sovereigns⁸⁸.

It is now important to focus on the Articles of the *Patto del Podio* which are more congruent with the federal thought. Article 1 ratifies an "infringeable" confederation, a popular "alliance" relying on faith, a *foedus*, signed by the representatives of all the Churches, which brought forward a common ecclesiastical structure able to set goals and to carry out programmes of common interest not only in the religious field, but also in social and political life. According to Peyrot, the covenant was made among believers aimed at ranging beyond religious and ecclesiastical perspectives, extending the notion of engagement to civil and political life. Therefore, the acquisition of a unitarian conscience led the Waldensians to establish, on the strong basis of their common faith, a Pact of Union encompassing in its entirety, the concept of *popolo-chiesa* previously developed, even if they were scattered in different valleys⁸⁹.

The "confederates" expressly related to mutual aid, and established in the Pact "to help and assist each other"⁹⁰. In Article 3, the unitary commitment provided for a joint effort to defend "the faith, the people, the goods" that assured the survival of the Waldensian people; moreover, Peyrot stressed, the signatories unequivocally promised to provide mutual support "in the military struggle" and "to compensate for their mutual needs with weapons, food supplies and any other means"⁹¹. This principle, ratifying a military alliance based on mutual aid and properly supported by the "intentions" stated in the other articles, highlights the profederal character of the Pact. Such a concept of mutual aid, therefore, stated a common will aiming at a common political action; in other words, it expressed a cohesion which, thanks to their faith, got through the contingencies and promoted the establishment of a superior political and religious entity transcending the historical independence of local Churches, while keeping it intact⁹².

that this ideal was God himself. Tourn G., *I protestanti una società*, II Vol., *op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁸⁸ Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", *op. cit.*, pp. 234 and 241.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁹⁰ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁹¹ Peyrot G., "Il Patto dell'unione del 1561", *op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁹² *Ibid.*

Keeping this assumption in mind, let's now analyse Article 5, which not only states a "strictly political" principle, as Peyrot recalls⁹³, but it also confirms the profederal nature of the document. In fact, the Churches were committed not to eluding the unitary bond on a perpetual basis and not only for the duration of the war; in other words, the Pact prevented each community from signing an independent peace treaty or agreement with their enemies. As clearly stated, it established an "indissoluble" tie among the parties, and explicitly stated that "no Valley is allowed to promise, reach an agreement or grant anything with relation to religion without the approval of all the other Valleys"⁹⁴. Despite their explicit reference to religious issues alone, it is clearly understood that faith itself was considered the pillar of everything and was therefore strictly related to any other political and social issue.

This is a federal assumption and it sums up the whole scope of the *Patto del Podio*, which was then reasserted many times and on many different occasions, but always to confirm the union of the Waldensian Churches and their people. The *Patto* was at first resumed by the Synod that took place in 1567, and it was then reformulated with the more explicit *Union des Vallées* (1571); this document, just like the Pact of Union, became one of the general sources of the current Waldensian Discipline. The Union stated that "should there be any rift" among the parties, "all would put themselves out and contribute to help those being molested, according to the common conclusion, as it was written and signed"⁹⁵.

It was therefore reasserted the binding force of the *Patto del Podio*, whose free acceptance pushed all the adherents to swear "to persevere inviolably in the ancient union, handed down from father to son, among all the believers in the Reformed religion of the Valleys, [...] and never to part from it"⁹⁶. Besides, the *Patto* reasserted also the principles of mutual solidarity, mutual aid and common action. In that regard, the Union reaffirmed the legitimacy of the use of weapons and the right to resistance; in fact, Article 4 stated that "all the Churches will adopt all legitimate protections and defences they have right to in order to help all Churches, or individuals enduring misery for religious reasons, with advices, goods, and the people that may be needed"⁹⁷. This presumed the strengthening of "central powers", which represented the government of the Union from a religious point of view, and whose decisions forced

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁹⁴ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

each Church to sacrifice its own interests and opinion in favour of the common good⁹⁸.

Compared to the *Patto del Podio* of 1561, Article 6 of the *Union des Vallées* introduces a change because it brings out the voluntary nature of the adherence to the Union by the Churches, as well as the possibility of a unanimous condemnation on the basis of a common discipline and of an action concerted against the secessionist behaviour of one or more of its members. It is therefore possible to assume, with all the necessary historical and political reservations, that such covenant-based Constitution envisaged the presence of a “coercive power” exercised by the unitary government, at least from a religious point of view, to preserve the cohesion of the Union. In fact, the declaration states that “whenever one of them breaks [...] the declarations of the union”, the government of the united Churches will censure and correct those acts “according to the ecclesiastical discipline, until the other members of the Union do not consider them to be schismatic and perjurious”⁹⁹.

After the *Union des Vallées* in 1571, the *Patto del Podio* was confirmed afterwards by the Synods of Angrogna (1647) and Pinasca (1658). The years between 1558 and 1564 also marked the accomplishment of the set-up process of the *ordonnances ecclésiastiques* stating the concept of ecclesiastical unity ratified by the *Patto*, as well as the synodal-presbyterial model of the Waldensian discipline, which provided the Union with an unitary legal system. The *ordonnances* based the cornerstones of the ecclesiastical life on local communities and the synodal system¹⁰⁰, and provided the Waldensians and their Churches with a common ecclesiastical constitution. The ecclesiastical structure of the Union, that is, the institutional architecture ruling the government of the Church, featured some “democratic” elements as well as some original aspects suggesting that the Waldensian Church had a protofederal-like ecclesiastical structure, able to guarantee both a large independence and a cohesive union. Let’s now analyze some of these aspects, which can all be found in the legal and historical development of the Waldensian ecclesiology.

⁹⁸ See Article 5 of the Constitution of the Union stating that “no one [Church member of the Union] will answer before having discussed the issue with the other Churches, and the members of such Union, to decide on a common behaviour, and to answer and act according to their common opinion”. *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁰ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

3. Profederal aspects in the Waldensian ecclesiology

Besides its being characterized by plain democratic aspects, the institutional configuration of the Waldensian Church shows a clear federal vocation in its covenantal origin, in its structure and in its inclusive and subsidiary formula. Let's now analyze – in a “federal” way – the constitutional and institutional structure of the Waldensian Church and the evolution of the concept of “Church” within its legal system. We have already focused on some of the differences among the episcopal, Presbyterian and congregationalist systems; let's now analyze the – quite unique – type of organization characterizing the Waldensian Church.

As mentioned before, this Church is the outcome of the union of several independent Churches; institutionally, it can be considered a “hybrid” between the synodal-presbyterial and the congregationalist models. As a matter of fact the Waldensians, who historically created many local independent Churches, established a unitarian organization to deal with all social and political issues; this has been possible also because of the above-mentioned sense of identity of the Waldensian people. However, the evaluation of the factors that led to such a unity cannot prescind from the need for evangelization, which is typical of all Christian Churches (and not only). The evangelization process shapes the Church itself; there, all the components take part responsibly in a common action aimed at the spreading of the Word. In the case of the Waldensians, the practical engagement of the evangelization stems from the clear definition of the concept of Union of Churches, which “can be sensed and is expressed through the renewal” of the institutions of the Church itself “in the conviction of the necessary sharing and the mutual contribution of all the communities to the ecclesiastical action”¹⁰¹. The concept of “Union of Churches” is therefore subordinate to and gathered directly from the reasons underlying the establishment of each Church.

This system, based on the union of independent yet mission-oriented Churches, on the one hand warded off the congregationalist split of the *ekklesie*, that is, all the assemblies of believers making up the so-called Waldensian communities; on the other hand, it preserved their independence and mitigated the “centralist” involution of the governing bodies of the Union. The denial of this unitarian concept would have entailed two main consequences for the Waldensian Church: either a form of congregationalism breaking up the solidity of the *opera*, or a unitarian centralization which would have pushed the Church towards a “clerical conception”, and would have therefore drained all active contribution from the communities in a very short time, thus leading the Church itself towards episcopal-like forms¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Having said that, the union of the Waldensian Churches has some peculiar features, notably about the nature of its synodal-presbyterial structure, which, in its turn seems to be clearly related to a federal-like organisation. In this regard, Peyrot points out some typical Presbyterian characteristics implied in the concept of "Union of Churches", where the congregationalist need overestimating the local community is tempered by the synodal need, which puts the stress on the unity of the local communities; such characteristics are also implied in the concept of local or regional autonomy, which is focused on the comprehensive character given by the presence of the Church in each locality¹⁰³.

It is important to remind that among the various Protestant ecclesiastical organizations, the Reformed ones – relating to Calvin – are the closest to the idea of subsidiarity. In particular, the synodal-presbyterial form states both the independence of each local Church, ruled by the council of the eldest (presbyters), and the unifying and superior demand of the Synod, made of ministers (pastors) and representatives of the local Churches in equal measures. Between the local Church and the general Synod there is always a regional organization known as regional or provincial or district Synod. Within Protestantism, this ecclesiastical organization places itself between congregationalism – equally reformed, but which does not foresee the unifying and superior action of the Synod – and episcopatism, mainly the Lutheran one, which, despite its synodal structure, is more centralized¹⁰⁴.

As far as the core of the system is concerned, the disciplines of the Waldensian Church state that the "Church is ruled by a hierarchy of assemblies, each dealing with a specific area of expertise: the assembly of each local Church, the assembly of each regional or territorial group of Churches, the Synod, both Italian and Rioplatense"¹⁰⁵.

From a theoretical point of view, it is possible to compare such a structure to other federal political-institutional structures. In the first instance, this is a subsidiary organisation because it highlights a multi-level structure, each level dealing with its own "area of expertise"¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, the

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Giampiccoli F., "Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà", *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁵ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 65 (whose specific parts will be hereinafter referred to as DV/1974, c. I, art. 7). The reference to the current Discipline is necessary to retrace and reconstruct the juridical and institutional evolution of the Waldensian Church, in order to highlight the deep changes occurred over the centuries, and to confirm the historical impact and the persistence of the profederal assumptions of Waldism in the 16th and 17th centuries. Over the centuries, these assumptions laid the foundations of the "method" underlying the much needed constitutional renewal of the organization of the Waldensian Church.

¹⁰⁶ Giampiccoli F., "Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà", *op. cit.*

reading of the Article clearly shows that the organization of the Waldensian Church relies on an expanded system of assemblies (local communities, Circuit, District, General Assembly or Synod) closely resembling the institutional architecture of federal-based political organization¹⁰⁷. Like all federal systems, the faithfuls and the citizens in the Waldensian Church hold the power-right which stems from the representation at all government levels. Therefore, the members of a community can attend the local assembly, elect their delegate to the district assembly up to the Synod, where the representatives of all Churches gather.

The Synod is the general assembly which expresses the unity of all the Churches¹⁰⁸. It is the supreme human authority of the Church on all doctrinal, legislative, jurisdictional and governmental issues¹⁰⁹. The unitary will of the Waldensian Church is therefore expressed through its general assembly, which can be considered the collective, representative government, responsible for the Head of the Church: Christ¹¹⁰. The foundation of the Waldensian ecclesiastical organization is the "local community", represented by the Synod, where each community attends as a member of the Union of the Waldensian Churches¹¹¹. As Alberto Ribet wrote, "the concept of the unity of the Church relies on the union and the active cooperation of each community"¹¹².

This "general assembly" of the Reformed Churches anticipates the structure of modern parliaments; as Spini suggested in his historical work

¹⁰⁷ Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ The Waldensian Synod is the general assembly of the believers, gathering pastors and deputies of each Church in equal numbers: 180 members in total (DV/1974, c. I, art. 30). The Synod, which meets two times a year – in Latin America in spring and in Italy in summer – (Italy DV/1974, c. I, art. 28) has the task of setting a common direction for the Church as well as its general guidelines on disciplinary and doctrinal issues; finally, it establishes relationships with the State and the other Churches (DV/1974, c. I, art. 29). During the synodal session, the administrative commissions in charge of implementing the decisions made by the Synod and of managing the various fields of activity, are elected. The most important commission is the Waldensian Board, made up of 7 members and chaired by a Moderator. The Board is the organ invested by the Synod with the official representation of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches in the relationships with the State and the ecumenical organization, between each session (*Patto d'integrazione*/1975, art. 30-33, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88). In order to avoid any concentration of powers or any personalization of the role held, all posts have a maximum duration of 7 years.

¹⁰⁹ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 70 (DV/1974, c. I, art. 27).

¹¹⁰ Peyrot G., "La Tavola e il governo della Chiesa", in *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, (6 Dicembre 1945).

¹¹¹ Peyrot G., "L'Istituto dell'autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese", in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, LXV, No. 82 (maggio 1945), pp. 27-28.

¹¹² Ribet A., *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica*, Catania, Tip. La Veloce, 1938, p. 5.

on the Modern Age, the Synod represents a modern parliament, in which modern democratic institutions are outlined¹¹³. According to this analogy, we could assume that an expanded synodal-presbyterial system like that of the Waldensians anticipates a federal-like political-institutional system. Such an assumption could be made only in principle, because of the lack of elements of comparison. However, the profound analogies between the two systems – suffice it to think of the principle of representation at different levels, the repartition of the specific competencies of each body, from “basic” communities up to the top levels (subsidiarity), to the level of internal autonomy of each community and the inclusive potential of the system towards independent external entities – make it possible, at least ideally, to draw a parallel between the synodal-presbyterial and the federal systems. Aside from the many aspects that could lead to a comparison between the two systems, we would like to focus only on the principle presupposing the articulation of the structure at the basis of the synodal-presbyterial organization of the Churches, which is clearly visible within a federal structure.

In short, the Protestant ecclesiology draws its inspiration from two basic criteria: the “independence of the local Church” and “the unity of the Churches in the general assembly of the Synod”¹¹⁴; it is therefore possible to find, within this “ecclesiastic parliament”, a key principle belonging to all federal systems, whose parliamentary assemblies combine the needs for unity and independence, which are peculiar to federal organizations.

According to their own principles and rules, the Churches elect their deputies – both laymen and pastors – to represent them during the votes and the sessions of the Synod¹¹⁵. These members of the Synod formulate a new common will which embodies the leading authority of the Waldensian Church on legislation, constitution and doctrine¹¹⁶. The deputies of these independent communities are also the agents of the their own Churches’ individual interests, and they are often called to account for themselves; therefore, the election of a deputy to the Synod represents the most important power given to a community, because it allows the community to take part in the judging, constituent and legislative assemblies as a separate unit expressing, in turns, the union of the Churches¹¹⁷. It is no accident that

¹¹³ Spini G., *Storia dell'età moderna*, I Vol., *op. cit.*, In particular, see Chapters II and VI of Part Two and Chapters I and II of Part Four. See also Tourn G., *I valdesi, identità e storia*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹¹⁴ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹¹⁵ *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-326 (*Regolamenti sinodali/1972*, capo I-II, art.1-19).

¹¹⁶ Peyrot G., “L’Istituto dell’autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese”, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

during the first period of consolidation of reformed Waldism (1564-1686), the Synod (made of the pastors and the deputees of each Church) became the meeting point of the Churches, the expression of the ecclesiastical union of independent and autarchical communities in the present juridical sense, that is, bodies able to give themselves a norm and a government *ex jure proprio*¹¹⁸.

However, are these communities truly independent? How are they connected to the Synod? To answer these question, it could help to quote some considerations on the prerogatives, the responsibilities and the freedoms of each Church, showing, in their “spirit” and basic principles, several affinities with those of a democratic and federal system. Each local Waldensian community aims at reaching its independence (financial, administrative, missionary), making the decisions concerning the community itself through an assembly and being ruled by a council attended as a member by its regular preacher (pastor)¹¹⁹, chosen by the members of the community themselves¹²⁰. Between the local Churches and the Synod, there is also a regional organization, spanning from the district to the regional level. In the framework of this organizational chart, each Church remains independent; besides, according to the subsidiarity principle – the most ancient phrasing of the Reformed ecclesiastical law¹²¹ – all Churches are voluntarily subject, in some specific areas, to the same ecclesiastical discipline set and exercised by the unitary governing bodies (Synod and Board).

It is therefore possible to say that the Synod represents the unity of the various parts of the ecclesiastical body, and has played a major role in making the covenantal formula consistent. The “connecting element” is the shared link of the synodal community, which is made possible at the organizational level as a consequence of the profession of faith of the Churches, and on which the covenant relies¹²². The doctrinaire aspect of the Church is a unitary one and is focused on the Scriptures; it acts as a “constitutional adhesive” and represents the foundations of the pluralitarian structural life of the communities, which draw their inspiration from the principles of independence and self-government¹²³. This type of ecclesiasti-

¹¹⁸ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹¹⁹ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹²⁰ The election of the minister of religion is just one of the symbol of the independence of the local Churches. The community of the faithfuls is ruled by the Consistory; besides, the Church has a full legal status, owns its movables and immovables, is financially independent, exercises its taxing power on its members and attends all assemblies (up to the Synod) with its deputees. See Peyrot G., “L’Istituto dell’autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese”, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ Giampiccoli F., “Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà”, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹²² Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

cal union, made of “independent and autarchical, yet not autocephalous, communities”, Peyrot writes marks the difference among the Waldensian ecclesiological system and all the others, because it sets itself between “the Presbyterian system and the congregationalist one”¹²⁴. In short:

The Synod is the supreme authority of the Church, [...]. According to the ancient *Patto d'Unione* [...], it is made of the quorum of deputies of the independent Churches and pastors. Without the deputations of the independent Churches or without pastors, the Waldensian Synod would be different from what it is and was, that is, the union of the Waldensian Churches which, preserving their independence, agree on a common discipline and management of common issues that assemblies and pastors are equally required to observe and respect¹²⁵.

The similarities between this system and the federal one are therefore evident, thus highlighting the balance stemming from the dialectics of opposing powers, which are at the basis of both systems. Such balance was instrumental for the Waldensian Church in establishing an ecclesiastical unity without a strong centralization, and in guaranteeing a high level of autonomy for its communities, thus preventing them from disintegrating. The key element is therefore represented by the dialectical confrontation between the “centre” and the “suburbs” and the elements forming the whole, whose tensions are the expression of “real, systematic, practical solutions [...] in the (sometimes difficult) implementation of an unstable, yet effective balance between two opposing principles, each equally dangerous if isolated from its counterpart”¹²⁶. In fact, Peyrot explained that the Waldensian ecclesiastical system, because of the dialectics among its elements, managed to preserve its efficiency even when the ecclesiological thought lacked of clarity, because the power of the conservative opposition of one part against the opposing trend of the other is sufficient to guarantee enough balance to keep the solidity of the whole¹²⁷. Such ideas lead to some remarks on the similarities between this ecclesiastical system and the classic institutional system generally equated with federalism. According to the latter, the *conditio sine qua non* for the existence of a federation is the coexistence of aggregating and disaggregating elements, “arousing both the *desire* for a union and the *desire* for independence from the limits of the union, [...] considered one of the preconditions for a federal union”¹²⁸.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹²⁵ Letter of Giorgio Peyrot to Emile Ribaute (June 15, 1965), cart. “Ufficio Legale 1953-1967”, fald. 60, cat. Z, maz. M, fasc. 13, cart. “Ordinamento ecclesiastico in genere”, in Archivio Storico della Tavola Valdese (hereinafter ASTV).

¹²⁶ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologicalo*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Wheare K.C., *Del governo federale*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

Let's now focus on the historical evolution of the concept of Church during the constitutional revision processes from the 16th century onwards. This analysis allows us to study the changes in the idea of ecclesiological unity over the time, as well as of its meaning according to the historical period, from the "unity" of the Churches to a "one and only" Waldensian Church. Between the 18th and the 19th centuries, in conjunction with the consolidation of the national states and the process of centralization in the European countries, some members of the establishment of the Waldensian Church felt the need to assert a stronger unitarian identity. Despite the formal change of its Constitutional Charter in the 19th century, the Waldensian Church was able to keep its nature intact and to preserve the original value of the ideals which inspired its birth.

The starting point dates back to 1561 with the *Patto del Podio*, which stated – right before the beginning of the war against the House of Savoy – the ecclesiastical union among the Waldensian communities living on both sides of the Alps, which still characterizes the nature of the Waldensian Church itself. The *Patto*, established on a shared and voluntary basis, ratified a union of independent Churches; hence, in the Waldensian ecclesiastical tradition, the use of the plural form to define the *Union des Vallées*, reasserted by the "*Patto d'unione*" (Pact of Union) in 1571 to point out the independence of the local Church within the unitarian structure of the Church or, even better, pre-establishing it. The anonymous writer of the *Histoire des persecutions* confirmed this concept and explained that "anciennement il y avoit dans les Vallées vaudoises des *Eglises Evangéliques* unies entr'elles par les liens d'une même foi et d'une oeuvre commune, mais indépendantes les unes des autres, et souveraines quant à leur administration intérieure et au choix de leurs pasteurs"¹²⁹. Less than a hundred years later, Gilles wrote that the Waldensian Churches had been characterized for centuries by a spirit of freedom and independence, and that, unlike the all-absorbing unity embodied by the Roman Church, they could find the most appropriate *trait d'union* through an "ecclesiastical confederation"¹³⁰.

After the tragical period that followed the harsh persecutions triggered off by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685 and the exile in French-speaking Switzerland, the Waldensians who came back to Piedmont in 1689 after the so-called "Glorious Repatriation", restored their ecclesiastical structure according to the previous covenantal tradition¹³¹. Therefore, the concept of union of the Waldensian Churches as a

¹²⁹ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹³⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 50-56. On the source (*union Ecclesiastique*), see Gilles P., *Histoire ecclesiastique des églises réformées*, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-192 (1st ed.).

¹³¹ In 1689, the return to Piedmont of the Waldensians exiled in Switzerland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) is one of the most significant and moving events

“synodal-like plurality”¹³² was used again, and the Waldensian Churches were able to maintain their essential prerogatives throughout the 18th century and to overcome the difficulties of the Napoleonic jurisdictionalism (1804-1815). This situation lasted for some more decades in the 19th century, also because of a first disciplinary reorganization which reasserted once again the ancient ecclesiastical Union, founded on the principle of the covenant among independent Churches. The first constitutional revision took place in 1828, when the project of a new federal-like general discipline was submitted to the Synod. The project re-established the relationships and the balance between the “centre”, represented by Synod and the disciplines, and the “suburbs”, which at that time included 13 independent Churches.

The first Chapter of the projects stated che “les Eglises évangéliques des Vallées du Piémont, au nombre de 13, dont quelques-unes sont encore annexes, avec titre d’Eglise, ne forment qu’un seul corp, ayant des intérêts communs, professant la même doctrine, uniquement basée sur la Parole de Dieu”. It finally stated that the Churches “se regardent comme soeurs: dès lors aucune n’a de supériorité sur les autres, ni ne doit prendre des mesures particulières au sujet de choses qui les regardent en commun. Toutes [les Églises] sont soumises à la même discipline ecclésiastique établie par le Synode, exercée soit par la Table soit par les concistoires particuliers de chaque Eglise”¹³³.

However, the project was not approved and was later replaced by a new one (1833) which did not modify, substantially and formally, the concept of “Union of Churches” and maintained the plural form in the title of Article 1, “*Des Eglises*”¹³⁴.

The year 1839 marked a shift towards centralized unitarism at the denominational level¹³⁵. In the modified and revisited Waldensian discipline, this entailed the replacement of a kind of terminology adapting the idea of plurality of the Churches to the concept of unity, with another kind focused on the reduction of the weight of each Church to the benefit of the powers representing the Union. Therefore, in the chapters of the new

in the history of this *popolo-chiesa* and in their struggle to regain their ancestral land, thanks to the power of their faith and the solidarity of the international Protestantism. Arnaud H., *Il glorioso rimpatrio dei valdesi*, Torino, A. Meynier, 1989. See also Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 167-187 and Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., pp. 157-206, Vol. II.

¹³² Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, op. cit., p. 24.

¹³³ See D.E. 1833, 1, in Pons T., “Actes des Synodes des Eglises Vaudoises 1692-1854”, in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, No. 88 (1948), p. 258. See also, Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

discipline, the plural form “*les Eglises*” became “*l’Eglise*”; Article 1 itself clearly shows the will of some members of the Waldensian establishment to provide the Waldensian Church with a new unitarian ecclesiological structure¹³⁶, sacrificing the traditional and historical independence and autarchy of the local Churches¹³⁷. In fact, Article 1 of the Discipline states that “*l’Eglise évangélique des Vallées Vaudoises du Piémont est une. Elle reçoit et professe pour unique règle de foi les doctrines contenues dans l’ancien testament et le nouveau*”¹³⁸.

It is highly likely that this shift towards centralization occurred in conjunction with the renewed contacts with the Anglican episcopal world¹³⁹. As it would take too much time here to analyze the historical period that marked this phase of the Waldensian history¹⁴⁰, it is more useful to focus on the inclination of a part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia*, then ruled by Colonel Beckwith¹⁴¹, towards an “episcopal-like” structure of the Waldensian Church. In other words, he aimed at promoting a reformation of the ecclesiastical structure to distance the Waldensians from the influence of the dissident Churches and the revivalistic movement, and to bring them nearer to the Anglican Church and, therefore, to the episcopal system¹⁴².

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ See *Actes des Synodes*, 1839, 16 in ASTV. See also Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹³⁸ See *Actes des Synodes*, 1839, 16 in ASTV.

¹³⁹ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁰ On this period of the Waldensian history, see Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-220 and Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-296, Vol. II.

¹⁴¹ Charles Beckwith (1789-1862) was a British colonel of Canadian origin. He is one of the leading personalities in the Waldensian history. Influenced by the *Awakening*, Beckwith was a son of the Anglo-American culture, made up of empirism and feelings, respect and haughtiness. He belong to the race of the English governors which were about to start establishing Her Majesty’s Empire. As soon as he discovered the existence of the Waldensians through William S. Gilly’s story, Beckwith made his wealth and his energy at the disposal of the populations of the Valleys for more than 30 years, fostered the building of temples and schools and established many assistance and instruction institutions. In 1848, Charles Albert awarded the old Colonel the diploma and the Cross of Knight of The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus for his extraordinary merits. Around 1830, he moved to Torre Pellice and spent the rest of his life there, turning the Valleys into “a small, independent “nation”, with its peculiar characteristics in Europe’s great Evangelical world”. Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 215-216. On Beckwith, see Giampiccoli, F., *J. Charles Beckwith. Il generale dei valdesi (1789-1862)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2012.

¹⁴² See the letter sent by Beckwith to Moderator Jean-Jacques Bonjour, August 28, 1844, in “Copialettere moderatore Jean-Jacques Bonjour”, in ASTV. It is well-known that the Colonel aimed at becoming a life-long Moderator, thus overcoming the system based on an elective system and on temporary limited posts.

This ecclesiastical centralization was hindered by a younger generation of intellectuals who defended the original meaning of the federal-like union of the Waldensian Churches¹⁴³. The opposition to this centralizing trend “welded” to the spirited defence of the “principle of the pluralistic agreement among all Churches” and to the “claim of what they believed to be their inviolable rights”¹⁴⁴. To these young people, the term “*Eglise vaudoise*” mortified the nature of the Church, nullified centuries of history and violated the very idea of covenant. The Churches were and had to remain “associations religieuses basées sur le principe biblique de la libre autonomie, de la souveraineté”, gathered in a “confederation”¹⁴⁵. However, pro-episcopalists were never able to reach their goals because of the strong opposition of the majority of the Waldensians; yet, despite the resistance of those who would have liked to maintain the plural form (*Eglises Vaudoises*) in the definition of the body of the Church, thus “consecrating the principle of an ecclesiastical federation”¹⁴⁶, the adoption of the singular form (*Eglise Vaudoise*) started being used in the disciplines, in striking contrast with the terminology used and the actual organization.

The apparent incongruity in the use of the expression *Eglise Vaudoise* in the Waldensian ecclesiology cleared up at the end of the 19th century, following a 10-year-long constitutional revision (1892-1902). The singular term was still used in the disciplines, but without a real revision of the Waldensian organization. Given the difference between “ecclesiastical federation” and “absorbing unity”, the term “Waldensian Church” expressed the unity of the representative body, even if from the perspective of the principle itself, the choice of the plural form would have been more appropriate. According to the drafters of the project, the adoption of the singular form did not mean that “all Churches had to merge into an

¹⁴³ Meille J.P., *Le Général Beckwith. Sa vie et ses travaux parmi les Vaudois du Piémont*, Losanna, G. Bridel, 1872, p. 184. See also Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ See s.n., *De la libre nomination des pasteurs au sein des églises vaudoises*, Turin, Union Typographique-Editrice, 1863, p. 6. The unknown supporter of the ancient ecclesiastical Union explained how this linguistic distortion had distorted the real nature and the reasons behind the historical union of the Waldensian Churches, and hence the meaning itself of Church. He also stated that “en lieu et place des *Eglises* nous avons l'*Eglise Vaudoise*, à savoir un tout organique, dans lequel les associations particulières disparaissent en perdant leur individualité; un ensemble qui ne mérite pas le nom de *confédération*, car celle-ci supposerait la liberté intérieure de ses membres, mais qui est une vraie *agglomération* dans laquelle les Eglises particulières viennent se fondre et se confondre, comme la goutte d'eau dans l'océan” (*ibid.*). See also Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴⁶ *Progetto di Costituzione presentato al Venerabile Sinodo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7. See also Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

ecclesiastical unity, thus choking their individualism"¹⁴⁷; on the contrary, it was aimed at increasing the degree of visible unity of the Churches. The authors of the draft reasserted this concept through an analogy, according to which the Churches "have to carry out the motto of the United States of America – where each State has its own particular jurisdiction: *ex pluribus unum!*". This *unum* is nothing but the *totality*, as the ancient Constitution would like it to be, but *a whole*, in front of the Christian world and the civil authority: the *Waldensian Church*, just like the 105 congregations of the free Church of Scotland and the 64 Churches of France constitute *The free Church and l'Église réformée respectively*"¹⁴⁸.

From a historical point of view, the evolutive process of the ecclesiological concept within the Waldensian legal system, with its many constitutional reformations and revisions, is much more complex and articulated, but this last definition of the structure of the Waldensian Church sums up well the idea underlying its organization. Its federal nature is confirmed by the subsequent structures set up after the expansion of the Waldensian Church through the missionary and the evangelization processes. This led to the birth of new communities, which yearned for independence and representation within the Synod, as well as to an institutional afterthought of the whole Waldensian ecclesiastical system.

Even in this case, the principle of the free union of independent and "autarchical", communities, mutually responsible and corporately coordinating the action of the Church in the synodal government, is respected. As Peyrot recalls, "even the Churches of the mission, [...] were having the same experience" as that of the Churches of the Valleys in "their institutional start-up, between independence and centralization, unidenominational Church and open ecclesiastical Union"¹⁴⁹. During this expansion phase of the Waldensian Church, the problems arising from the fast evangelization process at the end of the 19th century questioned its institutional structure, which had to be revised and reformulated in consideration of the new conditions.

In fact, following the wide expansion of the Waldensian missionary action in Italy, it was necessary to set up an organization in charge of the coordination of the evangelization process and of the integration of the new Churches in the ecclesiastical institutional framework. This organ, the Evangelization Committee, acted according to the principle of a unique Church, "centralized, direct, divided into hierarchically-subject parishes", in contrast with the principle of independence and autarchy moving them

¹⁴⁷ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, op. cit., p. 37.

towards the Union with the other Churches¹⁵⁰. For a long period, these Churches were not even represented during the Synods. Therefore, the Church itself had to face a blatant contradiction: on the one hand, there were independence-driven principles (regarding the internal government of the ancient communities of the Valleys); on the other hand, there was the centralization principle, for the management of the Mission Churches.

Once again, the ancient federal principles were involved in the shaping and the ordering of the new reality stemming from the evangelization. Therefore, the spur for the revision of the institutional organization came from the Mission, which asked for a juridical arrangement of its position within the Waldensian Church. The many Church-communities established through the missionary action all over Italy, asked for a coherent position within the institutional framework of the Waldensian Church, in conformity with its original principles and appealing to the *Union des Vallées* (1571), which laid the foundations for “une fédération d’églises”, considered “une organisation désormais reconnue comme indispensable”¹⁵¹. In 1873, the Synod approved the proposal of the General Conference of the Churches of the Mission and charged the Evangelization Committee to work out a project involving the Churches established in many parts of Italy (and all over the world) to gather them in “cette nouvelle Fédération”; this project “après adoption par le Synode, aurait été subséquentement proposé à l’acceptation des nouvelles Eglises”¹⁵².

The 1873 Synod reaffirmed the ecclesiological, federal-oriented principles underlying the Waldensian Church in the Valleys and outside the territory of the Mission. During their Conference, the Churches of the Evangelization showed their unanimous will “en exprimant le désir sincère d’être une même chose avec l’Eglise Ev. Vaudoise et en adoptant le principe fédératif et presbytérien”, in order to establish “une union toujours plus étroite avec les églises vaudoises pour arriver à former des unes et des autres *un seul corps*, ou, si l’on préfère, une *confederation*”¹⁵³.

This principle came to the fore many times throughout the history of the Waldensians, particularly in 1934 when the Churches of the Rioplatense District drew up their Statute according to the ancient principles of the

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ See *Resoconto del Sinodo del 1873*, appendix D., p. 60 in ASTV. See also Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵² *Attes des Synodes del 1873*, *op. cit.*, XI, in ASTV.

¹⁵³ *Resoconto del Sinodo del 1873*, *op. cit.*, p. 28 (loose adaptation). The 1873 project, known as “Organamento” of the Mission Evangelical Churches, was definitively approved by the Synod in 1875. This document, Peyrot notices, showed a “clear federalist structure referring to the ancient Union des églises des Vallées” Peyrot G., *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Waldensian system (that is, the federative criterion)¹⁵⁴, and later with the global Integration Pact with the Italian Methodist Church, ratified in 1975 and accomplished in 1979 with the first common Synod¹⁵⁵. The integration, Bouchard clearly wrote, has fulfilled a partial “unity within freedom”, that is, a union drawing its inspiration from federal principles. In other words, the *Patto di unione* concluded in 1975 maintained “the face and the organization of the two Churches, and the sense of belonging of each community”, binding them together in a single synodal assembly. According to Tourn, “this type of agreement, which foresees neither the union of the two Churches in an organization nor the absorption of one into the other” could seem new and original¹⁵⁶. It actually corresponded to an ancient principle of the Waldensian ecclesiology which conciliates the authority of the synodal assembly and the local responsible independence, whose most ancient historical precedent was the *Patto di unione* signed in 1561.

This federative process is nothing but the consequence of a wider process in the Protestant world, which started at the end of the 19th century and was boosted by the tragic events of the 20th century, with the birth of the Ecumenical Movement and the *World Council of Churches*.

This spiritual and cultural heritage – at the end of the 19th century and throughout most of the 20th century – had a significant impact on a generation of Italian Evangelicals, driven by their irenism and their ecumenical ideas towards the cause of the political unity of Europe. No other principle but the federal one could have guided some Waldensians to the fulfillment of such a goal.

¹⁵⁴ Article 1 of the Statute declares: “Las Iglesias evangélicas Valdeses de Colonia Valdense, de Cosmopolita, de Tarariras-Riachuelo-San Pedro, de Ombues de Lavalle, de Miguelete, de San Salvador (Uruguay), de Colonia Iris y Belgrano (Argentina) todas con personería jurídica y con mismos Estatutos, se constituyen en Federación de Iglesias Evangélicas Valdeses”. See *Atti della Commissione Distrettuale rioplatense 1955*, XXXIII, in ASTV.

¹⁵⁵ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia*, op. cit., pp. 110-111. See “Patto d'integrazione globale tra le chiese valdesi e metodiste”, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁵⁶ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 267.

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SECOND PART



I. The Question of "Peace" within Italian Protestantism

1. Europeanism, pacifism and irenism in the Waldensian Church and society between the 19th and 20th centuries

As clearly shown in the first part of this essay, the Reformed nature of the Waldensian culture has been instrumental in providing Italian Evangelism with an international and resolutely cosmopolitan breadth. Because of their century-old bonds with the Reformed world and their close connections with the Protestant communities established at the international and European levels, the Waldensians did not regard themselves as part of a limited confessional and territorial religious movement, and – in the long term – of a nation-oriented perspective, in accordance with their refusal of all strict political and religious schemes; as a matter of fact, from a confessional point of view, the Waldensians were close to the other European Protestant Churches and to the ecumenical perspective, which, in turn, was part of the Christian message.

This spirit, as we have seen, was the outcome of a particular historical, religious and political context and gave origin to a bivalent feeling encompassing both the community of believers and the universal Church. In the Protestant culture, the sense of freedom within the autonomy of their own communities is substantiated in a universal community. This twofold attitude was the consequence of the need for a confessional independence and the result of a reaction to the strict uniformity of the Catholicism. In particular, the sense of communion among the Protestant families stemmed from the contingent need to set aside the Counter-Reformist measures taken by the Roman Church between the 16th and 17th centuries. This attitude is likely to have given rise to that sense of interdenominational and interconfessional solidarity among Protestant Churches generally known as "Protestant International"¹.

¹ The Waldensians are part of the "Protestant International", and their history clearly shows the role of this interconfessional solidarity over the time; suffice it to mention Cromwell's diplomatic mediation and his threat to resort to armed intervention to help the Italian Calvinists against the religious retaliations carried out by Charles Emmanuel II, Duke of Savoy. On the above-mentioned events, see the English Ambassador to Piedmont, Morland S., *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont*, London, Henry Hills, 1658, passim, esp. pp. 336-361. On the Waldensians and the Protestant International, see also Tron D., *Le "Pasque Piemontesi"*

From the end of the 19th century, the diffusion of a strong irenic and ecumenical sentiment in the Christian world made the Protestants more aware of the need for the Church to attain a visible unity which could overcome all confessional differences, but without denying any historical, traditional and specific characteristic of each denomination. The federal model was taken into account, i.e. the idea of a “federal union” seen as the sole alternative to a “corporate union”. As Stephen C. Neill wrote:

why should not the Churches (while continuing to exist as independent units) enter into such a compact with one another so that ordination to the ministry in one body should convey the right of ministry in all, and the membership in one Church should convey with it the privileges and responsibilities of membership in all the rest? Why should not the Churches develop organs for common action, when common action is desired, without infringement of their right to act independently when they feel it right to do so?²

The federal union was supported by many secular adherents of Reformed Protestantism, as they deemed it to be more functional to the action of the Church, in spite of the theological controversies on the concept of unity and church. As Neill explained, if all the Churches recognized one another and accept the legitimacy of their sacraments, the federal union could be the remedy for healing all fractures within the Christian world. However, Neill added, at least three quarters of the Catholics belonged to the Roman Church, the Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran Churches, which – for various reasons – did not recognize the others as Churches³. Therefore, and almost exclusively in Reformed Protestantism, the idea of federal union was – and still is – a tangible hypothesis for the reunification of the Christian world⁴.

The aforementioned religious perspective coexists with the political idea of a European unity, which is based on similar observations. Between the 19th and the 20th centuries, a large part of the Reformed Protestant world was characterized by a strong irenic vocation, which revolved around the ideal of European unity and pacifism. Politically, the Waldensians were inclined to see Europe as their “common home” and to support all the

e l'internazionale protestante, Torino, Claudiana 2005 (also in *Bollettino Società Studi Valdesi*, n.194, 2, 2004). See also Wylie J.A., *The History of the Waldenses*, Harrington (DE), Delmarva Publications, 2014 (in particular, see Chap. 13).

² Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1517 al 1948*, op. cit., p. 130, Vol. III.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See Cullmann O., “L’ecumenismo dell’unità nella diversità secondo il Nuovo Testamento”, in *Protestantesimo*, XL, n. 3 (1985), pp. 129-130. See also *Id.*, *L’unità attraverso la diversità. Il suo fondamento e il problema della sua realizzazione*, op. cit.; *Id.*, *Le vie dell’unità cristiana*, Brescia, Queriniana, 1994.

initiatives aimed at appeasing the whole European Continent, potentially through a supranational organization based on the con/federal institutional models, which were largely present in the Reformed world and in traditionally Protestant countries, both at the ecclesiastic and political-institutional levels.

For these reasons, both Europeanism and federalism characterized, at a later stage, the political thought of part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia* between the 19th and the 20th centuries, even of those who were more sensitive to the "national values" of the Risorgimento.

The Waldensian community always supported the movements that aimed at peace and the unity of the European continent, in consequence of the nature of the Waldensian Church, the tradition of its internal structure and its cosmopolitanism, as well as its strong bond with the cultural environment in France and Geneva and the "Protestant International".

The recent history of the Waldensians is dotted with events testifying the above-mentioned attitude: from their involvement in late 19th-century peace movements to the establishment of inter-ecclesiastical organizations aimed at promoting a peaceful universal order, to the adhesion to the principles of the newly established League of Nations and the spreading of its values in cooperation with the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches⁵. The latter, fostered by the "Protestant International" at the beginning of the 20th century, aimed at encouraging the rapprochement and the coordination of all the Evangelical Churches in Europe, in the joint effort to promote peace among peoples and nations. The Italian Evangelists were also actively involved in the creation of the Ecumenical Movement and the *Movimento federalista europeo*-MFE (European Federalist Movement) during the Second World War; in the post-war period, they pursued the creation of a federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and of the United States of Europe, thus favouring all the policies aimed at the establishment of the first common European institutions.

Ecumenism and federalism represented the peak of the evolution in the religious and political thought of a large sector of the Waldensian world, especially regarding the key concepts of Christian universalism and world peace, which are both essential to the full understanding of many aspects of the most mature embodiments of the Italian Protestant movement. These Waldensians deemed the above-mentioned movements to be the most appro-

⁵ Rohtmetts P., "Ecumenical Peace Organisation. 'The World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches and Resistance to Totalitarian Regimes between two World Wars", in *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*, No. 64 (2013), pp. 62-83. For a brief historical introduction, see Bacon J.C., *Recruiting for Peace. The World Alliance and Youth*, edited by the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, London, The British Council of the World Alliance, 1931.

appropriate instrument to pursue their political and religious goals. However, the setting of such trends within the Waldensian community and, more generally, within the Italian Evangelical movement, calls for a rough outline of the ideological developments stemming from the intellectual activities of the Protestant avant-gardes in Italy from the end of the 19th century onwards. In fact, these avant-gardes considered both irenism and utopian pacifism as the forerunners of the most accomplished ecumenical aspirations and the most concrete federalist ambitions of the 20th century.

The diffusion of the pacifist movement in the 19th century clearly showed how important the analytical interpretation of deep-rooted historical needs was to part of the American and European civil societies. Beside the socialist and liberal trends, the most important component of pacifism in the 19th century was definitely a Christian-inspired⁶ one, as attested by the support and the participation of the Quakers. In Italy, pacifism and Europeanism featured a strong Christian-Evangelical element, whereas late 19th-century radical Waldensian pacifism was characterized not only by some vague Europeanist aspirations – inherited from a pre-existing historical and cultural tradition – and liberal and socialist ideological influences, but also by the moral beliefs derived from the Christian thought. Besides, there was also a series of elements pertaining to conciliatory confessional trends, in consequence of the unifying tensions within the “Protestant International” aiming at the rapprochement of the various Christian Churches. The pacifist considerations on the political world order in the 19th century revolved around the quest for a “legal” system able to balance the relations among all the great powers⁷.

At the end of the 19th century, a part of the Waldensian society fastened its attention on the European Liberal Democratic pacifist associations inspired by the so-called “utopian federalism”, brought to the forefront by Victor Hugo in his famous speech at the Paris Peace Conference in 1849⁸. By that time, the Europeanist attitude of the Waldensians was

⁶ Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁷ Spoltore F., “Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero. Charles Lemonnier”, in *Il Federalista*, XLV, n. 2 (2003), p. 117; Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit., pp. 60-71. On these movements and their campaigns, see Petricioli M., Cherubini D., Anteghini A. (eds.), *Les États-Unis d'Europe: un projet pacifiste. The United States of Europe: a pacifist project*, Bruxelles, P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2004; Petricioli M., Cherubini D. (eds.), *Pour la paix en Europe. Institutions et société civile dans l'entre-deux-guerres. For Peace in Europe: Institutions and Civil Society Between the World Wars*, Bruxelles, P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2007. On the British Peace Movement, see Laity P., *The British Peace Movement 1870-1914*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001. See also Hinsley F. H., *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations Between States*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963.

⁸ The Conference gathered some of the most prominent cultural personalities to support peace by spreading ideas and presenting various models for the political unity of Europe. Among them, an important role was played by Victor Hugo, who championed the cause of the United

already an incontrovertible fact, as confirmed by their cultural bonds with European Protestantism; in fact, they deemed federalism to be the most suitable and effective option to match their historical and confessional characteristics. Federalism was the driving force behind the choice of many of the most sensitive and enlightened Italian Evangelicals to embrace and support the cause of the political unity of Europe.

In the 19th century, the adhesion of some liberal and radical oriented Waldensians to the International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA)⁹ clearly shows the cultural cosmopolitanism of part of the Protestant society in Italy, as well as a vital Europeanist and internationalist sentiment. This was corroborated by an intense irenic awareness within the Protestant world, which had led many Evangelicals to the quest of a confessional reconciliation among the various Christian families. As a matter of fact, the participation of many Waldensians in the pacifist campaign showed a clear irenic stance.

The wars that stemmed from the European imperialism posed a serious threat to the middle-class peace movements, but the largest part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia* always held on to the principle of universal peace, in the continuous effort to overcome all national interests. Their

States of Europe on the basis of a romantic Europeanism and of a utopian federalist vision. He hoped for, and prefigured, a union of European States which would have not only granted peace but also fostered a sense of brotherhood. See Ory P. (ed.), *L'Europe? L'Europe*, Paris, Omnibus, 1998, pp. 163-169. On the federalist interpretation, see Spoltore F., "Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero. Charles Lemonnier", *op. cit.*, pp. 117-129.

⁹ The IAPA was founded in London in 1880 by Hodgson Pratt, who shared his long-time presidency with Félix Moscheles. Frederick Green was the Secretary of the Association. The Society had its own magazine (*Concord*). In the years that followed, many branches were opened in Oxford, Brussels and Italy, notably in Rome, Perugia, Turin, Torre Pellice and Milan. The Milan cell was established in 1887 and headed from 1891 by Ernesto Teodoro Moneta; a major role within the middle-class and democratic pacifism was played also by the Torre Pellice cell, led from 1896 by Edoardo Giretti and some Waldensians. On IAPA's Italian branches, see Cooper S.E., *Patriotic Pacifism: The Political Vision of Italian Peace Movements. 1867-1915*, Los Angeles, California State University, 1985; D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia. Edoardo Giretti e il pacifismo democratico nell'Italia liberale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1995. See also Toum N., *L'opera della pace e i suoi progressi. Conferenza tenuta in Torre Pellice il 22 febbraio 1897*, edited by Società Internazionale per la Pace-Comitato di Torre Pellice, Torre Pellice, Tipografia Alpina, 1897. On the Milan committee, see Società Internazionale per la Pace-Unione Lombarda, *Sette anni d'esistenza. Un po' di storia. Statuto. Comitato. Elenco dei soci. Speranze nel futuro*, Milano 1894; on the Torre Pellice Association, see *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898. I congressisti della pace a Torre Pellice*, edited by Comitato per la pace di Torre Pellice, Torre Pellice, Tipografia Alpina, 1898, pp. 67-69. Finally, on IAPA, see Ceadel M., *Semi-detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, and also Brown H., "The Truest Form of Patriotism": *Pacifist Feminism in Britain, 1870-1902*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 114-131. On pacifism in Europe between the 19th and 20th century, see Cooper S.E., *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe. 1815-1914*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.

cosmopolitanism, internationalism and irenism were the most effective antidote to nationalism and the infectious influence it exerted on part of the Waldensian community, thus proving its ideological insignificance.

Some Italian Evangelicals even refused to conform to the ambiguous official stance taken by the Waldensian Church, which was similar to that of the Italian government. This attitude was backed up by the Waldensian ecclesiastical institution when the Italian government declared war against Turkey for the possession of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. In fact, the Libyan war was fought far from Italy and the decisions of the government were deemed to be right; therefore, at the beginning of the war, very few members of the Waldensian Church expressed their disagreement¹⁰. The Waldensians reached its "heyday" during Giolitti's government. In that period, the Italian Calvinists were granted full religious freedom and were thankful to the King and the Italian government. The historical period from the unification of Italy to the rise of Fascism was therefore characterized by the almost total adhesion of the Church and the majority of the Waldensian community to the regulations and the political choices of the Italian governments¹¹. In short, the Waldensians were not nationalists but patriots, and many of them experienced the conflict between genuine patriotism and nationalist ideology with a good deal of moral suffering¹². Notwithstanding this ambiguous attitude, the Waldensian pacifists ceaselessly reasserted their loyalty to the Christian values, and reiterated their firm condemnation of all wars driven by national and imperialist interests.

By 1914, nationalism had taken over the Waldensian postulates of the "Protestant International", as well as socialism and liberalism; it was only with the Treaty of Versailles that the European Protestants had the opportunity to meditate on the solution to the issues of nationalisms and their relations with international anarchy.

This scenario led, among others, to the attempt of US President Woodrow Wilson to dilute all rivalries in Europe by means of a broader consensus at the international level¹³, and to the establishment of an international Christian organization aimed at fostering peace through the work of the Churches. The World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches was created to that end, and the Italian Evangelicals played an active role in the Alliance with their own representative committee. The Italian Protestants welcomed enthusiastically the creation of the League of Nations: they sup-

¹⁰ Adamo A., "L'atteggiamento della Chiesa Valdese nei confronti della guerra in Libia e della I guerra mondiale", in *Bollettino Società Studi Valdesi*, n. 147 (1980), pp. 10-11.

¹¹ Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, Torino, Claudiana, 1985.

¹² Carocci G., *Giolitti e l'età giolittiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1982, p. 187.

¹³ Bouchard G., "Europa cristiana? Una posizione protestante", in *La Rivista Dolciniana*, n. 22 (2003), p. 54.

ported its many political initiatives and actively promoted the reconciliation of the Churches to encourage the peace process in Europe¹⁴.

The scope of their activity, gradually revolving around large inter-ecclesiastical organizations, was twofold: on the one hand, they wanted to make international governments aware of the problem and to put pressure on them; on the other hand, the Waldensians aimed at the reconciliation of the various groups within the Christian world¹⁵. In other words, the first activity was based on the common engagement of the Churches to spread a sense of brotherhood among peoples and to exert pressure directly on the States and their governments on global political issues¹⁶. The second activity, instead, was marked by a strong irenic perspective and aimed at establishing a new unitary dimension, focused on the sharing of values and the preservation of differences at the religious level. The Ecumenical Movement boosted the reconciliation process and the effort to enhance the interconfessional and interdenominational cooperation even further, as it aspired to provide all Christians with a formal common base upon which to lay its functional foundations. Both of the above-mentioned trends, however, converged and strengthened themselves. In this regard, suffice it to remember the engagement of the World Alliance to advocate the gradual disarmament of the European powers. In 1932, Lord Dickinsons wrote that "the matter came up for discussion for the first time in 1922 when the Alliance held that it was a paramount duty of the Christian Church to strive for the mental and moral disarmament of the people in all countries, and to lead them at the same time to insist upon a rapid and universal reduction of armaments and the adoption of methods of arbitration and mediation in the settlement of all international disputes"¹⁷. The Protestant Churches then warned the sig-

¹⁴ Spini recalls how the Italian Evangelicals believed Wilson to be "the very embodiment of salvation", because he had showed the world "the right way out from so much anguish". Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit., p. 345. Many Italian Protestant intellectuals valued Wilson's initiatives and reposed trust in him; among them were Giuseppe Gangale, who stressed the Protestant origin of the League of Nations, and Piero Jahier, who considered Wilson a "wise father". Gangale G., "La Società delle Nazioni e noi", in *Conscientia*, III, n. 19 (1924) and Jahier P., *Ragazzo - Il Paese morale*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002, pp. 209-226.

¹⁵ See Rougemont D. de, *Vita o morte dell'Europa*, Milano Edizioni di Comunità 1949.

¹⁶ On the Briand-Kellogg Pact (which was the first concrete project for the institutional integration of Europe to be actually vetted by the European governments), see Fleury A., Jilek L. (eds.), *The Briand Plan of European Federal Union: National and Transnational Perspectives, with Documents: Proceedings of the International Conference, Geneva, 19-21 September 1991 (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)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 1998.

¹⁷ Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", in *Annual Report and Handbook of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches*, Geneva, Central International Office 1932, p. 13.

natories to the Briand-Kellogg Pact to honour the principles stated in the Charter; besides, the Alliance clearly emphasized “the moral responsibility for disarmament which lay upon the nations who had signed the Pact”¹⁸. Briand’s project outlined a vague and ambiguous federal bond, and urged the Churches of the Alliance “to use their influence with the League and with their governments” to establish “a universal system of settling disputes by peaceful judicial methods”¹⁹. More properly, the Churches were required to “recall their educational responsibility in the matter and to support the idea that nations ‘should renounce their claim to unrestricted right of action regardless of international obligations’”²⁰. The action of the World Alliance in support of peace substantially rested “upon the readiness of its National Councils and of the Churches working together to use their influence with the people, parliaments and governments of their own countries to bring about good and friendly relations between the nations”²¹.

In order to exert strong pressure on the European governments, however, the Churches had to reach a ‘confessional agreement’ among the various Churches and the Christian trends, at least in the Protestant world, in order to foster international peace and solidarity.

Therefore, whereas the main goal of the World Alliance was of a political and social nature, and largely relied on the joint action of the Churches, each within the borders of its own State, the pressing initiatives of missionary movements and youth and student organizations aimed at encouraging the formal, and in future also institutional, unity of the Evangelical world as well as at identifying a lower common confessional denominator.

Following the creation of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Ecumenical Movement could play an important political role at the international level in the first half of the 20th century, when the political thought and the actions of the Provisional Committee converged with those of the European federalism, in the effort to dam up the rise of nationalisms.

The need of a joint system to coordinate all actions and improve cooperation among the Churches persuaded some members of the Waldensian community to support the Ecumenical Movement and to foster, in the wake of the late 19th-century evangelization process, the establishment of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

²¹ Ehrenström N., “Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work, 1925-1948”, in Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, 2 Vols., Geneva, WCC Publications, 2004 (1st edition, The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 561, Vol. II.

a federation gathering and coordinating the many Evangelical communities scattered all over Italy, in the effort to overcome the isolation of the Waldensian Church. This process, however, came to an end only many years later with the creation of the *Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia*-FCEI (Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy)²².

The Protestant Churches were well aware that their failure during the First World War was due to the unanimous support to their own national causes; therefore, they resolutely tried to implement an effective supra-ecclesiastical and interconfessional coordination programme in the years that followed the War, in order to avert the "umpteenth suicide of modern Europe"²³. However, Europe was on the verge of an even more ominous catastrophe.

The idea of a federal union started to take shape within some Protestant circles, which deemed it to be viable both at the political and ecclesiastical levels. In fact, on the one hand, the federalist idea, intended as an institutional mechanism, seemed to offer the concrete possibility of a confessional reconciliation, coherently with the ecclesiological tradition of Reformed Protestantism; on the other hand, instead, federalism seemed to be a rational tool to finally achieve the "perpetual peace" conjectured by Kant.

This idea, however, became popular among the Protestants only during the Second World War and the provisional establishment of the World Council of Churches. The rise of totalitarian movements dramatically revealed how a large part of the European society was imbued with violence, thus denying any form of faith and worship but the nation-State and erasing all the conquests and progress made by the European society at one go²⁴. Besides, the exploitation of the national Churches by the totalitarian regimes forced many men of God to establish political and religious relations at the international level, and to put forward proposals to tackle not only all pressing confessional issues but also the political future of Europe. The idea of a European federation started to take shape at the end of the 1930s in the reports presented during the conferences held by the World Council of Churches.

Almost at the same time, a small group of Waldensians heard about Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli's *Manifesto per un'Europa libera e unita* (by then, known as *Ventotene Manifesto*)²⁵, and started spreading its ideas all over Europe through Switzerland. The Waldensians and their networks

²² See Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, op. cit., pp. 104-107.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁴ See Rougemont D. de, *Penser avec les mains*, Paris-Neuchâtel, Albin Michel-Éditions de La Baconnière, 1936.

²⁵ Spinelli A., Rossi E., *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, preface by E. Colomi (anastatic edition edited by Pistone S., with an essay by Norberto Bobbio), Torino, Celid, 2001.

in Switzerland were also instrumental in gaining supporters for Rossi and Spinelli's federalist project, among which was pastor Willem A. Visser't Hooft, then Secretary of the Provisional Committee of the WCC. The Waldensians helped the representatives of the European Resistance movements to hold clandestine meetings to discuss and outline the strategies for the establishment of a European Federation at the end of the war.

2. From the ideals of the Risorgimento to the perspective of a European Unity

The idea of federalism as a political and institutional system to foster peace around the world was almost immediately adopted and promoted by some members of the Waldensian society, who were primarily pacifists and Europeanists. For many Italian Evangelists, the adhesion to the pacifist theories circulating at the end of the 19th century stemmed from their religious beliefs; in some cases, this idea of pacifism took the form of a political engagement in favour of peace among the peoples in Europe, to be attained through international courts of justice and arbitrations. This attitude was a legacy of the Illuminist culture and was backed by the cosmopolitanism of the Waldensian society and its historical commonality with the Protestant countries.

The small Waldensian community could count on a European network of relations, ranging from Reformed Switzerland to the Netherlands, from Lutheran Germany – where Waldensian colonies had been founded in Hesse and Württemberg – to England, from Huguenot France to Bohemia. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Waldensian community was a “small Protestant island within a Catholic land”, whose members lived protected by the Piedmontese valleys and had survived the French and Savoy pressures with the help of their Swiss cousins and the Anglo-Dutch “protectorate”²⁶. Despite their isolation, however, the Waldensians established a bond with the Protestant countries, where the Waldensian *élite* studied. This fact clearly shows that during the 19th century the small Waldensian *enclave* had been inspired and driven “by the cultural trends and the religious ferment permeating the European Protestantism”²⁷. Notwithstanding the small group of Protestants in Italy and the opposition of the pontifical policies, the Waldensians were often able to introduce some sparks of that European and cosmopolitan culture which, in Italy, was restricted to very few privileged intellectuals. In the years before 1848, the Waldensians lived in a ghetto up against the slopes

²⁶ See Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit.; Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, II Vol., *Dal sinodo di Charforan all'Emancipazione*, op. cit.

²⁷ Rubboli M., *I protestanti. Da Lutero alle chiese, ai movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, op. cit., p. 120.

of the Alps and fought a "resistance war" using the mighty weapons of culture: it is no coincidence, Tourn wrote, that "the books, the schools, the scholarships [were] given by the Protestant world; behind Pomaretto and Prarostino – Tourn writes – there are always London, Amsterdam and Geneva"²⁸.

Therefore, the above-mentioned historical conditions allowed the Waldensians to establish new fruitful bonds with the Anglo-Saxon world, notably with Great Britain and the United States, which had supported a first attempt to evangelize Italy in the 19th century. The Risorgimento, in particular the breach of Porta Pia in 1870, led to an increase in the initiatives of the various denominations settled in Italy, notably the American and British Churches (especially Baptist and Methodist), over the whole territory of the Kingdom²⁹. After 1848, Piedmont had become "a mecca for all the patriots", regardless of their political beliefs and religious origins³⁰. Turin sheltered many Evangelical-Protestant patriots, political and religious refugees fleeing other Italian States, who would have later given origin to various trends and denominations, each with its own political and religious stance, also on how to achieve national unity. In a nutshell, three main trends prevailed after 1848: on one side, there were the "Brothers", led by Piero Guicciardini and Teodorico Pietrocola Rossetti, who founded groups of ardent believers waiting for the Kingdom of God; in the middle, there were the Waldensians, who were politically moderated and resolutely *Reformed* from the religious point of view; on the other side, there were the free Churches, whose believers closely combined the religious and national renaissance in a Protestant version of "God and Mother Country"³¹.

²⁸ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 197. On the cultural cosmopolitanism of the Waldensian community and its tight relationships with Protestant Europe, see: Armand-Hugon A., *Storia dei valdesi*, pp. 207-266, Vol. II.

²⁹ See Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit., in particular, chapters XII and XIII. A clear distinction, however, has to be made between the efforts of the Waldensian Church and the evangelizing initiatives of other denominations (Evangelical movements and Churches), such as the Methodists, the Adventists and the Baptists. Politically, the Waldensian Church obviously supported Cavour's political action, whereas the Methodists aligned themselves with Garibaldi and the Baptists appealed to the poverty of the common people.

³⁰ Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, op. cit., p. 29.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. On these trends, see Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit.; Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, III Vol., op. cit. On the evangelization process and the Protestant presence in Italy, see Spini G., *L'evangelo e il berretto frigio. Storia della Chiesa Cristiana Libera in Italia 1870-1904*, Torino, Claudiana, 1971; Maselli D., *Tra Risveglio e Millennio. Storia delle Chiese cristiane dei Fratelli 1836-1886*, Torino, Claudiana, 1974; *Id.*, *Libertà della parola. Storia delle Chiese cristiane dei Fratelli 1886-1946*, Torino, Claudiana, 1978; Chiarini F. and Giorgi L. (eds.), *Movimenti evangelici in Italia dall'Unità ad oggi. Studi e ricerche*, Torino, Claudiana, 1990. See also

In his book *Italia liberale e protestanti*, Spini analyzed the influence of European Protestantism on the Evangelical culture in Italy and described the dramatic – and conflictual – expansion of the Italian Protestantism and its attempt to consolidate its role within the national framework in the 19th century³². During this process, and despite the strong reformist feelings that drove the Evangelicals during the Risorgimento, the Italian Protestants gradually developed a sincere devotion to Italy, especially after its unification. The Italian Protestantism therefore combined Reformed aspirations (e.g. freedom of conscience, division between Church and State) and political ideals, connected with the creation of the national State and its institutional structure, and in the prospect of its social and cultural renaissance. This convergence was fostered also by the particular cultural climate that permeated the European Protestantism. According to Spini, the 19th-century Italian Evangelical movement was inspired by the Evangelical Awakening movement, rather than by the spirit of the 16th-century Reformation. The Awakening, with “its Pietistic spirit and personal *Erlebnis*, its sentimental ardour and its missionary and philanthropic activism”, paved the way to the great era of the Enlightenment and the Risorgimento³³. Therefore, also the Italian Protestantism of the second half of the 19th century stemmed, indirectly, from 18th-century German Pietism and English Methodism, and, more directly, from the *Réveil* of Geneva and Vaud and the *Eglises Libres*: the theological thought of Alexandre Vinet (1797-1847) and his vigorous defence of religious freedom and the separation of Church and State; the English *Evangelicalism*; and the *Free Church of Scotland*, founded in 1843 following the *Disruption* of the Presbyterian State Church of Scotland³⁴. These Swiss or British inspirations had not prevented the Italian Evangelical movement from having its own national character. It was born – so to say – together with the Risorgimento and first developed from 1849 onwards, during the violent protests against the Pope for the “*Questione Romana*” (Roman Question)³⁵.

In parallel with the spread of the Evangelical trends in Italy, partially linked with the international Protestant world, the Waldensians were able to combine a transnational confessional sentiment and a true patriotic fervour inspired by the Risorgimento. Therefore, also the Waldensian perception of national identity had been counterbalanced by a strong irenic spirit and a

Maghenzani S. and Platone G. (eds.), *Riforma, Risorgimento e Risveglio. Il protestantesimo italiano tra radici storiche e questioni contemporanee*, Torino, Claudiana, 2011.

³² Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ This term refers to the controversy on the role of Rome, the Holy See and future capital of the Kingdom of Italy, during the Risorgimento. The controversy ended with the signing of the Lateran Pacts in 1929 by King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy and Pope Pius XI.

growing ecumenical tension, which had slowly broadened the confessional perspectives of the vanguards of the European Protestantism at the beginning of the 20th century.

This twofold sense of belonging, consolidated during the Risorgimento, and to which the Italian Evangelicals had enthusiastically adhered³⁶, induced the Waldensians to resolutely support the national cause in view of a moral and civil renewal of Italy³⁷ and of its international opening, especially towards the Protestant countries. On top of this, the Waldensians were sincerely loyal to the House of Savoy, which had granted them civil liberties in 1848³⁸, thus triggering the struggle for religious freedom³⁹.

Beside the above-mentioned sense of belonging and the tenacious adherence of the Waldensians to the Risorgimento and the cause of inde-

³⁶ On the national spirit of the Waldensians and Evangelicals during the Risorgimento and the period that followed the unification of Italy, see Spini G., *Risorgimento e protestanti*, op. cit.; Bellion B., Cignoni M., Romagnani G.P., Tron D., *Dalle Valli all'Italia. I Valdesi nel Risorgimento (1848-1998)*, Torino, Claudiana, 1998. See also Spini G., "Le società bibliche e l'Italia del Risorgimento", in *Protestantesimo*, XXVI, n. 1 (1971), pp. 1-21; *Id.*, "A proposito di Risorgimento e protestanti: G. B. Passerini", in *Protestantesimo*, XLIII, n. 1 (1988), pp. 19-23; Chiarini F., "I protestanti nel Risorgimento italiano visti da Spini", in *Protestantesimo*, XLIV, n. 4 (1988), pp. 284-286.

³⁷ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 236 and ff. See also Giordano F.M., *L'individuo e la nazione*, op. cit., pp. 175-183.

³⁸ The promulgation of the "lettere patenti" (17 February 1848), through which Charles Albert granted the Waldensians political and civil rights, strengthened the small Alpine community's sense of belonging to the Kingdom of Sardinia and their support to the political stances and initiatives of the Piedmontese government. See Romagnani G.P., "I valdesi nel 1848: dall'emancipazione alla scelta italiana", in Bellion B., Cignoni M., Romagnani G.P., Tron D., *Dalle Valli all'Italia. I Valdesi nel Risorgimento (1848-1998)*, op. cit., pp. 71-101. For a juridical and historical assessment, see also Jahier D., *L'emancipazione dei valdesi per le lettere patenti del 17 febbraio 1848. Commemorazione*, Torre Pellice, Tipografia Alpina, 1922, p. 16. On the relations between the Waldensians and the Kingdom of Sardinia, see Spini G., "Rapporti delle chiese evangeliche italiane con lo stato durante il Risorgimento", in Peyrot G. (ed.), *La posizione delle Chiese evangeliche di fronte allo Stato: relazioni e documenti dell'incontro organizzato dal servizio studi della Federazione delle chiese evangeliche in Italia, Agape 19-23 agosto 1969*, Torino, Claudiana, 1970, pp. 89-105. On Charles Albert and the Waldensians, see Romagnani G.P., "Carlo Alberto e i valdesi", in Romagnani G.P. (ed.), *La Bibbia, la coccarda e il tricolore. I valdesi tra due emancipazioni (1798-1848)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2001, pp. 285-304. On the Statute and the Risorgimento, see Tourn G., *Risorgimento e chiese cristiane*, Torino, Claudiana, 2011. On Italian Protestants and federalism, see Giordano F.M., *L'individuo e la nazione. Federalismo protestante e origini del liberalismo italiano (1787-1848)*, op. cit.

³⁹ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 236. See also Giordano F.M., *L'individuo e la nazione*, op. cit., pp. 175-183.

pendence and national unity⁴⁰, two discriminants, more related to liberalism and federalism, can be traced in the Waldensian world: an ideological and confessional element within the Waldensian Church, and a historical and political one which confirmed the patriotism of the Waldensians and their unitary vision of Italy. In the first case, it was a debate on the structure of the Church between those who aimed at a centralist institutional reformation and those who wished for a federal-like structure, in observance of the traditional ecclesiological independence of the Waldensian community and in agreement with the federalist inclination to the political and ecclesiological thought of the Italian Reformed world. The second case, instead, was the year in which, as Giorgio Tourn wrote, the Waldensians discovered Italy⁴¹: the year 1848 would have marked not only their confessional independence but also the beginning of a new awareness, thanks to which the Waldensians would have eventually combined their religious and political identity, stemming from their being actual subjects of the Savoy Kingdom⁴².

After 1848, the Waldensian *élite* and the ecclesiastical management jointly supported Cavour's political strategy⁴³ and largely sided with the Piedmontese liberal moderates who were in favour of a war to set Italy free. Therefore, in the years between 1848 and 1861, the attitude of the Waldensians towards the federal and European trends was less evident, at least until the last 20 years of the 19th century when a solid group of Waldensian intellectuals reworked and developed these perspectives.

The above-mentioned elements, combined with Cavour's motto "a free Church in a free State", are therefore the foundations of the steady identification of the political "homeland" of the Waldensians with the new Italian State, as declared by the lieutenant of the King in his announcement: the Waldensians had joined "the 'great Italian family'"⁴⁴. In this perspective, the common points of reference for both the Waldensians and the

⁴⁰ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*; Molnar A., Armand Hugon A., Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.* On the period preceding the Risorgimento, see Romagnani G.P. (ed.), *La Bibbia, la coccarda e il tricolore. I valdesi tra due emancipazioni (1798-1848)*, *op. cit.*; Cantimori D., Firpo L., Spini G., Venturi F., Vinay V. (eds.), *Ginevra e l'Italia*, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Tourn G., *Risorgimento e chiese cristiane*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 and ff.

⁴² Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, *op. cit.*

⁴³ The process of secularization of the Kingdom of Sardinia promoted by Cavour had a strong impact on the Waldensians, whose loyalty to monarchy strengthened still further in 1870 and 1871, following the Capture of Rome and the promulgation of the Law of Guarantees. Spini G., *Risorgimento e protestanti*, *op. cit.*, pp. 323 and ff.; Tourn G., *Risorgimento e chiese cristiane*, *op. cit.*, pp. 179 and ff.

⁴⁴ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

other Italian Evangelicals were the modern Protestant "nations": England, Germany and the United States⁴⁵.

This international and progressive vision overlapped with the national perspective and acquired a European scope, in which the political and confessional expectations of a religious, moral and civil reform of Italy were in stark contrast with the more conservative and anti-unitary vision of the Papal State and the Catholic hierarchies. The Risorgimento catalyzed the ideal elements, the expectations and the political and religious reasons that fostered the genuine patriotism of the Italian Evangelicals and the Waldensians. The initial spirit of the Risorgimento and the idea of nation, however, started to crystallize and to become part of the political life of the new-born Italian State; the Waldensians, though, gradually shifted from the idea of nation to nationalism, and the most conservative forces among the Waldensian public opinion and the official Church adopted a moderate and indulgent, if not ambiguous, stance on the political choices of the Italian government at the international level, including the colonial period and the decisions showing a marked nationalist character.

Despite its international and Europeanist vocation, part of the Waldensian Church and of its civil society developed a national feeling all across the 19th century. In the years that followed the Italian unity, this feeling gradually evolved into a sort of devotion to the national values. During the First World War, the Waldensian society and its Church showed their loyalty to the Italian State whereas, under the Fascist regime, they would have opposed the nationalistic exaltation of the propaganda, thus showing their loyalty to their origins and the international nature of their diaspora.

This patriotic fervour increased steadily and led most of the Waldensians to actively support the military intervention in the Great War. It is true, as Spini explained, that at first Evangelical Italy condemned it unanimously, but it is also true that interventionism cleared its way even among the Evangelicals, in the wake of events of the Risorgimento, and many of them were finally persuaded of the moral need of the intervention, yet with all sort of hesitation and inner anguish⁴⁶. Obviously, the Waldensians never identified themselves completely with the Italian nationalism, because of the many inborn counter-forces within the Waldensian culture and religious tradition – in which the entrenchment of the reformed European spirit called up an ancient confessional solidarity – and of their customs, traditions and language, all strongly influenced by the European culture.

⁴⁵ On the betrayed expectations of a national renovation, see Bracchitta M., "Azionismo, protestantesimo e rivoluzione democratica nazionale", in *Quaderni del circolo Rosselli*, a. XXII, n. 1 (2002), pp. 73-79.

⁴⁶ Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-338.

The reasons for their resistance to the dangerous involution in the concept of national State rest on the choice of progress and civilization made by the Waldensians at the time of the Risorgimento: in other words, they opted for the future, the renewal and the opening⁴⁷. In short, the Waldensians developed a national and universal vision/meaning of the constitutive process of the new Italian nation. Many Waldensians and Evangelicals fastened their attention not only to Italy, which was now united and independent, but also to a Europe that was still in the making.

Between the 19th and the 20th centuries, such a perspective, strengthened by their cultural and religious closeness to the great Protestant countries championing modernity and progress, led many Waldensians to adopt the stance of those who hoped for a stable pacification and, in some cases, the political unity of Europe without neglecting the peculiar characteristics of each State. These ambitions were later endorsed by the international peace movement, which aimed at promoting the establishment of laws and international rules of arbitration to prevent all types of conflict among the European States.

At the beginning of the 19th century, a large number of leagues, societies and unions were created with the clear objective to foster an international organization able to prevent the tragic European conflicts from happening again. The New York Peace Society was the first to be founded in 1815. The year after, the British Quaker William Allen⁴⁸ established the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace in London. These two societies addressed the issue of peace in two different ways: the American society believed that peace could have been attained only through the internal institutional reformation of the States, and based its strategy on the arbitration and the persuasive powers of the public opinion of the governments. The British Society, instead, aimed at preventing and fighting against war, by showing that it was opposed to the Christian spirit and the interest of the human kind, and committed itself to finding an effective instrument to establish peace through the principle of non-intervention, the reduction of arms and the organization of a congress of nations⁴⁹. In both cases, the idea of a European federation is not mentioned yet. These pacifist organizations started organizing meeting and congresses in 1816, first at the local, then at the national and, finally, at the international levels. The

⁴⁷ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 236.

⁴⁸ William Allen (1770-1843) was an English scientist and philanthropist who actively supported the abolition of slavery. He was a member of the *British & Foreign Bible Society* (B.F.B.S) and had a universalist and ecumenic vision. Allen W., *Life of William Allen: with selections from his correspondence*, 3 Vols., London, Charles Gilpin, 1846. On William Allen, see Jahier D., "William Allen. Un quaker bienfaiteur des Vaudois", in *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Vaudoise*, n. 36 (avril 1916), pp. 97-110.

⁴⁹ Anteghini A., *Pace e federalismo Charles Lemonnier, una vita per l'Europa*, Torino, G. Giappichelli Editore, 2005, pp. 226-227.

first international meeting took place in London in 1843. It was followed by the Congress of Bruxelles (1848) and the famous Congress of Paris (1849), where Victor Hugo delivered his speech on the United States of Europe. Other congresses were organized by the International League of Peace and Liberty (Geneva in 1867, Lausanne in 1871 and Lugano in 1872). A series of universal peace congresses followed, inaugurated by the Paris Peace Conference in 1889 and ended with the 33rd Congress of Zurich in 1939. All these congresses were made possible by Charles Lemonnier⁵⁰, who worked to organize a universal gathering of all the peace associations. The agenda of the Congress of Paris encompassed all the main aspects that were regularly debated: 1) a comprehensive analysis of the international arbitration; 2) the application of the neutralization principle to rivers, canals and straits; 3) a study for the application of the federative principle among States; 4) the creation of an arbitration board; 5) a study for the establishment of international law with fundamental principles; and 6) research on the instruments and the measures to replace the state of war or truce with the juridical state among nations⁵¹. In the space of few decades, the issue of peace was debated not only at the moral and religious level, but also at the political and ideological one⁵².

The above-mentioned 19th-century Europeanist and international pacifism was promoted and supported by the Waldensian cultural *élite*, because of its adherence to the best ideals of the cosmopolitan vision devised during the Enlightenment. However, the impulse to establish a peace committee

⁵⁰ Charles Lemonnier (1806-1891), professor of philosophy and follower of Saint-Simonism, was a French pacifist and main organizer of the first world Congress of peace and freedom held in 1867 in Geneva. In 1868, he founded in Geneva the Europeanist magazine *Les États-Unis d'Europe*. Lemonnier was a pioneer in the creation of Europeanist movements and international peace organizations as well as in the promotion of the ideas on peace and European unity in the 19th century. On Lemonnier, see: Anteghini A., *Pace e federalismo. Charles Lemonnier, una vita per l'Europa*, *op. cit.*; Spoltore F., "Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero. Charles Lemonnier", *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Tourn N., *L'opera della pace e i suoi progressi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12. On the first peace congresses, see Nicholls D., "Richard Cobden and the International Peace Congress Movement, 1848-1853", in *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct. 1991), pp. 351-376. On the universal peace congresses, see Guieu J.M., "Les Congrès universels de la paix et la question de l'unité européenne", in Petricioli M. and Cherubini D. (eds.), *Pour la paix en Europe. For Peace in Europe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-406. For a bibliographic collection of thematic works and books on the peace movements and congresses at the end of the 19th century, see *Bibliographie du Mouvement de la paix. Littérature pacifiste dans la bibliothèque de l'Institut Nobel Norvégien*, Kristiania, Aschehoug & CO, 1912.

⁵² See Hinsley F.H., *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations between States*, *op. cit.*; Petricioli M., Cherubini D., Anteghini A. (eds.), *Les États-Unis d'Europe. The United States of Europe*, *op. cit.*

in Torre Pellice came from Edoardo Giretti⁵³, a Piedmontese industrialist and a Catholic who had a deep understanding of the economic, social and cultural reality of the Waldensian Valleys.

The tragic defeat of Amba Alagi (December 7th, 1895) dramatically revealed the velleities of the Italian imperialist aims, and sparked off the grievances of the pacifists and of those who were against the colonial expansion of Italy. Giretti was a firm believer in economic liberism, and emphasized the tight connection between customs protection and militarism, stemming from the "obsolete and chronic prejudices" that made countries see their neighbours as enemies⁵⁴. Instead, he believed that the ever-growing interdependence of the peoples, boosted by scientific progress, had the direct and immediate result to enhance solidarity and to draw peoples near as well as to show the obsolescence of the concept of national economic self-sufficiency, which was the ominous backbone of the autarkic policies that followed⁵⁵.

For these reasons, Giretti resolutely sided with those who fostered a free-trade economic policy since the protectionist shift promoted by Depretis, in the wake of the British liberalist tradition. His antimilitarist awareness was then strengthened by the ruinous colonial campaign in

⁵³ Edoardo Giretti (1864-1940), a Bricherasio-born small silk manufacturer, was a Liberal member of the Italian Parliament from 1913 to 1919. His first-hand knowledge of the industrial situation in Italy led him to become one of the strongest supporters of economic liberalism. Giretti got in touch with many important industrialists, economists and intellectuals, such as Maffeo Pantaleoni, Vilfredo Pareto, Antonio De Viti De Marco, Enrico Baroni, Umberto Ricci, Attilio Cabiati, Gaetano Salvemini, Luigi Einaudi and Gaetano Mosca. In 1885, Giretti embraced the cause of peace because of his anti-trust, anticolonialist and antimilitarist beliefs. He was one of the leaders of the international and Italian peace movement and one of the leading exponent of the the Italian democratic peace movement, together with Teodoro Moneta. In 1924, he wrote an essay on the need to establish a free market and put forward the idea of creating stable customs unions and leagues among the European countries. See Giretti E., "Come attuare il libero scambio in Europa", in *La Riforma Sociale*, Nov.-Dec. 1924; *Id.*, *Il protezionismo e la crisi*, Torino, Einaudi, 1935. On Giretti E., see D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, *op. cit.*, passim; *Id.*, "Edoardo Giretti entre pacifisme 'intransigent' et pacifisme 'intransigent'", in Petricioli M., Cherubini D., Anteghini A. (eds.), *Les États-Unis d'Europe. The United States of Europe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-304; Gobetti P., "Un nemico della plutocrazia", in *La Rivoluzione Liberale*, 31 maggio 1925; Papa A., "Edoardo Giretti", in *Belfagor*, n. 1 (1970), pp. 50-70; Inghirami S., "Edoardo Giretti: un liberista irriducibile", in *Annali di storia dell'impresa*, n. 5-6 (1989-90), pp. 209-268; Becchio G. and Di Giovinnazzo V., "Liberismo e liberalismo in Edoardo Giretti", in Marchionatti R. (ed.), *La scuola di economia di Torino. Coprotagonisti ed epigoni*, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 2009, pp. 17-40.

⁵⁴ Giretti E., *La cooperazione e la pace internazionale*, Caserta, Stabilimento Tipografico La Minerva di G. Turi 1896, p. 3, extract from the *Almanacco dei Cooperatori italiani* (1896). Giretti had already expressed his disagreement on the protectionist and colonialist policy of the Italian government after the Dogali massacre (1887).

⁵⁵ Giretti E., *La cooperazione e la pace internazionale*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Eastern Africa; in fact, he believed that the imperialist policy was the direct consequence of the economic protectionism and that war had been waged exclusively "in the interest of a small group of politicians and monopolists" who did not realize the ever-growing "web of commercial relations among different countries in the world" and the "absurdity of the old-fashioned idea that all peoples had to be self-sufficient"⁵⁶.

Following the tragic colonial events, Giretti was invited by Onesimo Revel⁵⁷ and Emilio Eynard⁵⁸, two prominent Waldensian members of the *Società degli operai di Torre Pellice* (Workers' Association of Torre Pellice), to hold a conference against the war in Africa on February 2nd, 1896.

On that occasion, Giretti not only tried to show the absurdity of war as a way to settle international conflicts – which instead could have been resolved by supranational institutions and through the creation of "International Courts and Arbitrations" – but he also made an appeal to take concrete action to establish a long-lasting peace⁵⁹. The Waldensians favourably accepted Giretti's stern warning and decided to work in order to foster and spread the culture of peace both in Piedmont and in the rest of Italy.

A group of influential personalities of the Waldensian and Pinerolo Valleys then gathered on March 15th, 1896 at Giretti's home in Bricherasio, where they made the decision of founding a new section of the International Arbitration and Peace Society. At first, a provisional propaganda committee was created by Revel and Eynard with some prominent personalities from the local cultural and editorial *milieu*, among whom were Enrico Caffaratti and Alberto Pittavino, a left-wing liberal who owned the *Tipografia sociale di Pinerolo* and was the co-founder and director of the local newspaper *La Lanterna Pinerolese*.

The committee immediately released a circular-appeal enunciating the ideological premises and the goals of the association. Revel and Eynard's initiative was favourably welcomed by the small Alpine community, thus paving the way to the summoning of an assembly to confirm the birth of the "Torre Pellice" Peace Association. The manifesto clearly stated that everyone could have joined the Committee, regardless of their differ-

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁷ Onesimo Revel (1860-1907) was a long-time leader of the *Società degli operai di Torre Pellice* and was the director of the liberal weekly magazine *L'Avvisatore Alpino*.

⁵⁸ Emilio Eynard (1869-1931) was a liberal and an active militant of the Radical Party. He was appointed Secretary of the *Società valdese d'utilità pubblica* (a charitable society) and Mayor of Torre Pellice from 1921 to 1926. Eynard was the editor of the radical-democratic weekly magazine *Il Pellice*. On his political views, see Eynard E., *Verso la Federazione europea*, Torre Pellice, Besson, 1901.

⁵⁹ See "La Pace e l'Arbitrato internazionale", in *La Lanterna Pinerolese*, 7 febbraio 1896 (summary of Giretti's conference held in Torre Pellice on February 2nd, 1896).

ent principles and aspirations, be them political, religious or economic, "for the triumph of a great and common ideal"⁶⁰. This attitude allowed the Committee to gather members from many different sectors. It had a cross-party nature, religiously and politically. In fact, the founding group included Catholics and Waldensians, both moderate and progressive. The Committee included also some pastors of the Waldensian Church.

On May 31st, 1896, a meeting of founding members⁶¹ approved the statute of the local Committee of the International Arbitration and Peace Society of Torre Pellice, and declared its official establishment. Its founding members included also Giovanni Pons⁶², then Moderator of the Waldensian Board, Giovanni Malan⁶³, owner of the *Tipografia Alpina di Torre Pellice e Naïf Tourn*⁶⁴, President of the *Società Valdese di pubblica utilità*. The above-mentioned members were later joined by other Waldensian personalities, such as Mario Falchi⁶⁵, professor of the Waldensian College, and Eliseo Costabel⁶⁶, mayor-to-be of Torre Pellice. The cause of peace acted as a catalyst for the cohesion of the Waldensian

⁶⁰ "Per la pace", in *L'Avvisatore Alpino*, 20 marzo 1896.

⁶¹ Tourn N., *L'opera della pace e i suoi progressi*, op. cit., p. 2. For a comprehensive list, see *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, op. cit., pp. 67-69. When it was established, the Committee consisted of 144 members; within a year, the number had increased to 181 and, by the end of 1898, to 196 (53 of whom were women). In the 1901, the Committee counted in 255 members. This is even more impressive if compared with the Committee of Turin, which in the same year had only 205 members. Most members were of Waldensian origin: among them were Enrico Soulier, deputy under Giolitti's government and later senator of the Kingdom, and Carlotta Beckwith, daughter of the British General Charles Beckwith, great benefactor of the Waldensian Church.

⁶² Giovanni Pietro Pons (1842-1909) was a Waldensian theologian and pastor, and a member of the Evangelization Committee. He was appointed Moderator from 1887 to 1909.

⁶³ Giovanni Pietro Malan (1846-1906) was the founder of *Tipografia Alpina* and of the magazine *L'Avvisatore alpino*. He was also President of various city organizations and members of the *Congregazione civile di carità* (Civil Congregation of Charity) of Torre Pellice.

⁶⁴ Naïf Tourn (1850-1927), teacher at the Waldensian College of Torre Pellice, President of the *Società valdese d'utilità pubblica*, and director of the Waldensian magazine *L'Echo des Vallées Vaudoises* was one of the sternest supporters of the Movement for peace and its ideals.

⁶⁵ Mario Falchi (1870-1945), teacher at the Waldensian College of Torre Pellice and liberal intellectual, was one of the most prominent Waldensian anti-fascist personalities and one Giretti's close collaborators, as well as an active pacifist and Europeanist. He was appointed President of the *Comitato per la pace di Torre Pellice* from 1909 to 1916 and Secretary of the *Federazione italiana per la pace e l'arbitrato* (Italian Federation for Peace and Arbitration). He was director of the magazine *La Luce, Voce del Pellice* and editor of the weekly *Il Pellice*. Falchi was also President of the *Comitato nazionale delle Associazioni Cristiane dei Giovani-ACDG*.

⁶⁶ Eliseo Costabel, teacher at the Waldensian College, was Mayor of Torre Pellice and President of the *Comitato per la pace* (Committee for Peace) of the Waldensian town.

Church and society around its *establishment*, and for the convergence of different opinions and views.

The newspaper articles that followed the foundation of the Committee were all focused on the absurdity of war as an instrument to resolve the disputes among peoples and enunciated the unanimous stance of the members of the Committee, who declared themselves against all conquering undertaking. They aimed at elevating the propaganda activity for peace to "make all wars impossible". According to its members, the unsuccessful abolishment of war would have crushed Europe "under the weight of an unbearable armour". At that time, Europe was oppressed by the proliferation of arms, the menace of permanent armies and the considerable military expenses constraining its development at the civil level. According to the Committee, the only real menace stemmed from "an erroneous and ruinous concept of patriotism and national honour", which prevented peoples from converging "on the ideas of progress and brotherhood"⁶⁷. Therefore, they deemed it essential to promote peace at the international level, in order to raise public awareness against all mere national interests.

The strategy of the Waldensian pacifists to promote a European peace fell into line with the ideas of the international movement which were based on some concepts, already rooted in the theory of classic federalism⁶⁸: firstly, the identification of nationalism as the primary cause of the conflicts among States; secondly, the awareness of the relationship between the "state of war" and the state of international anarchy, caused by the absence of a supranational juridical, political and institutional entity able to enforce a "state of peace"; and finally, the awareness of some intellectuals, notably Giretti and Eynard, of the impossibility to establish a free economic market in a chronically unstable political climate. In fact, according to them, the key to overcome this major issue was the creation of a supranational juridical system, duly backed by a coercive power, to stem all particular interests and foster the harmonic development of a free world market.

Article 2 of the Statute of the Committee of Torre Pellice states the general aims of the Committee, in accordance with those of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, which intended to "fight the ruinous spirit of conquest [...], foster and support friendship and harmonious trade relations among peoples, notably among neighbouring States"; first and foremost, however, the International Society clearly aimed at creating a federal-like supranational state structure to prevent any international controversy from degenerating into an armed conflict. Paragraph C of Article 2 of the Statute appropriately hoped for the creation of a "Federation of Civil States"

⁶⁷ "Per la pace", *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ See Levi L., *Il pensiero federalista, op. cit.*; Malandrino C., *Federalismo, op. cit.*; Albertini M., *Il federalismo, op. cit.*

following the "establishment of permanent courts of arbitration" for the peaceful resolution of all prospective international disputes among States⁶⁹. Hence, the Committee ultimately aimed at the achievement of a federation of States, notwithstanding its lack of a clear political and institutional definition.

The concept of "European Federation" or "United States of Europe", used by the pacifist movements in the 19th century to refer to the long-awaited political unity of Europe, was followed neither by a comprehensive definition of the concept of federation at the institutional level, nor by the constitutional architecture of a prospective federation of the European States, despite the implicit reference to the Swiss or the American model. Besides, the idea of a European unity still belonged to the realm of the great utopias, without any concrete political values aimed at the achievement of such union. These pacifists and Europeanists referred to previous studies which dealt with the establishment of a con/federal-like political and institutional project to unite all European States, notably the projects of Penn and Sully, Eméric Crucé (*Le Nouveau Cynée ou discours sur l'Etat*), the Abbot of Saint-Pierre (*Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle entre souverains chrétiens*), and the federal-like reorganization of the European system elaborated by Saint-Simon and Augustin Thierry (*De la réorganisation de la société européenne*)⁷⁰.

However, this federation had priority over the establishment of an international court; this attitude stemmed from the strategy of the peace movements at the end of the 19th century, with Frédéric Passy's⁷¹ internationalist trend prevailing over Charles Lemonnier's federalist approach. In fact, accord-

⁶⁹ See the statute of the Committee of Torre Pellice in *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

⁷⁰ On the various projects, see Curcio C., *Europa. Storia di un'idea*, *op. cit.*; Duroselle J.B., *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, *op. cit.*; Melchioni M.G., *Europa Unita sogno dei saggi*, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Frédéric Passy (1822-1912) was a French economist and politician. He occupied the position of minister under Louis Philippe I and Napoleon III's governments. He became a member of the *Académie de sciences morales et politiques* and in 1867 founded the *Ligue internationale et permanente de la paix et de la liberté*, the first French peace organization. Passy firmly believed in the need of a stable peace and the dialogue among States to achieve a real economic welfare. In 1901, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. On Passy's life, see his autobiography: *Pour la paix: Notes et documents*, Paris, Charpentier, 1909. On Passy, see Wild A., "Frédéric Passy", in Holl K. and Kjelling A.C. (eds.), *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates: The Meaning and Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in the Prize Winners' Countries*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1994, pp. 35-48; Grossi V., "Frédéric Passy: Economic Liberalism in the Service of Peace (1822-1912)", in *Interparliamentary Bulletin*, No. 74, 1 (1994), pp. 11-26; Clinton M., "Frédéric Passy: Patriotic Pacifist", in *Journal of Historical Biography*, No. 2 (Autumn 2007), pp. 33-62. On pacifism in France, see Lorrain S., *Des pacifistes français et allemands, pionniers de l'entente franco-allemande, 1870-1925*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1999; Siegel M., *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940*, Cambridge,

ing to the internationalist trend, the Federation was a secondary objective, despite its being the ultimate goal to aim for, because it was not considered the direct instrument to revolutionize the international political order.

The peace movement was characterized from the very beginning by various trends, each with its own theoretical approach. Passy and Lemonnier had opposing tendencies: the former had a strong internationalist inspiration and believed that only an international court of arbitration was entitled to settle all disputes among States and prevent wars from breaking out; the latter, instead, based his approach on Kant's *Progetto di pace perpetua* (*Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*) and referred to Saint-Simon's memorandum, who was inspired by American federation and had already proposed the establishment of a European parliament at the time of the Congress of Vienna. The Congress organized by the *Ligue internationale et permanente de la paix et de la liberté* in Geneva in 1867 aimed specifically at the creation of the United States of Europe. As Edward H. Carr later recalled, even if "in the manifesto, which was addressed to 'all friends of free democracy', the purpose of the Geneva Congress was defined as 'the maintenance of liberty, justice, and peace'", the ideal and practical goal of the peace movement was "to determine the political and economic conditions of peace among the nations, and in particular to establish the *United States of Europe*"⁷². The above-mentioned trends characterized the utopian pacifist movement until the First World War. At first, Lemonnier's stance and the goal of the creation of a European federation seemed to prevail, in the wake of the enthusiasm raised by the Congress of Geneva, attended by prominent partisans of European pacifism, such as Giuseppe Garibaldi, Victor Hugo, John Stuart Mill, Mikhail Bakunin and Amand Goegg; eventually, however, Passy's internationalist stance prevailed and that marked the strategy of the international peace movement, especially after Lemonnier's death⁷³.

Since the first universal peace congresses, it was clearly stated that the principle of the morals and the rights of the peoples was similar to that

Cambridge University Press, 2005. See also Vaisse M. (ed.), *Le Pacifisme en Europe des années 1920 aux années 1950*, Brussels, Émile Bruylant, 1993.

⁷² Carr E.H., "The League of Peace and Freedom: An Episode in the Quest for Collective Security", in *International Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (Nov-Dec. 1935), p. 838.

⁷³ See Spoltore F., "Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero. Charles Lemonnier", *op. cit.*; Anteghini A., *Pace e federalismo. Charles Lemonnier, una vita per l'Europa*, *op. cit.*; *Id.*, "Charles Lemonnier (1806-1891), précurseur de l'euro-péisme fédéraliste", in Petricioli M., Cherubini D., Anteghini A. (eds.), *Les États-Unis d'Europe. The United States of Europe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-194; Guieu J.-M., "Les Congrès universels de la paix et la question de l'unité européenne", *op. cit.* See also Tryon J.L., "The Rise of the Peace Movement", in *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 5 (Mar. 1911), pp. 358-371.

of the morals and the rights of the individuals⁷⁴, thus expressing the need for a higher authority not only for the individuals but also for the States. Naif Tourn provocatively stressed the existence of “two morals: one for the individuals, the other for the peoples”⁷⁵. He reaffirmed that the resort to force infringed all civil rules and had to be condemned by the internal law of any civilized State; he also noted, however, that in the case of the nations, the judgement changed and “war, the supreme affirmation of the survival of the fittest was considered to be legitimate by most men”⁷⁶. This judgement anticipated one of the pillars of the federalist thought, which was later developed by the theoreticians of British federalism (in particular modo da Lord Lothian), who deemed international anarchy⁷⁷ – i.e. the absence of an enforceable universal right – to be the main reason of the war.

During the first universal congresses, various proposals were tabled to outline a series of ideal aims and practical objectives shared by the many societies, leagues and associations that made up the League and converged on the *Bureau international permanent de la paix* of Bern⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace a Parigi nel 1889, a Londra nel 1890, a Roma nel 1891*, edited by Ufficio internazionale della Pace di Berna, Milano, Tip. stab. G. Civelli 1892, p. 5.

⁷⁵ Tourn N., *L'opera della pace e i suoi progressi*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ See Lord Lothian, *Il pacifismo non basta*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1986. On Lothian and British pacifism at that time, see Bosco A., *Lord Lothian: un pioniere del federalismo, 1882-1940*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1989; Pinder J. and Bosco A. (eds.), *Pacifism is not enough: collected lectures and speeches of Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr)*, London-New York, Lothian Foundation Press, 1990. On the thought of other British federalists, see Pinder J. and Mayne R., *Federal Union: The Pioneers. A History of Federal Union*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990; Pinder J., “Tre fasi nella storia del federalismo britannico”, in Preda D. and Rognoni Vercelli C. (eds.), *Storia e percorsi del federalismo. L'eredità di Carlo Cattaneo*, 2 vols., Bologna, il Mulino, 2005, pp. 367-402, vol. I; Bosco A., *Federal Union e l'Unione franco-britannica*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2009; Bosco A., “Federal Union et la tentative d'apporter la bataille fédéraliste sur le continent”, in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), “Die Welt war meine Gemeinde”. *Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, op. cit., pp. 131-164. See also Bosco A., “Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement (1938-40)”, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July, 1988), pp. 465-502.

⁷⁸ The *Bureau international permanent de la paix* was formally created in July 1891 in Rome within the 3rd Universal Peace Congress. The *Bureau*, whose headquarters were in Bern, was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1910 and is acknowledged as one of the forerunners of the League of Nations. It still is a permanent consultative member of the United Nations and acts as a link between intergovernmental agencies and international peace organizations. On the history of the *Bureau*, see Herz U., *The International Peace Bureau: History, Aims, Activities*, Geneva, IPB, 1969; Costa Bona E., *‘Il Bureau international de la paix’ nelle relazioni internazionali, 1919-1939*, Padova, Cedam, 2010. On the *Bureau's* stance on the European federation, see Spoltore F., “Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero. Charles Lemonnier”, op. cit., pp. 117-129 and see also *Résolutions prises dans les six premiers Congrès Universels de la Paix, Paris 1889, Londres 1900, Rome 1891, Berne*

Among the most relevant proposals were the inviolability of individual freedom, private property and national territory; as to the social and economic interests, the resolutions of the congresses aimed at limiting the rights of importation as the first step towards free exchange, the standardization of weights, measures, tariffs and currency, and the adoption of a conventional language to improve the relationships among the peoples and boost the circulation of ideas⁷⁹.

From an economic point of view, the members of the *Ligue* looked back to the experience of the *Zollverein*, which in 1834 had established a free trade area for the States of the German Confederation. They believed that the adoption of a similar customs union among the European States would have paved the way to the creation of a political union.

In this regard, Eynard affirmed that many factors were then "unceasingly pushing both peoples and governments towards the federal model"⁸⁰. The Waldensian pacifists not only recalled the many practical scientific progress (e.g. the steam engine, the telegraph and the massive circulation of publications) that undoubtedly contributed to knit together the civilized nations to form "a sole vital unity", but also stressed the "feverish" impact of industry, commerce and movement of capital on all the peoples, thus creating indissoluble ties among all the countries. Eynard's statement ("everything tends to internationalism"⁸¹) showed the principle of economic interdependence of States, and anticipated one of the future assumptions of the federalist theory on the unity of Europe⁸².

It must be remembered that Giretti was not only a pacifist, but also, as many other Waldensians, a firm supporter of the concept of free market. Luigi Einaudi's thoughts on economic interdependence⁸³ might have inspired Giretti⁸⁴, who almost certainly was the *trait d'union* between Einaudi's liberal supporters and the Waldensian pacifists and Europeanists.

1892, *Chicago 1893, Anvers 1894*, par le soins du Bureau international de la paix, Berne, 1894. For a list of the peace organizations that joined the *Bureau* at the beginning of the 20th century, see *Liste des organes du mouvement pacifique au 1^o juin 1901*, Bureau international permanent de la Paix, Berne, Imp. Buchler & Co 1901, pp. 4-20.

⁷⁹ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

⁸⁰ Eynard E., *Verso la Federazione europea*, op. cit., p. 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁸² See Robbins L., *Il federalismo e l'ordine economico internazionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1985; Einaudi L., "Il mito dello stato sovrano", in *Il Risorgimento liberale*, 3 gennaio 1945; also in *Id.*, *La guerra e l'unità europea*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1986, pp. 37-42 (1st edition, Milano, Edizioni Comunità, 1948).

⁸³ See Morelli U., *Contro il mito dello stato sovrano. Luigi Einaudi e l'unità europea*, Milano Franco Angeli, 1990, pp. 37 and ff.

⁸⁴ On the relation between Giretti and Einaudi, see their correspondence, archived at the Archivio storico della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi di Torino-AFLE. In particular, see

It is also surprising to notice how Eynard had already identified, at the beginning of the 20th century, the destructiveness of modern arms as an effective deterrent to war and as a crucial factor to achieve the political unity of Europe. He believed that "arms push the European nations towards the establishment of a Federation", as "massive armies [and] weapons, when perfected"⁸⁵ would have become so lethal that nobody would have ever dared to use them.

The main focus of the first congresses, however, was on the measures to adopt to introduce the international juridical state and the subsequent priorities to achieve this aim. During the first two congresses, most pacifists deemed the principle of international arbitration to be the most effective method to attain an international juridical order, even if the "old idea" of a European federation had surfaced again during the second congress. According to the pacifists attending the congress, the only remedy for the dynastic ambitions, the prejudices of the patriotism, the militarism and the policy of national self-centredness underlying the war, was the establishment of the United States of Europe⁸⁶. This political entity eventually became the ultimate goal for "all the supporters of peace"⁸⁷. Some Waldensian pacifists, however, already believed the unity of the Continent to be an ongoing process, and Eynard stated that "present-day Europe bears a striking resemblance to Italy" at the time of the Risorgimento; it is therefore easy to find "in every country, in every nation, some *European patriots* who sincerely believe in, and work hard for, the triumph of their supreme ideal: *the Federation of Europe*"⁸⁸.

This objective was reasserted and broadened during the third congress in Rome (1891), even if the conviction that the gradual approach of all the nations by means of courts of arbitration or "permanent congresses" was of prime importance, if compared to the creation of a European federation. In fact, a resolution of the Congress encouraged all the European Peace Societies and their members "to centre their propaganda around the United States of Europe, especially during election campaigns", but reaffirmed also the need to create a permanent Congress of Nations to resolve all international controversy and wars by means of law, rather than force"⁸⁹.

Edoardo Giretti's letter to Einaudi (dated September 15th, 1900), file Edoardo Giretti, and Luciano Giretti's letter to Franco Falchi (dated January 23rd, 1978), file Franco Falchi.

⁸⁵ Eynard E., *Verso la Federazione europea*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁶ See Moneta E.T., "Il Congresso universale della pace e la conferenza interparlamentare di Londra", in *L'Amico della Pace. Almanacco popolare illustrato*, a. II, (1891), pp. 56-59.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Eynard E., *Verso la Federazione europea*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁹ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace*, op. cit., p. 10.

The report of the fourth Universal Peace Congress in Bern (1892), drawn up by Beniamino Pandolfi⁹⁰, clearly shows the will of some pacifists to make the strategy of the Movement even more radical than that of the activists, who aimed at establishing at first a judicial system to settle all disputes among States by means of arbitration and international law, and then their federal union. Pandolfi's agenda, instead, made clear "que la paix en Europe est une condition indispensable de civilisation et qu'elle n'est pas possible sans la justice et par conséquent sans l'union", and put to the vote the idea of establishing "une confédération d'Etats, tendant à définir le droit international et à favoriser la fraternité des peuples"⁹¹. It finally reasserted that "afin de rendre plus facile la fédération de tous les États, nous amis de la paix, nous devons encourager toute tentative de *Fédération partielle* [...], pourvu qu'elle fût accessible à toutes les autres nations encore isolées ou partiellement fédérées"⁹². Besides, Pandolfi had sensed the gravity of the advance of the centralization process carried out by the national State against justice, sovereignties and fundamental freedoms, which made him believe that, "pour concilier les deux besoins de liberté et d'égalité", it was necessary to "recourir à la forme federative"⁹³.

Pandolfi focused his attention on the ways to establish the European federation which, in his view, should have been gradual. In fact, he believed that "le lien qui pourrait unir avec utilité les Nations civilisées d'Europe, devrait être fort léger, et limité: à empêcher la guerre; à régler le contingent fédéral, le droit de cité, l'abolition graduelle des douanes; et à ce que l'on entend ordinairement par Législation sociale". He added that "les Nations et les Souverains actuels devraient conserver leur indépendance: et tous les Corps législatifs qui existent à present devraient conserver leur autorité pour définir les limites de compétence entre lesquelles pourrait se

⁹⁰ Beniamino Pandolfi Guttauro (1836-1909) was an Italian deputy, Freemason, President of the Venezia Peace Society and Secretary General of the *Bureau interparlementaire de la paix*. He firmly believed in the political unity of Europe and was one of the most active Italian delegates of the Interparliamentary Union for Peace and Arbitration. The Union, founded in Paris in 1889, was initially known as Interparliamentary Conference for Arbitration, and later contributed to the creation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague and of the League of Nations. It is highly probable that Pandolfi's relations with the Waldensian world relied not only on the common engagement for peace, but also on his affiliation with the Freemasonry and the many Protestants who had joined the association. See Pandolfi B., *Resume de l'histoire du mouvement interparlementaire pour l'arbitrage et pour la paix*, extrait des rapports officiels des comites d'organisation de Paris et de Londres, Padoue, Prosperini, 1891 and *Id.*, "L'unione interparlamentare e il gruppo italiano", in *Rivista d'Italia*, n. 8, 5 (1902), pp. 231-242.

⁹¹ Pandolfi B., *La Federation et la Paix. Rapport à la IV conférence à Berne, aout 1892*, traduction française de l'original italien par C. Usigli. Rome, Tip. F. Sethi, 1892, p. 80.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

déployer une Législation fédérale!"⁹⁴. Despite all possible caution on the establishment of a European federation, Pandolfi resolutely stated that "the federation of the States of Europe was the radical solution to the problem [of war] and would have brought peace to Europe"⁹⁵. This statement reaffirmed Pandolfi's engagement within the peace movement to impose, "the need to focus on the Union of States, rather than on the Arbitration"⁹⁶.

The congresses that followed, however, consolidated the idea of the internationalists, who deemed it more effective to stipulate some permanent arbitration treaties among peoples and to institute an international court of arbitration, and who immediately promoted a large-scale *pro pace* propaganda revolving around a parliamentary and popular ferment⁹⁷. At the end of the 19th century, the Peace Movement turned its efforts in the wake of an initiative promoted by Tsar Nicholas II to reduce armaments and to look for *la discussion internationale* in order to achieve a European-wide peace based on the international law. Émile Arnaud, President of the *Ligue internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté*, then wrote a short essay in which he supported the thesis of the *paix par le droit international*, rather than *par la fédération*⁹⁸. Obviously, the ultimate goal of the United States of Europe was not abandoned, but it was simply downgraded to the aim of a pacification process through *international law* and diplomatic policies.

The European federation was then an abstract idea, far from being practically achieved. This condition led to the predominance of the idea of arbitration, drawn from the traditional Anglo-Saxon pragmatism⁹⁹, according to which it would have been more effective to draw up international laws to be applied by a higher authority rather than create the United States of Europe straightaway. Lemonnier himself, who organized the first universal peace congress in Paris with Hodgson Pratt and Frédéric Passy in 1889, eventually supported the idea of the arbitration, which the pacifists deemed to be of the utmost importance because of its prominence among the public opinion in Europe.

Like the Waldensian pacifists and Pandolfi, also Lemonnier believed that only a federative system would have allowed the creation of a supranational court¹⁰⁰. He was persuaded that "in order to establish a long-lasting peace, it was necessary to pursue the foundation of a permanent interna-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Pandolfi B., "L'unione interparlamentare e il gruppo italiano", *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁹⁷ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace, op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹⁸ Arnaud E., *L'organisation de la Paix*, Berne, Bureau international de la paix, 1899.

⁹⁹ Anteghini A., *Pace e federalismo. Charles Lemonnier, una vita per l'Europa, op. cit.*, p. 292.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

tional Court", which, in his view, could have been possible only with "the creation of a republican federation of peoples"¹⁰¹. The birth of a European State would have then led to the establishment of "an international code [and of] a permanent federal court in charge of its implementation" and of "a federal force" to ensure "the enforcement of the resolutions of the court"¹⁰². Following the decline in the enthusiasm for this idea and the predominance of the internationalists' "pragmatic" stance, Lemonnier became more open to the idea of arbitration and realized how important it could have been to achieve "more relevant aims on the path to peace"¹⁰³.

This stance would have eventually led to the failure of the Peace Movement. In fact, the congresses that followed did not have any political effect at the international level and were totally unable to halt the nationalist sentiment of their own members, aroused by the colonial wars. After the Great War, the congresses were still active, despite their total lack of programmatic skills, and survived until the rise of Fascism and National Socialism. In 1935, however, Philip-Henry Kerr, Marquis of Lothian, observing the failure of international pacifism and focusing on the possibilities offered by international arbitration in a world not yet exacerbated by nationalist feelings, identified the main cause of war with the anarchy of state sovereignties. Lothian, therefore, blamed the pacifists for not having dealt with the problem of international anarchy and explained that

"until the peace movement realize this central fact and base their long-distance policy upon it, it will stand in the ranks of those who follow Sisyphus. Every time it succeeds, by immense and consecrated effort, in rolling the stone of national sovereignty near to the top of the hill of international co-operation, it will find that stone slipping out of its control and rushing down to overwhelm its leaders and their followers behind them."¹⁰⁴

According to Lothian, the only solution was the establishment of a specific political institution: the State; or rather, the World Federation¹⁰⁵. Despite their awareness of the above-mentioned perspective, most of the 19th-century Europeanist and peace movements were not fully conscious of the implications, at the international level, of the anarchy stemming from the division of peoples into sovereign States; or, at least, they did not put them at the centre of their political thought.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 300. See also Spoltore F., *Il federalismo nella storia del pensiero*. Charles Lemonnier, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Lord Lothian, *Pacifism is Not Enough, Nor Patriotism Either*, being the Burge Memorial Lecture for the Year 1935, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ Lord Lothian, *Il pacifismo non basta*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

The 19th-century peace movement lacked a clear programmatic vision to start a concrete federative process among the European States, eventually labelled as utopian. Also the Waldensian pacifists considered the European federation as the arrival, rather than the starting point, thus mistaking the mean with the aim, at least from the theoretical point of view of the later federalism. Also Norberto Bobbio remarked how the idea of a federation of European States already existed in the 19th-century intellectual world; however, "despite the numerous magazines illustrating it, the many projects it gave origin to, the declarations solemnly celebrating it" this idea was, before the end of the Second World War, "if not a generous and sterile utopia, at least a doctrinal program, a matter of principle, an inviting theme for magazines dealing with peace"¹⁰⁶.

3. The Peace Association of Torre Pellice and its action to establish a "Federation of Civil States"

The strategy of the peace movements largely relied on propaganda activities, almost exclusively aimed at fostering the culture of peace, at "spreading ideas and cultivating peaceful feelings, educating the public opinion to consider war an unnecessary evil, which can be and has to be avoided"¹⁰⁷. Conferences, meetings and debates were regularly held to inform the public about the international political situation, to sensitize it to the cause of peace and to instruct it on the possible remedies and strategies to be followed.

A resolution of the 3rd Universal Peace Congress urged all peace societies to liaise with other organizations sharing the same solidarity ideals (e.g. The Red Cross and the first feminist associations) and expand the number of their supporters. The resolution also called on wealthy personalities to contribute to the establishment of publications to steer public opinion towards the idea of the "United States of Europe, aimed at putting an end to the current anarchy of the nations"¹⁰⁸. Some resolutions of the second Congress acknowledged the influence of Christianity on the moral and political progress of mankind, and "called the ministries of the Gospel back" on the need to spread the principles of good will and peace among peoples, notably among the young people¹⁰⁹. Likewise, the 1st and 3rd Congresses hoped that university professors teaching international law would have granted arbitration an important role during their lessons and that universities would have modified their statutes

¹⁰⁶ Bobbio N., "Il federalismo nel dibattito politico e culturale della resistenza", in Pistone S. (ed.), *L'idea dell'unificazione europea dalla prima alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Torino, Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1975, p. 221.

¹⁰⁷ *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁰⁸ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace*, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

to allow their students to attend courses in other universities abroad, thus eradicating "all feelings of hate or prejudice about nations seen as enemies"¹¹⁰. Falchi, one of the most active members of the Committee of Torre Pellice, remarked how pacifism could have been achieved more easily through an "educational work" at the civil level to drive "conscience and will towards peace". In his view, this attitude would have raised a new level of civil awareness and would have naturally prepared men "to replace war with arbitration, just as it had happened with the relations among individuals and among towns"¹¹¹.

The activities of the committees were then backed by the initiatives of the *Bureau international permanent de la paix* of Bern, which in 1892 started coordinating the activities of the many peace associations in the world. In 1899, Giretti was invited to join the executive committee of the *Bureau*, together with Teodoro Moneta¹¹², because of his prestige within the international peace movement, by virtue of his being President of the Peace Association of Torre Pellice¹¹³.

The second Universal Peace Congress marked the establishment of a special Committee to draw up a joint document, in the name of all the peace associations, to show the main religious, political, commercial orders what the aims of the Movement were, so to urge them to involve their own governments in the determination of the most appropriate instruments for the establishment of courts designated to resolve all international controversies without resorting to war¹¹⁴. This new strategy was backed by a more focused plan, whose programme was defined during the third congress, and which revolved around the organization of an active propaganda, especially in the occurrence of political elections, so to convince the electors to vote for the candidates whose programmes were based on "peace, disarmament and arbitration"¹¹⁵.

Similarly, the fourth congress agreed to present a universal petition in favour of peace. This "appeal to the peoples" was signed in Bern in August 1892 by the top representatives of the various peace societies, includ-

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

¹¹¹ Falchi M., *Il movimento pacifista ed il cristianesimo evangelico*, Firenze, Comitato di Torre Pellice della Società Internazionale per la Pace, 1913, p. 8.

¹¹² Ernesto Teodoro Moneta (1833-1918) was an Italian journalist and patriot, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1907. On Moneta, see Combi M., *Ernesto Teodoro Moneta: Premio Nobel per la pace 1907*, Milano, Mursia, 1968; for a critical interpretation of Moneta's pacifism, see Albertini M., "Cultura della pace e cultura della guerra", in *Il Federalista*, XXVI, n. 5 (1984), p. 23.

¹¹³ D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, *op. cit.*, p. 26. See also Eynard E., "Movimento pacifico", in *L'Avvisatore Alpino*, 29 settembre 1899.

¹¹⁴ *Deliberazioni prese dai tre primi Congressi universali della pace*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

ing many Nobel Prize winners such as Frédéric Passy, Élie Ducommun, Charles Albert Gobat, baroness Bertha von Suttner, Fredrik Bajer and Henri La Fontaine¹¹⁶.

Finally, it is worth remembering the engagement of the Interparliamentary Union, which from 1889 onwards, carried out, in parallel with the first universal congress, an intense awareness activity at the parliamentary level to foster the peace process in Europe¹¹⁷. The aim of this Union – which, as Naïf Tourn remarked, pursued “the same end as the [universal] congress, but with a more practical attitude”¹¹⁸ – was to actively support peace by exerting pressure on national governments through the action of the deputies and senators of the European countries which had joined the Interparliamentary Union.

The Waldensian pacifists deemed it natural to involve the Waldensian Church in the struggle for peace from the very beginning, and to urge it to take a stance on the issue of war and support it within the international ecclesiastical organizations¹¹⁹. Such task was made easier by the fact that some of the members of the Committee were also institutional members of the Church, such as Giovanni Pons, Moderator of the Waldensian Board. Therefore, some resolutions explicitly referred to the promotion of peace, and the Church instructed the Synodal Office to inform the Royal Government about the sentiments of the Waldensian Christian

¹¹⁶ See “Appello ai Popoli, per una petizione universale in favore della pace”, in *Giù le Armi. Almanacco illustrato della Pace*, anno IV (1893), p. 85.

¹¹⁷ The Interparliamentary Union was established in 1888 on the initiative of the then-deputy Frédéric Passy, and William Randal Cremer, member of the House of Commons in Britain. A year later, the first conference was held in Paris and was attended by the delegates of France, United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Hungary, United States and Liberia. The aim of the Interparliamentary Conference for Arbitration, which ratified the birth of the Union, was the adoption of guidelines for the new organization and the implementation of ways to strengthen peaceful relations among the countries supporting the initiative, thus favouring the resort to arbitration. See Zarjevski Y., *The people have the floor: A History of the Inter-Parliamentary Union*, Aldershot, Dartmouth Publishing Company Limited, 1989. See also Maza H., “Frédéric Passy: La Fondation de l’Union Interparlementaire”, in *Netif meneurs internationaux*, Paris, 1965, pp. 223-239 and *L’Union Interparlementaire de 1889 à 1939*, ouvrage publié par les soins Bureau interparlementaire de la paix, Lausanne, Payot, 1939. See also Amico G., “L’unione interparlamentare, dall’arbitrato alle crisi economiche: un cammino lungo più di un secolo”, in *Amministrazione in cammino: rivista elettronica di diritto pubblico, diritto dell’economia e di scienza dell’amministrazione*, edited by Centro di ricerca sulle amministrazioni pubbliche “Vittorio Bachelet”, 2008, pp. 1-18.

¹¹⁸ Tourn N., *L’opera della pace e i suoi progressi*, op. cit., p. 15.

¹¹⁹ See Janni U. and Comba E., *La guerra e il protestantesimo*, Firenze, Tip. Fattori e Puggelli, 1918.

Evangelicals on the issue of peace among the nations¹²⁰. Besides, the Church, in line with the wish expressed by the International Peace Society ("Torre Pellice" Association), decided to devote one Sunday a month "to support the cause of brotherhood among all peoples and to pray for its fruitful victory"¹²¹. In 1905, the Synod explicitly asked the Church and its leaders to make an even more valuable contribution, through prayers and propaganda activities, to the circulation of the ideas in favour of peace and international arbitration¹²². Always in 1910, the Synod finally decided on the entry of the Waldensian Church into the *Bureau international de la paix* of Bern. The Church should have had to pay a "yearly fee of 10 Liras", collect all the publications of the Office in the library of its Theological School and send their official representatives to the 6th Universal Peace Conference held in Como, in the person of the pastor residing there¹²³.

At the international level, the most important initiative made by the Association was the demonstration organized in 1898 during the trip of the delegates of the Peace Society to Torre Pellice, shortly after the closing of the general meeting of the delegates of the Peace Society held in Turin¹²⁴, where all the leaders of the peace movements were invited by the Association to visit the village of Torre Pellice and to support "the crucial issues of peace and brotherhood among the peoples"¹²⁵.

The delegation was greeted by "an extraordinary crowd waiting impatiently for the train to arrive"¹²⁶ and to meet the illustrious leaders of the international peace movement. Among them were Frédéric Passy, Élie

¹²⁰ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1898", art. 33, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1889-1904*, in ASTV.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, art. 29. See also the correspondence among the Waldensian pacifists: Emilio Eynard and Naïf Tourn's letter to the President of the Synod (8 settembre 1903, Carte società, cartella 1919-1935, Società internazionale per la pace, in ASTV); Emilio Eynard's letter to Arturo Muston (5 febbraio 1909, Carte società, cartella 1919-1935, Società internazionale per la pace, in ASTV). The ASTV keeps also some letters sent by the Committee of Torre Pellice to the authorities of the Waldensian Church, signed by Emilio Eynard, asking for constant adhesion to pacifist initiatives in the years 1898-1913.

¹²² "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1905", art. 32, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV.

¹²³ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1910", art. 40, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV. See also Revel B., "VI Congresso Nazionale per la Pace", in *La Luce*, 29 settembre 1910.

¹²⁴ See *Procès-Verbal de L'Assemblée Générale des Délégués des Sociétés de la Paix, Turin 1898*, Berne, Michel & Büchler, 1898.

¹²⁵ *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Ducommun¹²⁷, Emile Arnaud¹²⁸, Gaston Moch¹²⁹, Jakow Novicow¹³⁰, as well as the representatives of both the Italian and the local press (*Il Secolo*, *La Stampa*, *La Gazzetta del Popolo* and *L'Avvisatore Alpino*, *La Lanterna Pinerolese*, *L'Echo des Vallées Vaudoises*, respectively)¹³¹.

In the public gathering that followed the official reception of the delegates at the town hall, Giretti reminded how the conquest of religious freedom had been the first step towards brotherhood among the peoples, and how the seed of confessional discrimination among the European peoples had been progressively replaced by that of nationality. Passy mentioned the need of a *bien-être matériel* to achieve the unity of the European peoples and the contribution of trade to spread ideas and knowledge. Ducommun explained that peace was far from being a matter of moral will and recalled the history of the Waldensians, who "ont compris, après des années de dévastation et de deuil, qu'il y a quelque chose de supérieur à la force: c'est la persévérance dans la revendication du droit!"¹³². The same principle was confirmed by Arnaud, according to whom "les rapports entre les Nations" had to rest on "le mêmes principes de droit et de morale que les rapports entre les individus"¹³³. Moch explained his vision of a common European language to help people communicating and the role of cross-border regions, and expressed his gratitude to the "habitants de la Tour" because they "ont été des premiers à mettre nos principes en action"¹³⁴. Finally, Novicow pointed his finger at the prejudices among the peoples, and optimistically stated that "le jour où les nations européennes comprendront qu'elles se valent presque toutes [...], les préventions qui existent actuellement pourront disparaître et un des obstacles les plus puissants, qui empêche aujourd'hui la fédération de l'Europe, sera écarté"¹³⁵.

The closing speech was delivered by Giovanni Pietro Pons, Moderator of the Waldensian Church and member of the "Torre Pellice" Association,

¹²⁷ Honorary Secretary of the *Bureau international de la paix* of Bern.

¹²⁸ Member of the *Bureau* and representative of the magazine *Les États-Unis d'Europe*.

¹²⁹ Representative of the *Bureau français de la Paix*, the *Société du Familistère de Guise* and the *Alliance universelle*.

¹³⁰ Jakow Novicow was a famous Russian sociologist, publicist and author of an essay foreseeing a European federation. Novicow J., *Fédération de l'Europe*, Paris, Alcan, 1901. On Novicow's proposal, see also Eynard E., "Lo spirito di conquista", in *L'Avvisatore Alpino*, 8 febbraio 1901.

¹³¹ *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-12. See also "La visite des Délégués du Bureau international de la Paix", in *L'Echo des Vallées Vaudoises*, 6 octobre 1898.

¹³² *Pax! Ricordo del 29 Settembre 1898*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

who recalled not only the patriotic engagement of the Waldensians, but also their lack of *chauvinism*¹³⁶. "The love of our country, when it is not blind, does not prevent us from respecting and loving the other peoples [...], we are united by strong bonds with our sister nations: France, Switzerland, Germany and England, here so nobly represented, are friends and dear countries to us"¹³⁷.

Despite the absence of *chauvinism* in the Waldensian culture, however, the turn of the century marked a slight shift towards nationalism by part of the Waldensian ecclesiastical institutions, at first with the colonial war in Libya, and later with the events that led to Italy's entrance into the First World War. In 1906, the Church had voluntarily abolished the traditional "special Sunday" dedicated to peace, despite Eynard's continuous requests to revive that custom¹³⁸.

The Waldensian Church, however, first refused to take a clear stand on the occasion of the Italo-Turkish War and was fiercely opposed by the pacifists of the Association, led by Mario Falchi¹³⁹. The pacifists criticized both the Church, for its ambiguous behaviour, and the Royal government for having started a potentially destabilizing military campaign at the European level. According to D'Angelo, the leaders of the Church did not want anyone to suspect that the Waldensians were not imbued with feelings of pure love and sincere devotion towards their country; instead, they wanted them to look as if they were perfectly integrated in the Italian liberal state, so to avoid any discrimination¹⁴⁰. The official bodies of the Waldensian Church and the most competent exponents of its *intelligentsia* were then starting a separation process that would have led, on the one hand, to a "less and less substantial"¹⁴¹ pacifism and, on the other hand, to a radical pacifism rooted in its ideals rather than in its interests¹⁴².

Despite the support of the war in Libya given by many Italian pacifists (including Moneta), Giretti and his Waldensian friends Eynard and Falchi stood out for their uncompromising anti-nationalist stance, and founded

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ See Emilio Eynard's letter to Arturo Muston (February 5, 1909), *doc. cit.*

¹³⁹ See D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² On the gradual alignment of the Waldensian Church with the policies of the Italian government and the consequential split between the leaders of the Church and the pacifists of the Association of Torre Pellice, see Giampiccoli's letter to Edoardo Giretti (2 aprile 1914, Copialettere del Moderatore Ernesto Giampiccoli, 1913-1919, copialettere 3, in ASTV).

a new Italian Arbitration and Peace Federation gathering all the various Italian peace associations siding with the *Bureau*¹⁴³.

The idea of an Italian Arbitration and Peace Federation had been unsuccessfully put forward some years before by the Waldensians, when the Torre Pellice and Torino Peace Associations had proposed to establish a national Federation to coordinate the initiatives of the Italian pacifists¹⁴⁴. Some years later, an internal split between the pacifists supporting the Italian government in the Italo-Turkish War and those siding with the international peace movement revived the project of a national Federation. The *Unione lombarda* (Lombard Peace Society), led by Moneta, accused Giretti to foster anti-patriotic sentiments, because of his harsh criticism of the Italian military campaign¹⁴⁵. Therefore, on September 25th, 1912, at the end of a meeting of the 19 Italian delegates gathered in Geneva to elect the new executive committee of the *Bureau*, Falchi, Eynard and Giretti decided to group together all the Italian peace societies and create a new entity to promote and coordinate their initiatives. The newly-established Italian Federation immediately expressed its solidarity to the *Bureau* and its policy. A commission of thirteen members¹⁴⁶ was then appointed to carry out the internal reorganization procedures, and a temporary executive committee formed by the three above-mentioned Piedmontese pacifists was established. Finally, the Federation was definitely headquartered in Torre Pellice and Mario Falchi was appointed Secretary General¹⁴⁷.

The Federation modeled its statute on the principles of the *Bureau* and started its propaganda and study activities. The most remarkable federal-oriented initiative carried out by the new Italian Federation was the proposal of creating a Balkan Federation, fostered by Arcangelo Ghislieri¹⁴⁸,

¹⁴³ D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, op. cit., pp. 125 and ff. and Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit., p. 295.

¹⁴⁴ Foa I.A. (ed.), *Atti del Congresso nazionale delle Società per la Pace, Torino (29, 30, 31 maggio e 2 giugno 1904)*, Torino, Stamp. Reale di G.B. Paravia e C., 1905, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ See Giretti E., *Il Congresso della Pace di Ginevra e la calunnia del mio antipatriottismo*, Pinerolo, Tip. Sociale, 1913.

¹⁴⁶ D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, op. cit., p. 137.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁴⁸ Arcangelo Ghislieri (1855-1938) was a Mazzinian geographer, journalist and politician. He was one of the founders of the Italian Republican Party and of the magazine *L'Educazione politica*. Ghislieri was also a Freemason, a confirmed pacifist and activist of the International Peace Society. He opposed all form of nationalist rhetoric and supported federalism against the authoritarian and centralizing involution of the State. See Benini A., *Vita e tempi di Arcangelo Ghislieri (1855-1938)*, Lacaita, Manduria 1975; Mangini G. (ed.), *Arcangelo Ghislieri. Mente e carattere (1938-1988)*, Bergamo, Lubrina, 1989.

Giretti and Falchi to avert the risk of a war¹⁴⁹. They pleaded the cause of a "great Balkan Federation", seen as the only way to safeguard the common independence of the Balkan peoples and to avert all possible future danger for peace in Europe¹⁵⁰. This proposal clearly shows how aware these pacifists were of the potential of the federal system, seen as a tool to establish a peaceful order based on the respect of all sovereignties. It could be even possible to go as far as to say that Falchi and Giretti understood the value of institutional federalism, thus foreseeing a crucial aspect of the federalist thought later developed in the Ventotene *Manifesto* by Rossi and Spinelli, whose stance was very close to that of Einaudi and his adherence to the idea of the United States of Europe well before the war¹⁵¹.

Unfortunately, no proper connection or parallelism can be established, as the Federation gradually disbanded during the First World War¹⁵². However, the Europeanist and federalist pacifism of these Waldensians did not disappear without trace, but it remained alive in the culture and the conscience of those who later approached the organized MFE.

The First World War dampened the enthusiasm of the Waldensian establishment, and rekindled its patriotism and its traditional loyalty to the King. The Synod expressed its "intense sorrow for a war tearing [...] Europe apart"¹⁵³, but the Church never took an openly anti-interventionist stance; on the contrary, it opted for an ambiguous silence. In 1916, the Synod saluted "all the sons of the Church who boldly and serenely offer their life and shed blood for the fatherland"¹⁵⁴, and in 1917 the Synod praised the initiative of the Board "to honour the dead in the last war for the independence of Italy by erecting a building in Torre Pellice to perpetuate the memory of their sacrifice"¹⁵⁵. By that time, both the Church and the Waldensian society were imbued with patriotic fervour and believed war to be "the

¹⁴⁹ On the correspondence among Ghisleri, Falchi and Giretti, in which the details of the project are discussed, see D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, op. cit., pp. 139-145. The letters are kept at the Domus Mazziniana in Pisa (Carte Arcangelo Ghisleri).

¹⁵⁰ "Piccola cronaca del nostro movimento. Per i popoli balcanici", in *Guerra alla Guerra!*, aprile-maggio, 1913, pp. 57-58.

¹⁵¹ See Einaudi L., "Un sacerdote della stampa e gli Stati Uniti europei" in *La Stampa*, 20 Agosto 1897, pp. 1-2.; *Id.*, "La grande illusione: guerre di ieri e guerre di oggi", in *La Riforma Sociale*, XIX, 1912, pp. 265-266; *Id.*, "Unioni politiche e unioni doganali", in *Minerva*, XXVI, n. 36, 1916, pp. 97-99.

¹⁵² See D'Angelo L., *Pace, liberismo e democrazia*, op. cit., pp. 145-149.

¹⁵³ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1914", art. 32, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV.

¹⁵⁴ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1916", art. 18, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV.

¹⁵⁵ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1917", art. 30, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV.

necessary accomplishment of the national Risorgimento” and, therefore, “almost [...] the evidence of fidelity to the ideals of their motherland”¹⁵⁶.

Nationalism had undermined the long-established international confessional solidarity typical of the spirit and the actions of the Waldensian Church and society, thus disrupting the values of its establishment: the conflict among Protestant powers marked the fall of the liberal bourgeois ideology and the marginalization of the Protestant reality and its values¹⁵⁷.

Finally, also the Waldensian pacifists had to accept the inexorability of the Italian military intervention, and most of the so-called “good Evangelicals” ended up by adopting a point of view similar to that of the democratic interventionism¹⁵⁸, including Falchi and Giretti, who gradually supported a “moral” type of intervention. In fact, the two Italian pacifists made a stand for the Italian intervention in 1915, in consequence of the behaviour of the Central Empires; however, they championed the moral nature and the inevitability of the intervention to face the danger of the “barbarization” of Europe. Giretti, in a speech addressed to the *Bureau*, made a clear distinction between “political neutralism and moral neutralism” and warned not to “remain culpably silent” in the face of the violation of the rights and the “crimes” committed by Austria-Hungary against Serbia and by Germany with the “sacrilegious” invasion of Luxembourg and Belgium. Giretti therefore asked the *Bureau* to acknowledge his “moral” stance, as all the principles that inspired the peace movement had been violated¹⁵⁹.

Falchi shared a similar stance. He appealed to an “ideal of justice among the peoples”, violated and infringed “by the Teutonic imperialism”, leading to the painful and “always unfair” option of war to restore “the necessary [...] moral and social principles to protect the features of the new civilization”¹⁶⁰. Falchi resolutely condemned the principle of “fight for life” applied to mankind and to the relationships between men and peoples, which he believed to be a source of moral and social decay, and the corruption of the patriotic sentiment and some degenerated forms of social democracy leading to the predominance of “ferine and predatory

¹⁵⁶ Tourn G., *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa*, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit., p. 345.

¹⁵⁹ Giretti's open letter to the director of the Parisian newspaper *Journal des Débats* (January 19, 1915); the Italian translation was published in *La Lanterna Pinerolese* (23 gennaio 1915). The *Bureau* rejected Giretti's claims, which would have probably triggered off the reaction of its German and Austrian members.

¹⁶⁰ Falchi M., *Affinché essi non siano morti invano*, edited by the Società per la Pace e l'Arbitrato, Comitato di Torre Pellice, Roma, Tip. Dell'Unione Editrice, 1916, p. 10.

instincts" among peoples¹⁶¹. Falchi strongly supported the establishment of "a law for the nations" to fight the chaos and disorder ruling the world, and to eradicate, once and for all, the "blasphemous and repugnant concept of national divinity"¹⁶². In Falchi's thought, the connection-identification between international law and supranational State could have been exclusively of a federal nature, and only a supranational state structure could have allowed the establishment and the observance of "a law of the nations, along with the law of the people"¹⁶³; according to Falchi, this would have been the only way to "show the real nature of the collective legal homicide, [...] that is, a disgrace to be erased"¹⁶⁴.

By the end of the war, the Italian Arbitration and Peace Federation had lost most of its original appeal and power, and its Waldensian members got back to their Evangelical institutions and associations. Instead, the last year of the conflict saw the rapprochement among the Churches to foster the cause of peace. Part of the Waldensian society and its Church adhered to the initiatives promoted by the "Protestant International", and joined the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Falchi M., *Il movimento pacifista e il cristianesimo evangelico*, edited by the Società per la Pace e l'Arbitrato, Comitato di Torre Pellice, Firenze Tipografia Fattori e Puggelli, 1913, p. 9 (an excerpt also from *La Rivista Cristiana*, luglio-agosto-settembre 1913).



II. The Question of “Christian Unity” within Italian Protestantism

1. From the World Alliance to the Ecumenical Movement

In the years between the two World Wars, the Christian world saw the thriving of international political initiatives aimed at contracting great ecclesiastic alliances in order to promote, on the one hand, the gradual confessional rapprochement among the Churches and, on the other hand, to detect the most suitable instruments to foster peace at the international level. Such initiatives, made by the Protestant Churches, paved the way to the creation of the Ecumenical Movement that led to the establishment of the World Council of Churches¹.

¹ On the history of the Ecumenical Movement and the WCC, see Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1517 al 1948*, op. cit.; Fey H.E. (ed.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1948 al 1968*, op. cit. English edition: Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, op. cit.; Visser 't Hooft W.A., *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1982; Fey H.E. (ed.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1948-1968*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 2004; Briggs J., Oduyoye M.A., Tssetsis G. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1968-2000*, 3 Vols., Geneva, WCC Publications, 2004. See also Ricca P., “L’adesione della Chiesa valdese al Consiglio ecumenico delle chiese”, in *I Valdesi e l’Europa*, op. cit., pp. 389-406; Ricca P., “Il movimento ecumenico”, in Filoramo G., (ed.), *Storia delle religioni*, Vol. II. *Ebraismo e Cristianesimo*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1995, pp. 653-667. See also Cereti G., “L’ecumenismo cristiano”, in Filoramo G., Menozzi D. (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo*, IV Vol., *L’età contemporanea*, 4 Vols., Roma-Bari, Laterza 2009, pp. 355-393. For a description of the Protestant Churches between the 19th and the 20th centuries, see Ricca P., “Protestanti nelle rivoluzioni?”, in Filoramo G., Menozzi D. (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo*, *L’età contemporanea*, op. cit., pp. 5-128. On the WCC and the European unification, see Zeilstra J.A., *European unity in ecumenical thinking, 1937-1948*, Zoetermeer, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1995; Willaime J. P., “Il Consiglio ecumenico delle Chiese e la Conferenza delle Chiese europee di fronte all’unificazione dell’Europa” in Canavero A. and Durand J.-D. (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell’integrazione europea*, op. cit., pp. 141-157; Leustean L. N., *The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community*, op. cit. On the WCC, the European institutions and the European integration process, see Leustean L. N., “The Representation of Religion in European Union”, in *EUI Working Papers*, RSCAS 2013/96, pp. 1-29; Mudrov S.A., “Religion and the European Union: Attitudes of Catholic and Protestant Churches toward European Integration”, in *Journal of Church and States*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (2014), pp. 507-528.

The idea to gather the world Churches to promote peace was first launched in May 1907 by some Protestants churchmen during an informal meeting in London: the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches was then established "through the Spirit of God speaking to the conscience of few men"². The participants decided to involve also the British Churches, and an "interchange of visits" with the German Churches was arranged in 1908. Contacts were also established with similar movements in North America. Seven years later, in August 1914, the Alliance was formally set up during a meeting held in Costanza, which was attended by about a hundred representatives of the various European and American Churches and led to the creation of an organizational committee: at first, it was made up of representatives of the British, American, French, German and Swiss Protestant Churches, who were later joined by Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish and Italian delegates. Due to the many years needed to develop the Alliance, however, only the principles and the guidelines of the programme could be drafted before the beginning of the Great War.

In the wake of the post-war euphoria, the European Churches re-established contact and reinforced their confessional relations – especially between the English and the German Churches – in a collaborative effort with the then nascent League of Nations. The "new" World Alliance decided to support American President Woodrow Wilson in his mission to pacify the world³, and its members welcomed "with joy the decision, made at Versailles, to establish a League of Nations"⁴, whose principles and objectives coincided perfectly with those of the Alliance itself.

Wilson's "fourteen points" foresaw not only the re-establishment of the balance of power among the European States and the support to the freedom of smaller nations through the principle of self-determination, but were also seen, throughout the Protestant world, as a tangible way to restore peace among the European peoples. Wilson, a Presbyterian and the son of a pastor, was a prominent personality of "the best traditions of Christian America"⁵. The Italian Evangelicals were then confronted again

² Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", *op. cit.*, p. 9. On the history of the World Alliance, see Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, *op. cit.*, pp. 336, 418, 421, 509, 513-519, 523-526, 528, 530-535, 540, 558, 560-566, 568, 570-574, 579, 593-594, 627, 699, 702, Vol. II; on its organization, resolutions, relations with the League of Nation meetings, conferences and the adhering churches, see *Annual Report and Handbook of the World Alliance*, *op. cit.*

³ See Bottaro G., *Pace, libertà e leadership. Il pensiero politico di Woodrow Wilson*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2007.

⁴ Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 532, Vol. II.

⁵ Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

with "the old idea of the superior civilization of the Protestant nations"⁶, as wished by all the European Protestants, who strongly believed in the establishment of peace among all the Christian nations. According to Baptist philosopher Giuseppe Gangale, the new international situation and structure, just like arbitration itself, was "a Protestant-Rousseauian expression" exploited by Anglo-Saxon pragmatism. In his view, one of the main contributions of Calvinism was the fostering of "the concept of life seen as action, as realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. The League of Nations was a step towards the Kingdom of God"⁷.

However, Wilson was not a true innovator because he actually looked back to the past and "instead of impacting [...] on the political strength of the idea of nationality"⁸, he gave nationality a moral value and granted it a pivotal role, as well as an ideal and juridical value, through the principle of self-determination of the peoples⁹. According to Wilson, the League of Nations was not an instrument "to solve the problems related to the harmony of the European continent, but to promote the regular and safe development of the democratic order"¹⁰. He basically believed that the development of democracy within the framework of regulated international relations would have been sufficient to re-establish the harmony among the States and nations of the world in a natural way¹¹. Wilson's motto, "making the world safe for democracy", partially matched that of the Europeanist peace movement which, however, had never been able to find a solution to the problem of international anarchy and its tight bonds with the degeneration of nationalism and the massive economic development.

The World Alliance aimed at exploiting "the influence of the Christian Churches in order to guide people, as well as national and international government bodies towards peace", so to find "a solution to international problems through the strengthening of international law"¹². In the first conference of the Alliance, J. Allen Baker was appointed to the post of President

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Gangale G., "La Società delle Nazioni e noi", *op. cit.*

⁸ Melchionni M.G., *Europa Unita sogno dei saggi*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁹ On the most important Italian Protestant magazines, such as *Conscientia*, *Fede e Vita* and *Bilychnis*, the themes of peace and nationalism were largely debated, in particular right before the outbreak of the First World War. See, Spini G., *Italia liberale e protestanti*, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-335.

¹⁰ Melchionni M.G., *Europa Unita sogno dei saggi*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹¹ See Morelli U., "From the Criticism of the League of Nations to the Project of a New Europe. The Debate on Overcoming National Sovereignty after the First World War" in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), "Die Welt war meine Gemeinde". Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-98.

¹² *Annual Report and Handbook of the World Alliance*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

and the pacifist aims of the League were reasserted; there, it was finally stated that the Alliance would have worked "to remove the causes of war and to establish international courts"¹³. Such aim closely reflected that of the international peace movement, to which the Alliance explicitly referred in order to broaden its scope and strengthen its potential. The inter-ecclesiastic organization had acknowledged the great ideal effort made by the various peace societies on the basis of ethical considerations in favour of peace; however, it reproached them for the lack of direct connections with the organized religious bodies¹⁴. The World Alliance aimed at overcoming this limit by acting in conjunction with the organized lay peace movement. In the early years of the present century, the ideal of peace inspired by the Christian principles was already deeply rooted in many leaders of the peace movement, who had realized the great potential of a Christian community in terms of effective action against war. From this point of view, the ideal of Christian peace was evolving into a more tangible vector, thanks to the action of the Churches and their ability to penetrate people's conscience and instil this ideal into public opinion¹⁵. As Italian Methodist Carlo Maria Ferreri (1878-1942) once remarked, the members of the Churches had the duty to "ban the message of peace" to forge "Christians personally committed to peace"; the Churches had to turn into "peace agencies" aimed at "accustoming their members to 'considering peace' a Christian duty"¹⁶.

Besides, it has to be remembered that several Church personalities had joined the international peace movement, as in the case of the Waldensian community; this event, together with the geographical proximity of the *Bureau international permanent de la paix* and the central international office of the World Alliance, both located in Switzerland, almost certainly had an impact on the ideas and the programmes of the World Alliance, especially in the years that followed the end of the Great War.

The evidence of an ideological continuity between the *Bureau* of Bern and the central international office of Geneva can be found in the first international conferences of the Alliance. This event/conference laid the foundations of its strategy, directed at pushing the national Churches "to exert their influence on peoples, parliaments and governments of the world to establish long-term and friendly relationships among the nations"¹⁷, in order to urge the States to adopt "methods of arbitration and mediation

¹³ Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁴ Lord Dickinson, "Foreword", in *Annual Report and Handbook of the World Alliance*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Ferreri C.M., "Alleanza per l'amicizia internazionale mediante le Chiese. Conferenza di Cambridge (1-5 settembre 1931)", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 9 (ott. 1931), p. 57.

¹⁷ Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

in the settlement of all international disputes"¹⁸. However, these words echoed those pronounced in the previous international peace conferences, and still relied on measures that had proven to be inadequate to counter chaos and nationalisms.

International disarmament was one of the most strongly debated issue within the Alliance. "Today, disarmament is the goal – Carlo M. Ferrari wrote – the Church has to pursue" by exerting its influence "with all means on peoples and governments"¹⁹; such an aim required the convergence between the Alliance and the League of Nations, which could have easily supported the needs of the Churches. However, the great inter-ecclesiastic organization tackled the issue of disarmament only from a religious perspective, without reference to any political or technical aspects. The organization immediately opted for a psychological form of persuasion "for the mental and moral disarmament of the people in all countries"²⁰, to the prejudice of a real political action. Such intention proved to be just as tenuous as the internationalist postulates of the radical and socialist peace movement in the post-war period. Nonetheless, the World Alliance supported also some concrete political projects, such as the Briand-Kellogg pact (1928) which proposed to "ban" war from international politics²¹. On that occasion, the Alliance tried to emphasize "the moral responsibility for disarmament laying upon the nations who signed the Pact"²², and called out for the Churches to put pressure on the League of Nations and the national governments to "complete with all dispatch the international arrangements"²³. These words clearly show the trust and the hope for the achievement of peace reposed by the Alliance in the League of Nations and its crucial action to establish a "cosmopolitan society" and "universal peace" through a gradual disarmament process at the international level²⁴.

The Waldensian Church and society were immediately captured by the level of cooperation to achieve international peace, and corroborated by the first achievements of the Ecumenical Movement. This positive climate led, on the one hand, to the blossoming of a new ideal ferment within the various Evangelical associations in Italy and, on the other hand, pushed the Waldensian ecclesiastical institutions to take actively part in the organization and the initiatives of the World Alliance. The Waldensian

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁹ Ferreri C.M., "Alleanza per l'amicizia internazionale mediante le Chiese", *op. cit.*, p. 58.

²⁰ Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²¹ See Melchionni M.G., *Europa Unita sogno dei saggi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-97.

²² Lord Dickinson, "The Story of the World Alliance", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

²⁴ Geremia F., "Noi di fronte al disarmo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 1 (gen. 1932), pp. 3-6.

Church did not attend the first meeting held by the Alliance in 1919 in Den Haag, Holland; instead, it was present at the conference of St. Beatenberg, Switzerland, in 1920. On that occasion, the Synod "showed its satisfaction for the Movement formed within the World Alliance", and "heartily recommended the pastors and the members of the Waldensian Church to join and support the Movement"²⁵. Between the 1920s and the 1930s, the Waldensian Church supported the initiatives fostered by the World Alliance to achieve peace among the European states and those aimed to promote "ecumenical conferences for the unity of all the Churches", as shown by the minutes of the meetings of the Board²⁶. The World Alliance – and the Ecumenical Movement stemming from it – acted as a catalyst for the Waldensian establishment, as well as for the youth organizations and the missionary institutions²⁷. The Church and the youth organizations were officially represented by Ernesto Comba (Church's Moderator) and Cesare Gay²⁸ respectively. At that time, Gay was both the international Secretary of the World Alliance²⁹ and the Secretary of the *Associazioni cristiane dei giovani*-ACDG, the National Committee of the YMCA. Since their establishment in 1887, the ACDG had a national structure with an interdenominational vocation. In 1920, under Falchi's chairmanship, an increasingly international stance was adopted and the ACDG were characterized by a strong irenic and ecumenical spirit, and the opening to themes such as pacifism, arbitration and disarmament³⁰. In the troubled

²⁵ "Risoluzione finale del Sinodo del 1920", art. 30, in *Resoconti Sinodo 1905-1920*, in ASTV.

²⁶ "Verbali sedute Tavola Valdese", feb. 1919 -mag. 1921, n. 4, sedute del 8,9,10,11 giugno 1920, in ASTV.

²⁷ See "Le relazioni internazionali", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 2 (feb. 1931), pp. 46-47.

²⁸ Cesare Gay (1892-1970) was a lawyer and a Freemason, and a prominent personality within the Waldensian world. He was linked, on the one hand, to the establishment of the relations among Waldensians, Italian Protestants and Catholic modernism, and, on the other hand, to the history of Waldensian ecumenism in the first half of the 20th century. On Gay's activity in the ACDG, see Viallet J. P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 174-178. See also Spini G., *Italia di Mussolini e protestanti*, Torino, Claudiana, 2007, pp. 199 and ff.

²⁹ *Annual Report and Handbook of the World Alliance*, op. cit., p. 102.

³⁰ The ACDGs, despite the majority of their members being Waldensian, were relatively independent of the Waldensian Church. For this reason, in 1932, pastor Paolo Bosio created a similar organization, the *Federazione Giovanile Valdese*-FGV (Waldensian Youth Federation), which was more rigidly confessional and linked to the ecclesiastical institutions. In 1938, in order to achieve a more centralized management of the activities of the youth organizations, the Board appointed Bosio to the Secretariat of the *Federazione Unioni Valdesi*-FUV (Federation of the Waldensian Unions), which gathered the ACDGs and the *Gruppi Giovanili Valdesi*-GGV (Waldensian Youth Groups), led by Giovanni Corradini. The latter referred to the magazine *Gioventù Valdese*, which aimed at making the youth aware of the fundamental problems of Waldism and Italian Protestantism in general. On these organizations, see Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese*

years that saw the consolidation of nationalism and Fascism in Italy, the ACDG, with their European and international inspiration, still gathered long-time pacifists such as Emilio Eynard, and young theologians and Evangelical intellectuals, such as Giovanni Miegge and Ferdinando Visco Gilardi³¹. The ACDG, Spini recalls, were "a sort of island of freedom, diametrically opposed to the fascist totalitarianism" and their ideological stance was extremely clear, although wisely concealed, as the historical situation required. Therefore, as the ACDG could not openly express their political views, they worked to "overcome all confessional barriers in the name of an ecumenical Christianity"³², thus trying to downsize the nationalist perspective and remove all propagandistic distortions in the light of the international events. Even during the fascist era, the meetings organized by the ACDG were usually attended by well-known anti-fascist personalities such as socialist Lelio Basso, collaborator of the Evangelical magazine *Conscientia*, Catholic modernists Romolo Murri and Ernesto Buonaiuti and Evangelical Francesco Fausto Nitti³³, son of Vincenzo Nitti³⁴, Evangelical pastor of the Italian Methodist Episcopal Church and leader of the ACDG³⁵. In this historical phase, *Conscientia*, edited by Gangale³⁶,

di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945), op. cit., pp. 268 and ff.; Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., pp. 38 and ff., Vol. III.

³¹ See Bouchard G., Visco Gilardi A., *Un evangelico nel lager. Fede e impegno civile nella vita di Ferdinando e Mariuccia Visco Gilardi*, Torino, Claudiana, 2005.

³² Spini G., *Italia di Mussolini e protestanti*, op. cit., p. 201.

³³ Francesco Fausto Nitti (1899-1974), a Freemason and anti-fascist intellectual, was one of the founders of Carlo and Sabatino (Nello) Rosselli's movement *Giustizia e Libertà*-GL (Justice and Freedom). Nitti fought in the Spanish civil war and adhered to the European Resistance movement during the Second World War. On Francesco Fausto Nitti, see Ramella P., *Francesco Fausto Nitti: l'uomo che beffò Hitler e Mussolini*, Roma, Aracne editrice, 2007.

³⁴ Vincenzo Nitti (1871-1957) was a high-ranking masonic dignitary and Francesco Saverio Nitti's (1868-1953) cousin. Francesco Saverio Nitti was the author of several works on peace and the need to create the United States of Europe after the Great War: *L'Europa senza pace* (1921), *La decadenza dell'Europa* (1922), *La tragedia dell'Europa* (1923), later collected in Nitti F.S., *L'Europa senza pace, La decadenza dell'Europa, La tragedia dell'Europa*, Bari, Laterza, 1959.

³⁵ The 1933 ACDG meeting had a significant impact and a political meaning. On this meeting, see "Il Campo-Convegno delle ACDG a Villar Pellice", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VI, n. 9-10 (sett.-ott. 1933), pp. 147-154.

³⁶ Giuseppe Gangale (1898-1978) was an Italian linguist, philosopher and writer who joined the Baptist Church in 1924. He was the director of *Conscientia*, published by the Baptist Theological School of Rome and the publishing house *Doxa*, and collaborated with Adriano Tilgher, Antonio Banfi, Giovanni Miegge and Carlo Antoni. The encounter with Turin-born intellectual Piero Gobetti was crucial to the development of his political thought and laid the foundations of his work, *Rivoluzione protestante* (1925), in response to Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale* (1924). Gangale later developed an interest in Karl Barth's dialectical theology, and was the author of, among others,

played a crucial role in the cultural context of the Italian Protestantism³⁷. The magazine, influenced by American Baptist Dexter Gooch Whittinghill, director of the publishing house *Bilychnis*, became the interpreter of the cultural and moral needs of the country and guided the critical judgement of its authors against the all-engaging claims of the new ideologies and their anti-Christian stance. In the 1920s, the need for a renewal put forward by this Protestant avant-garde was supported by Piero Gobetti and the magazine *Rivoluzione Liberale*, which gathered a heterogeneous group of anti-fascist intellectuals, some of whom would have contributed to the development of the idea of a united Europe.

Finally, it is worth mentioning *Gioventù Cristiana*³⁸, the official magazine of the ACDGs, which devoted most of its pages not only to the initiatives of the Ecumenical Movement, the World Alliance and the League of Nations on interconfessional and international political issues, but also to pacifism and disarmament³⁹.

The nationalist propaganda reached its peak in the mid-1930s, triggered by the Nazi ideology and the rearmament of Germany. Confronted with the impending danger of new wars, all major international Protestant organizations pinned all their hopes on the League of Nations. Despite its

Apocalissi della cultura (1928), *Revival* (1929) and *Il Dio straniero* (1932). Gangale is, together with Giovanni Miegge, one of the main exponents of the neocalvinist Protestant trend in Italy, and his theological remarks are connected to Barth's thought. See Rostagno S., "La linea teologica Gangale-Miegge", in *Protestantesimo*, XLVII, n. 1 (1992), pp. 12-25. On G. Gangale, see Rota G., *Giuseppe Gangale. Filosofia e protestantesimo*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003; Rostagno S., "Giuseppe Gangale (1898-1978)", in *Protestantesimo*, LXIII, n. 4 (1998), pp. 323-324; Demofonti L., "Giuseppe Gangale e la rivista "Conscientia"", in *Protestantesimo*, LXIV, n. 1 (1999), pp. 23-29.

³⁷ On *Conscientia*, see Dalmas D., Strumia A. (eds.), *Una resistenza Spirituale. "Conscientia" (1922-1927)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2000.

³⁸ ACDGs' press organization *Gioventù Cristiana* was founded in 1928 and became the "voice of the Protestant youth movement" in the 1930s. Like *Conscientia*, *Gioventù Cristiana*, was an independent and interconfessional magazine. The appointment of Giovanni Miegge and Willy Jervis in 1931 as heads of the press office gave the magazine not only an international breadth and an ecumenical vocation, but also a clear Barthian direction. During the war and the Resistance, many of its most prominent contributors would have later developed Europeanist and openly federal ideas: among them, Mario Alberto Rollier, Francesco Singleton Lo Bue, Giorgio Peyronel, Osvaldo Coïsson, Willy Jervis, Bruno Revel, Vittorio Subilia and Giorgio Spini. Because of the contribution of anti-fascist intellectuals and its critical nature, the magazine shifted gradually from the religious field to an openly political conflict with Fascism. In 1940, following the publication of an article written by Barth against Hitler and his regime, in which he asserted the opposition of the German *Bekennende Kirche* against Nazism, *Gioventù Cristiana* was forced by the Italian authorities to suspend publication. See Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", in *Protestantesimo*, XVII, n. 1 (1962) and Spini G., *Italia di Mussolini e protestanti*, op. cit., pp. 221-229.

³⁹ See "Programma delle ACDG", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 9 (ott. 1931), p. 64.

strong limitations, this was still considered the only instrument to prevent any new conflict and create a democratic world organization, aimed at establishing the international solidarity and the respect among different nationalities pursued by the Christian world. Despite all criticism, the international Protestant movement took it upon itself to "protect" the League of Nations against the interests and personalisms of the European powers. Also *Gioventù Cristiana* adopted this stance and stated that the goal of the League of Nations was a clear duty of the Protestant movement, because the "federal unity of the peoples is rooted in its spirit and its traditions, whereas the formless and centralizing unity of the Holy Roman Empire is rooted in the spirit and the traditions of the Roman Church"⁴⁰. The contributors to the magazine therefore not only sided with the League, but also acknowledged its pragmatism and the moral effort typical of the social and political tradition of the Anglo-Saxon Protestantism.

Following the deterioration of the international situation and the interconfessional relations, the World Alliance gradually lost most of its propulsive power, also in consequence of the indulgence of the vast majority of the German Evangelism towards the Nazi ideology. Between 1933 and 1938, the Alliance cooperated with the ecumenical movement *Life and Work*, and attended the international meetings that would have later led to the creation of the World Council of Churches⁴¹. The old league of the Churches, however, had virtually left the field clear for the Ecumenical Movement to collect and coordinate the needs of the Protestant organizations and associations, which were starting to catalyze the political and spiritual tensions of the Christian youth. The World Alliance was a pre-war type of pacifist society, because its ultimate goal was not *peace* – a political fact – but international *friendship* – a spiritual fact⁴². This circumstance brought to light the intrinsic limits of the Alliance, which had abandoned its "utopian ideologies" to gradually adhere to "the principle of national loyalty", while mildly continuing to make the Christian Churches aware of the need to shape international relations according to the spirit of the Gospel⁴³.

The World Alliance went through its most critical period in 1944, in consequence of internal political rivalries and the lack of funds. The Alliance unsuccessfully tried to regain momentum at the end of the war, but the development of the Ecumenical Movement had definitively nullified the principles

⁴⁰ Geremia F., "Il cristianesimo evangelico di fronte all'odierna realtà sociale", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VI, n. 9-10 (sett.-ott. 1933), p. 169.

⁴¹ See "Convegno latino 1931. Ecumenismo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VI, n. 8 (sett. 1931), p. 23.

⁴² "Nota redazionale", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VI, n. 7 (lug.-ago. 1931), p. 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7. See also Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1991, pp. 38-39.

of the Alliance, which was formally dissolved on June 30th, 1948, the year of the official foundation of the World Council of Churches.

It is now time to expand a little further on some features of the Italian Evangelism in the years between the two wars, notably of the *Gioventù Cristiana* group which was building up a strong interest in both culture and politics, in reaction to totalitarian ideologies. This intellectual vanguard, led by Waldensian theologian Giovanni Miegge⁴⁴, would have laid the ideological and spiritual foundations of the most conscious Waldensian anti-fascist movement. Miegge acted as a catalyst for many neo-calvinist intellectuals, known as “young Barthians”, who were open to an ecumenical perspective and had taken an intransigent ethical stance. At first, they were harshly critical of religious confessionalism, for it had prevented all interconfessional dialogue and the rapprochement of the Christian Churches, and later of nationalisms and their ruinous consequences. Such position gradually turned the young Barthians to an ecumenical perspective and to the idea of a federal unity at the European level.

2. Some remarks on nationalism in the “Barthian youth”: towards the ecumenism, in search of federalism

The failure of the World Alliance had been pre-announced by the resurgence of nationalism throughout Europe, the ineffectiveness of the “old systems” adopted by the peace movement to foster peace, the split among the national Churches at the international level and the war. The above-mentioned world confessional confederation had proved itself to be ineffective in tackling the actual reason which prevented both the ecclesiastical organizations and the States from cooperating constructively to

⁴⁴ Giovanni Miegge (1900-1961) was a Waldensian pastor, professor at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology and one of the most prominent and original theologians of the Italian Protestantism in the 20th century. He collaborated with *Conscientia* and *Doxa*, and was among the first intellectuals to spread Karl Barth’s biblical-theological thought in Italy. Miegge was the editor of *Gioventù Cristiana* and the promoter of the *Giornate teologiche* (theological days) at Ciabàs, and gathered a solid group of young Evangelicals, who stood out for their political and civil engagement during the Resistance and in the post-war years. Miegge collaborated with many newspapers and magazines, and wrote several books, among which, *Lutero* (1946), *La Vergine Maria* (1950), *Per una fede* (1952) and *L’Evangelo e il mito nel pensiero di Rudolf Bultmann* (1956). On Giovanni Miegge, see Saccomani S., *Giovanni Miegge*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002; Genre E., Rostagno S. (eds.), *Una visione della vita e della teologia. Giovanni Miegge (1900-1961)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2002. See also Spini G., “L’avventura intellettuale civile di Giovanni Miegge”, in *Il Ponte*, VIII-IX (1961), pp. 1195-1201; Vinay V., “Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione”, *op. cit.*; Tron C., “Giovanni Miegge: voce caratteristica del protestantesimo italiano”, in Miegge G., *Scritti teologici*, Torino, Claudiana, 1977, pp. 7-22; Tourm G., “L’opera di Giovanni Miegge nel protestantesimo italiano”, in *Gioventù Evangelica*, n. 49, (feb. 1978), pp. 5-8.

achieve peace. The lack of unity in the Christian world and of a strong ecumenic direction had led to the failure of the objectives set by the European Churches. In fact, the States' appeals to national identity had succeeded not only in making European Christians fight one another, but also to shatter confessional solidarity by setting Great Britain and Germany, namely the major Protestant powers in Europe, one against the other. The above-mentioned situation had shifted the problem of war from peace ideals and Christian ethics to the concepts of power, hegemony and balance⁴⁵.

Therefore, the main reason behind the degradation of early 20th-century religious pacifism was the expansion of nationalism and its "activism", which filled the ideological void created by the war⁴⁶ and was in contrast with communist internationalism and the "old and stagnant" liberal democracies, and with the Churches of Europe and their passivity and fragmentation at the confessional and political levels. Nationalism had replaced any other value and forced its way through both collective and individual consciences. Even the Christian values were demeaned by the ideas of "Homeland" and "Nation", which led to the nationalization of the Protestant Churches and to a behaviour and a vision paradoxically different from the profound Christian beliefs, and eventually culminating in the denial of solidarity and the unity of the human kind. In the name of the "vital needs" of the national state, a large part of the European society did not feel or acknowledge the radical discrepancy between the Christian principle of universal brotherhood and the sense of superiority stemming from the univocal belonging to a nation.

During the war, the ecumenical and progressive Christian groups and movements, born also thanks to the World Alliance, understood the deep reason of the above-mentioned distorted perspective, through the work of its members adhering to the Ecumenical Movement and, later, to the WCC⁴⁷. They identified nationalism and confessionalism as the germ of the spiritual and ethical decay, and acted with resolve to find a solution at the ecclesiastical and the political levels⁴⁸. Between the 1930s and 1940s, the WCC – as we will see later – would have opposed fascisms and totalitarian regimes⁴⁹

⁴⁵ See Dehio L., *Equilibrio o egemonia*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ See Croce, B., *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono*, *op.cit.*, pp. 395-424.

⁴⁷ See Ricca P., "The Ecumenical Movement Between the two World Wars and the Birth of the World Council of Churches" in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), "*Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*". *Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-66. See also Leustean L.N., *The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Dell'Acqua S., "Plans of Christian Churches and Groups on the Future of Europe in '*Documents on the History of European Integration*'" by Walter Lipgens, in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), "*Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*". *Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-287.

⁴⁹ See Rohtmets P., "Ecumenical Peace Organisation", *op. cit.*, pp. 64-71.

and would have cooperated with the federalist and Europeanist movements born with the European Resistance, because of their ideological affinity⁵⁰.

Before moving on, however, it is necessary to focus on the remarks made by Karl Barth⁵¹ on nationalism, and later by the intellectuals of the Italian Protestantism directly influenced by his thought between the two World Wars, and to show the influence and the importance of this “neo-calvinist” trend on the Protestant thought in the 20th century⁵².

In 1914, the European Churches, despite their joint effort to foster peace among the peoples, resolutely started supporting the politics of their own governments. Even German theologian Martin Rade (1857-1940), who had a more moderate stance, wrote on the *Christliche Welt* about the “bankrupt of Christianity” and its inability to promote and maintain brotherhood among the various Christian peoples of Europe⁵³. According to Bouchard, in some European nations “Protestantism was infected by nationalism”⁵⁴. This is clearly true in the case of Germany, where many Protestant intellectuals and theologians favourably welcomed the Reich’s imperial plan⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ See Giordano F.M., “Introduction. Ecumenism and Federalism: a Historical Convergence” in *Id.* and Dell’Acqua S. (eds.), “*Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*”. Willem Adolf Visser ‘t Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-24.

⁵¹ Karl Barth (1886-1968) is one of the most important theologians of the 20th century and one of the main promoters of the renewal of the Protestant thought and theology in Europe and in the world. He was disciple of Adolf von Harnack and a Calvinist pastor, and taught theology in Göttingen (1921), Münster (1925) and Bonn (1930). Due to his opposition to Nazism, he was deprived of his professorship in 1935 and moved back to Basel, where he taught until 1962. Barth’s most famous work, *The Epistle to the Romans (Der Römerbrief)*, 1919, attracted the attention of European theologians and philosophers and gave origin to a theological movement known as “dialectical theology” or “crisis theology”, which contrasted with the historicist and romantic “liberal theology”. Barth renewed the Calvinist thought by taking it back to its roots (neo-calvinism), and founded the magazine *Zwischen den Zeiten* (1922-33) to spread his theological vision. Among its contributors were Rudolf Bultmann, Emil Brunner, Eduard Thurneysen and Friedrich Gogarten. On Karl Barth, see Barth Karl, *L’epistola ai Romani*, *op. cit.*; *Id.*, *Agire politico e libertà dell’evangelo*, Troina, Città Aperta, 2004; *Id.*, *L’umanità di Dio. L’attualità del messaggio cristiano*, Torino, Claudiana, 2010. On his political ideas, see Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2004.

⁵² Miegge M., “Le renouveau du protestantisme en Europe. Karl Barth: théologie et politique. Karl Barth: théologie et politique” in Giordano F.M. and Dell’Acqua S. (eds.), “*Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*”. Willem Adolf Visser ‘t Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-77.

⁵³ See Köhler F., *Die deutsch-protestantische Kriegspredigt der Gegenwart, dargestellt in ihren religiös-sittlichen Problemen und in ihrer homiletischen Eigenart*, 7 Vols., Giessen, Töpelmann, 1915, p. 33, Vol. II. On this statement, see also Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁵⁴ Bouchard G., “Europa cristiana? Una posizione protestante”, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁵⁵ See Hammer K., *Deutsche Kriegstheologie (1870-1918)*, München, Koesel-Verlag, 1971.

The German Evangelical Church was then fully involved in the establishment of Wilhelmian's Imperial State⁵⁶. Many leading intellectuals, such as Thomas Mann, shared the views of the great Lutheran theologian Adolf von Harnack⁵⁷, who had written a paper supporting the policies of the German government in favour of the *Kulturkrieg*⁵⁸. In 1817, 300 years after the Reformation, the German philosophers and theologians celebrated Martin Luther as a national hero, and in 1830 Hegel acknowledged the role of the Augsburg Confession in the creation of a national identity. As Bouchard wrote, during the 19th century in Germany "the two branches of the Reformation (Lutheran and Calvinist) tended to converge" and to join in the establishment of the Reich; this led to the identification with the Reich and, often, to the adhesion to its values⁵⁹. This process involved also the German Evangelical Churches, which later supported the State during the war and the most critical events at the international level.

Nationalism partially gained ground also in Great Britain, where the Anglican Church sometimes took a conservative and national imperialist stance; however, the liberal tradition and structure of the British society frustrated all conservative efforts of the ecclesiastical and political institutions.

Therefore, if before the First World War the Evangelical Churches showed an "almost absolute indifference" towards the rise of nationalisms, at the end of the conflict paved the way, notably in Germany, to the advent of totalitarianism. In fact, after twenty years and despite the previous experience, the "nationalized" Churches had acquiesced, or had sided with, their own governments. This was notably the case of the German Protestant Church, which aligned itself with the Nazi policy. Since the very beginning of its history, the National Socialist Party had tried to take advantage of the hold of the churches on the German people by incorporating some sort of "positivist Christianity" into its ideology. Once come into power, the Nazi Party strongly manipulated the ecclesiastical institutions and exploited their message. The *Deutschen Christen*, that is, those who

⁵⁶ See Bouchard G., "Una voce delle chiese evangeliche", in *Cantiere Europa. Passaggio verso il futuro*, in *Quaderni de Il Ponte*, LV, n. 5 (mag. 1999), p. 76.

⁵⁷ Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) was one of the most relevant Protestant theologians and Church historians between the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1876, he was appointed *professor extraordinarius* at the University of Leipzig and later he taught at the University of Giessen and at the Humboldt Universität. His most important work is *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, a comprehensive critical treatise on the history of dogmas. Despite his moderate conservative stance, Harnack supported the German intervention in the First World War. Consequently, many theologians, including Barth, rejected and refuted the so-called liberal theology fostered by Harnack. On his thought, see Harnack A., *L'essenza del cristianesimo*, Brescia, Queriniana, 2003.

⁵⁸ See Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-143. See also Tillich P., *L'era protestante*, edited by F. Giampiccoli, Torino, Claudiana, 1972.

⁵⁹ See Bouchard G., "Una voce delle chiese evangeliche", *op. cit.*, p. 76.

supported the regime, operated so as to “convert” the debilitated German Church to the nationalist ideology of the totalitarian State.

It has to be noted, however, that the participation of the Churches to their own national policies before and during the Second World War was less unanimous than in the First World War, thanks to the opposition of Evangelical and Catholic dissidents towards National Socialism and its anti-Christian ideology.

The first split occurred in 1933 with the introduction of explicitly racist regulations in the ecclesiastical rules, according to which all baptized Jews were declared non-Arian and, therefore, expelled from church. Some outraged German Christian-Evangelicals, including Martin Niemöller⁶⁰ and Dietrich Bonhoeffer⁶¹, stressed the incompatibility of this principle with the Christian faith, and created an association to help all those who had been

⁶⁰ Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) was a German theologian and Lutheran pastor. After taking part in the Great War, he realized that the deep moral and spiritual crisis of the German society needed the renewal of the Christian message. However, the 1929 crisis and the social and economic difficulties that affected Germany after the war led Niemöller closer to Nazi stances. When the Nazis fomented the split in the German Protestant Church, Niemöller sided with the opponents of the regime and called for the establishment of a national-based league of Protestant pastors. He was arrested by the *gestapo*, tried and sent to a concentration camp. Rescued from Dachau, in the second half of the 20th century Niemöller supported Konrad Adenauer's policy and took a firm stance against rearmament and the atom bomb. He also urged the German Evangelical Church to assume responsibility for its deeds and devoted himself to the cause of pacifism and Europeanism. See Schmidt D., *Martin Niemöller: eine biographie*, Amburgo, Rowohlt, 1959; Schmidt J., *Martin Niemöller im Kirchenkampf*, Hamburg, Leibniz-Verlag, 1971; Bentley J., *Martin Niemöller, 1892-1984*, New York, Free Press, 1984. On Niemöller's pacifism and Europeanism, see Düringer H., Stöhr M., *Martin Niemöller im Kalten Krieg: die Arbeit für Frieden und Gerechtigkeit damals und heute*, Frankfurt am Main, Haag und Herchen, 2001. See also Conway J.S., “The Political Theology of Martin Niemöller”, in *German Studies Review*, IX, No. 3 (October 1986), pp. 521-546.

⁶¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a Lutheran theologian and pastor. He was one of the most relevant opponents of Nazism in Germany. He was a supporter of the Ecumenical Movement and was appointed young Secretary of the *Unione mondiale per la collaborazione tra le Chiese* (World Union for the Cooperation among Churches) in 1931. In 1933, he became a member of the universal Christian movement *Life and Work*. The ecumenical question was always of the utmost importance in Bonhoeffer's thought, both at the theological and dialogical levels, and he firmly opposed the “Aryan paragraph” defended by the *Deutsche Christen*. In 1939, Bonhoeffer joined the German Resistance movement led by H.J. von Moltke, who was the President of the *Kreisau* conspiratorial group. He was arrested by the *gestapo* in 1943 and hanged in Flossenbürg in 1945. On his work, see the critical edition *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Scritti scelti (1915-1945)*, edited by A. Gallas and A. Conci, 10 Vols., Brescia, Queriniana, 1991-2009 (German edition: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*, 17 Bände, Gütersloh, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986-2015). On Bonhoeffer's life, see Bethge E., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, teologo cristiano contemporaneo. Una biografia*, Brescia, Queriniana, 1991; Marsh C., *Strange Glory. A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, New York, Knopf, 2014.

hit by such racial discrimination. In 1934, Niemöller and Bonhoeffer sided against the regime at the synod of Wuppertal-Barmen, during which the German Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) was created and whose doctrine was defined by the Theological Declaration of Barmen (*Barmer Theologische Erklärung*). The Declaration stated the incompatibility of the evangelical message and all totalitarian claims. After the synod, many communities like the *Bekennende Kirche* were created in Germany, all of which refused to rely on the will of the German Church⁶².

From that moment, the *Bekennende Kirche* became a model for many churches all over Europe, in particular for the oppressed Christian-Evangelical minorities. In Italy, the Confessing Church played a crucial role and was instrumental in making the Italian Protestant movement distance themselves from Fascism, and in raising an anti-fascist awareness among many Italian Evangelicals. This trend did not represent the official Church; however, it was the most radical and progressive part of the Italian Protestantism, as in the case of the "young Barthians".

In the Protestant communities, this was mainly due to Karl Barth's strong impact on the Protestant world and his "harsh criticism of the Christian society" and the liberal Protestantism⁶³, both responsible, in his view, for the collapse of Europe during the Great War⁶⁴. Barth was influenced by religious socialism and fostered the idea of solidarity among men to establish the Kingdom of God; according to Barth, war breaks all existing bonds, thus destroying the germs of the Kingdom and obstructing the path which leads to it⁶⁵. The Swiss theologian put the blame on the widespread optimism which had prevented even the most vigilant observers to understand the most profound reasons undermining peace in Europe. According to Barth, the decline of the Western civilization was not to be ascribed to war; instead, war should be seen as the natural – and inevitable – consequence of such decline. In other words, the war was the outcome of the decennial, or even secular history of a society founded on

⁶² On the *Bekennende Kirche*, see Bologna S. *La Chiesa confessante sotto il nazismo: 1933-1936*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1967; Hockenos M.D. *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004; Gremmels C., Grosse H.W., *Il cammino di Dietrich Bonhoeffer verso la resistenza*, Torino, Claudiana, 2006; Giampiccoli F., *Willem A. Visser 't Hooft. La primavera dell'ecumenismo*, Torino, Claudiana, 2015, pp. 79-105. See also, Miegge M., "Le renouveau du protestantisme en Europe", *op. cit.*

⁶³ On liberal Protestantism, see Subilia V., *Il protestantesimo moderno tra Schleiermacher e Barth*, Torino, Claudiana, 1981.

⁶⁴ Bouchard G., "Una voce delle chiese evangeliche", *op. cit.*, p. 77. See also Miegge M., "Le renouveau du protestantisme en Europe", *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 and ff.

⁶⁵ Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

pride, selfishness, and the obstinate assertion of its own reasons⁶⁶. This was also the consequence of the partial adherence of liberal Protestantism to the reasons of National Socialism.

Barth even dared to state that war had become a "global, all-engaging phenomenon" because of the failure of all those who should have at least tried to fight nationalism, individually and collectively; such phenomenon had belied the capitalists, who "counted on economic powers to preserve a peaceful climate at the international level"⁶⁷. According to liberal peace movements, those powers had an indisputable practical force, but not a moral strength, against war⁶⁸. Likewise, this creeping "sin" had corrupted the international solidaristic nature of socialism, and the peaceful universalistic nature of Christianity. Barth resolutely faced such enemy and relied on culture and theology to fight the tempting and pleasant instincts underlying both nationalism and militarism. Sin, in Barth's view, crosses all borders and barriers, and concerns not only the individual, but reverberates also on the relationships among the peoples, the Churches and all opposing entities. Barth's interest was focused on the collective manifestations of sin, rather than on the corruption of mankind; it was a negative universality without which the good side, epitomized by the universal character of grace, would not be understandable. The confrontation between the two terms remained unresolved, thus accentuating the eschatological tension and the sense of entrenchment of men which prod the conscience of the believers and their commitment to taking action. Nationalism is, therefore, a universal sin which dialectically enhances the universal value of Christianity and the historical strength of its values, as well as the social and political pre-eminence of the individuals. The grace, manifesting itself through Christ, offered men the chance to repent and take part in the construction of the Kingdom of Christ on earth, in contrast to the kingdom of sin with its dissolution and selfishness⁶⁹.

In Barth's vision, the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* corroborates the relationship between mankind and God; in his work, the Swiss theologian preconizes a more positive cooperation aimed at the re-establishment of the Christian principles and the peaceful attainment of well-being. The adequacy of such relationship is based on the core concept of Resurrection announcing the grace and the salvation of mankind by God. In Barth's thought the idea of a God that is "totally set apart" from the world is obviously maintained; this aspect, however, represents "the hard case" that has to be accepted,

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ See Rizzi M., "Una nota", in Gallas A., *Il giovane Barth. Fra teologia e politica*, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

but which does not exclude at all the friendship and the covenant between God and men, and their possibilities to operate in the world⁷⁰.

Other theologians and men of faith, such as the above-mentioned Niemöller and Bonhoeffer supported Barth's stance. They were fully aware of the historical misdeed of German nationalism and the responsibility of the Churches, and provided their work with an overtly European breadth. This slender, yet strong-minded minority exhorted Christians and the European Churches to persevere in the struggle against Nazism⁷¹; however, it warned the anti-Nazis against turning into anti-German, and from transforming a "just" war into a "holy" war⁷².

The early years of the postwar period were marked by profound changes in the Protestant theology. Barth's influence had extended well beyond the religious domain, because the subjects he tackled reflected the moral and ideal crisis ravaging Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. His theories were bitterly criticized by the advocates of traditional theological trends because of the interpretative approach and the complex language he used. As one of his Italian disciples explained, Barth was misinterpreted by most of his opponents, partly because of the obscurity of his language; besides, most of them had focused exclusively on the disruptive impact of his works, not on their contribution to the renovation of theology and the Christian message⁷³. The originality of Barth's religious thought lies in the two expressions which define the spirit and the methodology of his research: "dialectical theology" and "theology of crisis"⁷⁴. These expressions aimed at demolishing the old stances which had restrained the reformation of theological interpretation and hermeneutical methodology, thus hindering *de facto* a more authentic and contemporary interpretation of the dramatic conditions of modern Christianity. Barth's theories were, despite his flat denial, reminiscent of the optimistic vision of the Enlightenment philosophy, and

⁷⁰ On Barth's interpretation of the "Covenant Theology", see Miegge M., "Foedus operum e foedus gratiae: la teologia del patto di Johannes Coccejus (1603-1669) alla luce della critica di Karl Barth", in *Annali di storia dell'esegesi*, II, n. 8 (gen.-giu. 1991), pp. 105-123.

⁷¹ On their engagement and role in the fight against Nazism, see also Hockenos M.D. *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past*, *op. cit.*

⁷² Bouchard G., "Una voce delle chiese evangeliche", *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

⁷³ See Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Barth's theology reasserted the centrality of the Scriptures as the core of the theological investigation and marked the incompatibility of the divine and human aspects. This dialectic is resolved in the crisis of the conscience, according to which Christians have to operate in favour of the divine element in a way that was "totally set apart". See Strauch M., *La teologia della crisi*, Roma, Doxa, 1928; Balthasar H.U., *La teologia di Karl Barth*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1985.

were still imbued with positivist and idealistic ideas⁷⁵. The innovatory and provocative strength of Barth's thought emerges overwhelmingly in his commentary on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, in which the Swiss theologian did justice to the sociological and anthropological optimism of the liberal and positivistic age, so tragically culminated in the First World War. Supported by other dialectical theologians, Barth brought to the attention of the Evangelical Church the pivotal role of the Holy Scriptures in Christian life and preaching⁷⁶.

In Italy, the progressive Evangelical movements realized the importance of Barth's critical effort to renovate Protestantism from the inside. In the Waldensian world, Barth's theories remained the prerogative of a minority of secular theologians and intellectuals who did not belong to the official circles of the Church and the Waldensian Faculty of Theology, with their late-Protestant liberal or neo-pietistic attitude.

In 1937, the appointment of Giovanni Miegge, Barth's most prominent Italian scholar, as professor at the Waldensian Faculty, marked a turning point in the reappraisal of the evangelical message. Miegge, and the group of young people who gathered around him, deemed it necessary to return to the primitive spirit of the Reformation and to Calvin's thought. Miegge's *Lutero*⁷⁷ fostered, among the young Italian Evangelicals, the well-established trend to return to the works of the 16th-century Reformers and, consequently, to a theology that was more vigorous and substantially more consistent with the Biblical message⁷⁸. According to Miegge, it was necessary to overcome the feeling of ethical and spiritual irresolution of the liberal Protestantism, and to reassert an active Christian will that could have led, to the transformation of the theoretical concept of Christianity into a moral and spiritual notion, directly engaging the life of each individual and of the whole human race⁷⁹. In short, it aimed at putting the Christian message into practice through the reforming action of the man of faith promoting "a new, rigorous, political and religious form of Protestantism"⁸⁰. The young Barthians believed that their action should not be confined to the religious field, but it had to be extended also to the civil and political domains⁸¹. In Italy, for a proactive

⁷⁵ See Subilia V., *Il protestantesimo moderno tra Schleiermacher e Barth*, op. cit., pp. 5-16.

⁷⁶ See also Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 21.

⁷⁷ Miegge G., *Lutero. L'uomo e il pensiero fino alla Dieta di Worms (1483-1521)*, op. cit.

⁷⁸ Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", op. cit., p. 6.

⁷⁹ See Falchi M., "La crisi del nostro secolo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, III, n. 7-8 (lug.-ago. 1930), p. 202.

⁸⁰ Gangale G., *Revival*, op. cit., p. 82.

⁸¹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 22.

Protestant minority crushed between the absolute claims of the Catholic Church and those of the Fascist State, this cultural and critical fight aimed at asserting an alternative identity and Christianity to those recognized and accepted by the totalitarian state. Gangale highlighted the ideological and organizational complicity of the Roman Church and the Fascist regime. In his view, in fact, "nationalism was Catholic, without leaving anything to be inferred [...], religion-wise; anti-romantic, art-wise, conservative in domestic politics and expansionist in foreign politics"⁸². In other words, at the political level the struggle against the confessional "absolutism" of the Catholic Church implied the fight against all forms of totalitarianism, regardless of the form they might have taken⁸³.

The reference to the values of the Reformation in more "authentic" and contemporary terms, fulfilled the need for a more rigorous idea of Church. As Vinay wrote, "Miegge's activities were nothing but a religious ceremony" resolutely aimed "at renovating the preaching and at providing the youth organizations with a clearer Protestant conscience", but mainly "at determining the political and civil action of the Italian Evangelicals"⁸⁴. In Miegge's vision, this "new" Church should have been not only more pragmatic and active, but should have also represented a powerful tool to check the radical progressive abandonment of the Christian faith efficiently carried out by secular ideologies.

Miegge's works were instrumental not only in spreading Barth's new concept of Christianity in Italy, but also in shaping the moral and cultural conscience of many young Waldensians, some of whom would have later fought against Nazi-Fascism. Miegge championed Barth's theology among the peoples of the Valleys, questioning the set of values the "liberal generation" was still anchored to and paving the way to a new generation who dramatically conflicted with the ancient thought and opened itself to the ecumenical experience. This avant-garde movement explored analytically all the aspects of the political and religious life of its time, taking "the great Europe of freedom and progress as a landmark": the same Europe "founded

⁸² Insonne P. [ps. di G. Gangale], "Lo spirito del fascismo", Dalmas D., Strumia A. (eds.), *Una resistenza Spirituale. "Conscientia" (1922-1927)*, op. cit., p. 168.

⁸³ On this theme, see Gentile E., *Contro Cesare. Cristianesimo e totalitarismo nell'epoca dei fascismi*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2010. For more in-depth religious and philosophical comments, see Jaspers K., *La situazione spirituale del tempo*, Roma, Jouvence, 1982 (original German edition: *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1931); *Id.*, *Von der Wahrheit*, München, Piper, 1947 (in particular, pp. 883 and ff.). For a historical reconstruction, see Menozzi D., Moro R. (eds.), *Cattolicesimo e totalitarismo. Chiese e culture religiose tra le due guerre mondiali (Italia, Spagna, Francia)*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2004; Ferrone V. (ed.), *La chiesa cattolica e il totalitarismo. Atti del Convegno (Torino, 25-26 ottobre 2001)*, Firenze, Olschki, 2004.

⁸⁴ Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", op. cit., p. 7.

by Luther and Calvin, Cromwell and Gustaf Adolf⁸⁵. Incidentally, the biographies of some of these key personalities of the European Protestantism⁸⁶ had been published by "Doxa", Gangale's publishing house.

Miegge's movement was a homogeneous group of intellectuals, in which political engagement and theological research often converged, but who were undoubtedly linked by a strong sense of belonging to the same community⁸⁷. This experience remained circumscribed within the borders of the Evangelical world, mainly because of its theological implications; however, the movement established fruitful relations with many lay intellectuals who did not belong to the Waldensian community⁸⁸. The most prominent Evangelical members of the Barthian group include notably Valdo Vinay⁸⁹, Vittorio Subilia⁹⁰, Francesco Lo Bue⁹¹, Neri Giampiccoli⁹²,

⁸⁵ Aquilante S., Bouchard G., Becchino F. et al. (eds.), *Chiese e Stato. Il ruolo del protestantesimo nell'Italia che cambia*, Torino, Claudiana, 1998, pp. 144-145.

⁸⁶ Gangale and Miegge published *Calvino* and *Lutero* in 1927 and 1930 respectively. B. Revel published *Cromwell* and, in 1933, the biography of Gustav Adolf of Sweden.

⁸⁷ See Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", *op. cit.*; Tumminello E., "Intellettuale e società civile a Torre Pellice nel biennio 1944-1946", in *la Beidana*, n. 9 (gen. 1989), p. 56.

⁸⁸ It is worth mentioning some names, such as Lelio Basso, Antonio Banfi and Mario Manlio Rossi. Many others, who were all involved in the anti-fascist experience and the Resistance, will be present also in the third part of this work.

⁸⁹ Valdo Vinay (1906-1990) was a Waldensian pastor and theologian. He was one of Barth's disciples and wrote several important essays on the Protestant thought and history; among others: *La dottrina di Dio nella teologia di Carlo Barth* (1942), *La Riforma protestante* (1970), and *Ecclesiologia ed etica politica in Giovanni Calvino* (1973). On V. Vinay, see Ricca P., "Valdo Vinay 1906-1990. La vita, le opere, la fede", in *Protestantesimo*, XLVI, n. 1, 1991, pp. 2-40. See also Schede biografiche: Valdo Vinay in ASTV.

⁹⁰ Vittorio Subilia (1911-1988) was a Waldensian pastor and theologian. He was the author of some remarkable studies on Protestantism and Catholicism: *Il movimento ecumenico* (1948), *Il problema del male* (1959), *Il problema del cattolicesimo. Una valutazione protestante del Concilio Vaticano II* (1962), *La nuova cattolicità del cattolicesimo* (1967); *Solus Christus. Il messaggio cristiano nella prospettiva protestante* (1985). On V. Subilia, see Conte G. (ed.), *Il pluralismo nelle origini cristiane. Scritti in onore di Vittorio Subilia*, Torino, Claudiana, 1994. See also, Schede biografiche: Vittorio Subilia in ASTV.

⁹¹ Francesco Umberto Singleton Lo Bue (1914-1955) was a Waldensian pastor and taught at the Collegio di Torre Pellice. During the war, he became a member of the *Partito d'Azione-PdA* (Action Party) and joined the Resistance. He was one of the first supporters of the MFE and was managing editor of *L'Unità Europea*, media organization of the Movement. See, Giordano F.M., *Francesco Singleton Lo Bue pastore valdese, antifascista e federalista*, Torino, Claudiana, 2013. See also Giordano F.M., "L'impegno politico di un pastore valdese del XX secolo: Francesco Singleton Lo Bue dall'ecumenismo al federalismo", in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, CXXIV, n. 201 (dic. 2007); *Id.*, "Francesco Singleton Lo Bue nella Resistenza, tra etica barthiana e federalismo europeo", in Papini C. (ed.), *Gli evangelici nella Resistenza*, Torino, Claudiana, 2007, pp. 245-258.

⁹² Neri Giampiccoli (1914-1989) was a pastor and moderator of the Waldensian Board from 1965 to 1972. See Schede biografiche: Neri Giampiccoli, n. 82 in ASTV.

Mario Alberto Rollier⁹³, Giorgio Peyronel⁹⁴, Bruno Revel⁹⁵, Giorgio Peyrot⁹⁶ and Giorgio Spini⁹⁷.

- ⁹³ Mario Alberto Rollier (1909-1980) was an anti-fascist Waldensian chemist. He joined the *Partito d'Azione* in 1942 and was one of the founders of the MFE in August 1943. After the war, he became a member of the Italian Social Democratic Party and of the Milan city Council between 1951 and 1960. Rollier is one of the most significant personalities in the history of the MFE and his work, *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa?* (1944, 2nd ed., Domus, Milano, 1950), represents his most outstanding contribution to the cause of federalism. On M.A. Rollier, see Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit.; Gagliano S. (ed.), *La personalità poliedrica di Mario Alberto Rollier. Ricordo di un milanese protestante, antifascista, federalista e uomo di scienza*, Milano, Biblion edizioni, 2010. See also Giordano F.M., "Dalle Valli all'Europa. Mario Alberto Rollier e la prospettiva europea della 'Carta di Chivasso'", in Peyronel S. and Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Il crocevia della Dichiarazione di Chivasso: il contesto storico e i suoi protagonisti*, Claudiana, Torino, 2015.
- ⁹⁴ Giorgio Peyronel (1913-2009) was an anti-fascist chemist. He was one of the most prominent exponents of the Waldensian federalism, and played an active role within the MFE. He was also one of the contributors to the underground newspaper *L'Unità Europea*. In 1943, he was among the drafters of the *Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine*. After the war, he became member of the *Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche* (National Research Council) and of several ministerial committees. On G. Peyronel and his federalist thought, see Stefano Dell'Acqua, "Diritti delle minoranze, autonomie locali e prospettiva federalista"; Peyronel G., "I valdesi e le autonomie alpine", in Peyronel S. and Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Il crocevia della Dichiarazione di Chivasso*, op. cit., pp. 117-140; pp. 154 - 172.
- ⁹⁵ Bruno Revel (1895-1959) was of ancient Waldensian descent and taught Languages at the Bocconi University of Milan. On B. Revel, see Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 55.
- ⁹⁶ Giorgio Peyrot (1910-2005) was a Waldensian jurist and professor of Ecclesiastical Law at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology of Rome. He contributed to *Gioventù Cristiana*, *L'Appello* and *Protestantesimo* and, after the war, was the Italian delegate at the International Labour Conference at the Bureau International du Travail in Geneva. Peyrot was also one of the Italian representatives of the WCC's Commission on International Affairs and the director of the legal office of the Federal Council of the Evangelical Churches in Italy. On G. Peyrot, see Pons I., Varnier G.B. (eds.), *Giorgio Peyrot. Il giurista delle minoranze religiose*, Genova, Genova University Press, 2013. See also Long G., "Giorgio Peyrot: un profilo", in *Protestantesimo*, LXI, n. 1 (gen.-mar. 2005); Giampiccoli F., "In memoria di Giorgio Peyrot", in *Protestantesimo*, LXI, n. 1 (gen.-mar. 2005).
- ⁹⁷ Giorgio Spini (1916-2006) was an Italian Methodist antifascist historian. He was a member of the *Partito d'Azione*, and taught in various universities, in Italy and abroad, after the war. Spini was President of the Socialist Institute for Historical Studies and co-editor of the *Rivista Storica italiana*. Among his most relevant works: *Risorgimento e protestanti* (1956), *Storia dell'età moderna* (1960), *Autobiografia della giovane America* (1968), *Il protestantesimo italiano nel Novecento* (2005). For a biographical and bibliographical overview, see Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, edited by V. Spini, Torino, Claudiana, 2002; *Id.*, *Lo storico e la politica: scritti giornalistici (1945-1961)*, edited by M. Bianchi, Firenze, Polistampa, 2007; Landi A., Mazzei R., Sodini C. et al. (eds.), *Bibliografia degli scritti di Giorgio Spini*, Firenze, Olschki, 2007.

They promoted many initiatives aimed not only at casting a new light on the most complex aspects of Biblical hermeneutics and theology, but also at dealing with topical political issues and at meditating on the nature of contemporary ideologies. Besides, this resilient and "Europe-oriented" *élite*, who left "an indelible mark" on the history of the Waldensians and the Protestant movement in Italy⁹⁸, fostered many influential cultural experiences and founded several magazines, such as *Gioventù Cristiana* and *L'Appello*⁹⁹, to support their religious and political ideas. These initiatives were complemented by the so-called *Giornate teologiche* (theological days), during which most of the themes debated in the above-mentioned magazines were resumed and expanded¹⁰⁰.

The often critical analysis of the Barthians on the most relevant contemporary themes was aimed at tracing their origin and development in the past theological tradition and in the modern historical-philosophical culture, by comparing the previous ideological trends with Barth's renewed vision of Christianity and the ecumenical vocation that was spreading all over Europe.

In this regard, the article by the future WCC's Secretary General Willem A. Visser 't Hooft¹⁰¹, published on *Gioventù Cristiana* and titled

⁹⁸ Aquilante S., Bouchard G., Becchino F. et al. (ed.), *Chiese e Stato*, op. cit., p. 145.

⁹⁹ Following the suppression of *Gioventù Cristiana*, the Barthians continued their political activity on *L'Appello*.

¹⁰⁰ They were one of the most significant cultural initiatives in the recent Waldensian history, a real think-tank on the most diverse themes concerning the Christian-Evangelical world. The *Giornate teologiche* days were the expression of the neo-calvinist and ecumenical attitude of the young Barthians. The reports and the debates of the meetings were published on *Gioventù Cristiana*, *L'Appello* and *Protestantesimo*. On the *Giornate teologiche*, see Genre E., Rostagno S. (ed.), *Una visione della vita e della teologia*, op. cit.; Spini G., "Premesse della resistenza valdese. Le giornate del Ciabàs", in Papini C. (ed.), *Gli evangelici nella Resistenza*, op. cit., pp. 23-28.

¹⁰¹ Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985) was a Dutch pastor and theologian. He was appointed Secretary General of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1924. He took part in the creation of the provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches and held the Secretariat General of the WCC until 1966, notwithstanding his young age at the time of his appointment. In the spring of 1944, Visser 't Hooft took into his house in Geneva the representatives of the European Resistance movement for a series of meetings, chaired by Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, which led to the drawing up of the *Dichiarazione federalista internazionale dei movimenti di Resistenza* (International Federalist declaration of the Resistance Movements). On Visser 't Hooft, see: der Bent A.J. van, *W. A. Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985). Fisherman of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva 2000; Giordano F.M., "Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft e il federalismo europeo. Dalla Resistenza alle iniziative per l'unità europea nel dopoguerra", in *Cittadinanza europea*, 2011/2, pp. 93-111; Giampiccoli F., *Willem A. Visser 't Hooft. La primavera dell'ecumenismo*, op. cit. and Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), "Die Welt war meine Gemeinde". *Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe*

"God and the other western gods" clearly stated this aim¹⁰². Visser 't Hooft warned all the Christians, and pointed out how the most important issue was to "determine what to believe in", trying to understand "what God or gods our age still worships"¹⁰³. Visser 't Hooft, whose thought was aligned with Barth's stance, remarked how after the French Revolution new religions had gradually established themselves, each with its own god (reason, nation, race, etc.), which demanded total obedience. Among them, he indicated liberalism, socialism, communism and perceived the fanaticism that imbued the German National Socialism. According to Visser 't Hooft, the most dangerous of the "new gods of the modern age" was the nation, which was the "object of intense passions [...] and a real object of worship"¹⁰⁴.

Rollier endorsed Visser 't Hooft's warning, and stated that the only antithesis and the only possible struggle is the one against all the idols and the absolutisms created by men to worship them¹⁰⁵. According to Rollier, mankind search for "safe" idols to avoid relativity with its uncertainty, from which God – the *totaliter aliter* – rises. Divinities such as individualism, collectivism, rationalism, idealism and nationalism are nothing more than "Titanisms leading men [...] to forget God, to slant the world, maybe not to face the relativity within God himself"¹⁰⁶.

Gioventù Cristiana vigorously reasserted its stance, the central role of transcendence and faith against the humanization of God as the most effective way to fight the all-engaging claims of mass ideologies. The crisis emerging from the more general dialectic between human and divine should have generated the "common measure"¹⁰⁷ described by another Swiss Barthian intellectual, Denis de Rougemont¹⁰⁸. In his

between ecumenism and federalism, op. cit. See also his memoirs, Visser 't Hooft W.A., *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1987.

¹⁰² Visser 't Hooft W.A., "Dio e gli dei dell'occidente", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 6-7 (giu.-lug. 1931), pp. 139-144.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁰⁵ Rollier M.A., "Ancora 'Teologia dialettica e politica'", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VI, n. 8 (ago. 1933), p. 139.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁰⁷ In his work *Penser avec les Mains*, the young writer focuses on the quest for a common measure to re-think the western society and to establish new political bonds considering people as an aim. De Rougemont identified the "common measure" of the Western world with the person. See Rougemont D. de, *Pensare con le mani. Le radici culturali della crisi europea*, Massa, Transeuropa, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Denis de Rougemont (1906-1985) was a Protestant writer and philosopher. Following his crucial meetings with Alexandre Marc and Robert Aron, he joined the personalist movement and was one of the contributors to Mounier's *Esprit*. De Rougemont was deeply influenced by the neo-calvinist trend and founded the Barthian-oriented maga-

Definition of the person, de Rougemont emphasized the pivotal role of "the human person", with his dignity, freedom and responsibility, in the establishment of a real political, economical, social and cultural revolution¹⁰⁹. Man should set himself free from all totalitarianisms and be the "active builder" of his own reality. According to de Rougemont, the conquest of the human person and the effort to put the person at the very heart of society are the ultimate goal of an actual human revolution¹¹⁰.

Such a perspective gave man back his freedom and transformed him into the key element from which a new society could have been built. Furthermore, de Rougemont's Christian personalism grafted onto the ecumenical perspective, according to which the believer and his community were the heart of a general convergence process of all the various Christian trends. The Ecumenical Movement which was then spreading throughout the Protestant world, was radically opposed to all forms of racial antagonism and pride, as well as to all national egoism aiming to eliminate the other nationalities and minorities, and ferociously condemned the deification of race, class or political and cultural ideals, to be considered as idolatries¹¹¹. Therefore, the ecumenism moved from the premise that the unity of Christians revolved around the unifying Christocentric principle, respecting their confessional freedom regardless of any ecclesiological difference. This approach, based on respect and dialogue, allowed to overcome the hierarchical and univocal structure of the Catholic Church, thus paving the way to new forms of convergence, reconciliation and unity of the Christian world¹¹².

zine *Hic et Nunc* (1932-1936). His experience with *L'Ordre Nouveau* (1933-1938), a magazine that combined personalism and an individual-based social, economic and political vision, led him to formulate an *integral* concept of federalism. He passionately supported the idea of a European federation revolving around the individuals. In the years between the two Wars, de Rougemont became a point of reference also for the Italian Barthians. On Denis de Rougemont, see Locatelli S., de Florentiis G.H. (eds.), *Denis de Rougemont. La vita e il pensiero*, Milano, Ferro edizioni, 1965; Ackermann B., *Denis de Rougemont, une biographie intellectuelle*, Genève, Labor et Fides, 1996; *Id.*, *Denis de Rougemont: de la personne à l'Europe: essai biographique*, Lausanne, Edit. L'Age d'Homme, 2000. His major works include *Politique de la Personne* (1934), *Penser avec les Mains* (1936), *Vita o morte dell'Europa* (1949), *L'avenir est notre affaire* (1977).

¹⁰⁹ Rougemont D. de, "Definizione della persona", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, VIII, n. 2 (mar.-apr. 1935), pp. 39-42.

¹¹⁰ Rollier M.A., "Recensione a Denis de Rougemont, 'Penser avec les mains', Paris 1938", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, XI, n. 4 (lug.-ago. 1938), pp. 28-29.

¹¹¹ See Rollier M.A., "Il Messaggio alle Chiese e le Conferenze di Oxford e di Edimburgo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, XI, n. 1 (gen.-feb. 1938), p. 9.

¹¹² See Rougemont D. de, *L'uno e il diverso*, Roma, Edizioni Lavoro, 1995, pp. 13-18.

Man regained his status as the linchpin of the Christian vision of the world, without whom, Miegge stated, "no Christian vision of the State is possible"¹¹³; besides, the Barthians' idea of Christianity could not consider the separation between the believer, on the one hand, and the politician, on the other hand¹¹⁴; therefore, the totalitarian concept of the State confronted them not only with a religious dilemma on values in general, on the freedom of the Church, but also with a political one, on the model of State that was more compliant with God's will. According to such principle, the political engagement of Miegge and his young collaborators stemmed from their theological beliefs, and implied the strict observance of the evangelical message, as "theological considerations and political engagement formed a cohesive whole, and the study of just one aspect of their struggle would mutilate reality"¹¹⁵. The contributors of *Gioventù Cristiana* hoped for a social, political and confessional reform which was as close as possible to men and citizens, in obedience to social justice, democracy and free participation. Miegge affirmed that Christians "had to solve the political problem by looking for a political solution". Therefore, such an interpretation led to the active political engagement of the Church¹¹⁶.

Ecumenism proved to be the most suitable instrument to overcome all confessional barriers without belittling their peculiarities. This universalistic impulse led to a period of rapprochement, solidarity and convergence among the various Christian Churches, with the exception of the Catholic Church, which would have resumed the ecumenical dialogue only in the 1960s. However, the refusal of all totalitarianisms and centralizing bureaucratic States fostered the debate among the young members of the Movement on which type of State was more compliant with the Christian principles, and which type of political-institutional system was closer to the ecumenical model. The meditation on the international order and the future of Europe paved the way to the recognition, by the members of the WCC, of federalism and its institutional mechanisms as the most effective instrument to establish a European peace and to foster a new ecumenical consciousness¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ Miegge G., "Oxford - Edimburgo 1937", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, XI, n. 1 (gen.-feb. 1938), p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 46.

¹¹⁵ Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., p. 270. See Alessandro Galante Garrone's article on Miegge and the young Barthians, "Le valli della libertà", in *La Stampa*, 25 luglio 1962.

¹¹⁶ Miegge G., *L'Église sous le joug fasciste*, Genève, Labor & Fides, 1946, pp. 44-45.

¹¹⁷ On the federalist perspective in the Protestant world, see Bouchard G., "Protestants, Ecumenical Perspectives and Federalism", in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), *"Die Welt war meine Gemeinde". Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, op. cit., pp. 258 and ff.

Before expanding on the theoretical aspects and of the most relevant contributions of the Waldensians to the cause of the European federation, it is crucial to stress the role played by Barth's theology and the ecumenical sensitivity on the Italian Evangelicals between the 1920s and 1930s. These two factors provide a key element to understand the deep reasons behind the evolution in the consciousness of a whole generation of Waldensians, some of whom transferred their deep-rooted moral and civil beliefs into the political domain, and participated in the struggle against Fascists. Many of them later joined Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli's MFE, as they held on to the conviction that real long-lasting peace could have been achieved only by putting an end to the age of the Nationalisms and opening that of European unity.

THIRD PART

I. Federalism and Ecumenism in International Reformed Protestantism

1. Christian ecumenism and European federalism: “United through Diversity”

Before describing the consistency of the Waldensian effort in the MFE, it is necessary to widen our gaze to the international landscape to reveal in the broader structure of Reformed Protestantism the propensity for federalist ideas. If the ultimate objective of this work is to find a connection between federal Protestant thought and political federalism at a concrete level, reflections on ecumenism carried out by international Reformed Protestantism made this connection evident. A tangible proof was a con- and federal-type of perspective both within the confessional realm and in the context of political arrangements in the first half of the 20th century. This perspective, although still lacking a theoretical codification in studies on political thought, was present in the political experience of many representatives of European and North American Protestantism who adhered before, during and after the Second World War to the various pro-European and federalist movements which arose before and during the Resistance.

For this reason, before describing the facts related to Waldensian activism in the MFE, it is necessary to present the ideological characterizations which influenced the thinking of the Protestants, making them more open to and predisposing them to the pro-European and federalist demands. Without these premises, in fact, it would not be possible to fully understand the reasons which led international Protestantism, organized in the World Council of Churches, to support a federal hypothesis for Europe at the end of the 1930s. Furthermore, it would be incomprehensible, in Italy, to justify such an immediate and spontaneous adhesion of numerous intellectuals, laypeople and men of the Protestant Churches to the ideas of the Ventotene *Manifesto*.

Therefore, it is first necessary to introduce ecumenism as a religious factor capable of orienting the conscience of the many Italian Evangelicals towards the federalist perspective, particularly the Barthians, who took part in the first worldwide ecumenical season, which arose in the Orthodox Christian and Protestant environment from the 1920s to the 1930s. Second, it will be interesting to draw attention to how federalism in its turn “contaminated” the orientation

of political reflections in the WCC on the future European organization, pushing its Secretary General, Visser 't Hooft, to create favourable conditions enabling the representatives of the Italian Resistance to meet with their comrades hailing from other European countries and sign the first international joint declaration of European federalists. However, before inserting these arguments into the framework of historic events, it is fitting to shed light briefly on what is meant by "ecumenism", what substantial difference exists between Protestant and Catholic ecumenism, and through which means a confessional and political comparison of the two orientations is made possible.

Therefore, we will now attempt to trace briefly the conceptual origins of contemporary ecumenism, highlighting certain "ideological" aspects and delineating the similarities and connections with federalist thinking, to offer a historical perspective of its concrete developments from the provisional formation of the WCC in 1937 to the activity undertaken during the Second World war on behalf of the Allies, until its official birth in 1948. It was precisely in this period that the convergence between ecumenism and federalism emerged more clearly within the WCC, and upon it in 1945 the Waldensian federalists developed their own vision of European federalism.

The term ecumenism – by now secularized – has become synonymous with an open, supportive and sympathetic behaviour, a virtue which has also remained in the religious setting, when ecumenical dialogue or spirit expressed a generic need for unity of the Churches and understanding amongst believers. Yet ecumenism is not only dialogue oriented towards an interconfessional debate tending to reciprocal comprehension in an attempt to overcome ancient controversies, ideological conflicts and theological differences, but it is above all a movement which implies an action towards Christ more than towards unity¹. The Ecumenical Movement was born as a reconciliatory force aimed at restoring the full and visible unity of Christians through a common effort among the various confessions; this does not exclude comparison on the ecclesiastical front, but the central

¹ Tourn G., *Italiani e protestantesimo. Un incontro impossibile?*, Torino, Claudiana, 1998, p. 229. Regarding this, see also Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, Roma, Claudiana, 1948; Michalon P., *L'unità dei cristiani*, Catania, Edizioni Paoline, 1966; Milaneschi C., *Ugo Janni, pioniere dell'ecumenismo*, Torino, Claudiana, 1979; Cereti G., "L'ecumenismo cristiano", in Filoramo G., Menozzi D. (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo*, op. cit., pp. 353-393, Vol. IV. On the subject of ecumenism and the European integration process, see Fischer J., "Le chiese e l'Europa di fronte al terzo millennio. Da Basilea a Graz, i progressi dell'ecumenismo in Europa", and Willaime J.-P., "Il Consiglio ecumenico delle chiese e la conferenza delle chiese europee di fronte all'unificazione dell'Europa", in Canavero A., Durand J.-D. (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, op. cit., pp. 177-188 and pp. 141-157.

point and underlying problem remains the integrity of faith². Only regarding this it is possible to define the union with respect to the community of followers and the world, and not with respect to the Churches, which maintain their distinct confessional characteristics and, therefore, their specific contribution to Christianity. For the Churches, in fact, Protestant ecumenism does not require a generic *reductio ad unum*, which would entail drastic constitutional and theological revisions, with the resultant flattening of the denominational and confessional differences, but simple Evangelical faith.

This approach, which responds to the attempt to identify and constitutionalize elements of common faith to the various confessional natures, respecting, integrating and harmonizing the theological and ecclesial differences, excludes from the outset one unitary formula from the research process, one single rigid hierarchical structure. Vittorio Subilia pointed out that the participants of the Ecumenical Movement were prepared "against the temptation of unity in uniformity", remaining far away from the imitation of "the Roman method of pure and simple absorption, leveling centralization, the subjugation of authority"³. The Waldensian theologian was among those who maintained the need for a confessional research "based on the principle of unity in variety" in order not to sacrifice Christian liberties. As regards this, the Gloucester Bishop considered it useless and dangerous to establish some form of united Church before all Churches, in the same manner, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, Non-Conformists, had learned the fundamental tenets of the Christian doctrine⁴.

At the origin of the guiding principles of ecumenical development the need for recognition of the plurality of the confessions prevailed since "the church of Christ is one (as the Credo states); however, there are many confessions, not only as a result of history, but as equally significant expressions of Christian reality"⁵. Therefore, no confession is able to "translate into its concrete form the fullness of Revelation", requiring the logical consequence of the "juridical equality of all of the confessions before Christ"⁶. From this perspective, in which no Church is more Church than the others, but each is trying equally to find its own unity in the convergence of the elements of faith and not on the basis of radical manoeuvrings and ecclesial and confessional reductions, Protestantism, in particular Reformed Protestantism, has contributed in a substantial manner to delineating the

² See Visser 't Hooft W.A., *The Pressure of Our Common Calling*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1959.

³ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, *op. cit.* p. 100.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Tourn G., *Italiani e protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

⁶ *Ibid.*

ecumenical way⁷. In part this is due to an innate condition in Protestantism, which in sustaining its own emancipation from the start of the Reformation suffered from separations which arose within Christianity. The search for religious freedom, which ended in the creation of a multitude of Churches and trends, each one with its own confessional identity, stimulated in the Protestants the desire to pursue a shared convergence starting with the conservation of their true identities. In fact, in the Protestant world there exists, by virtue of its internal fragmentation, a concept of unity intended "as an operative communion among different churches"; this concept, particularly in the setting of Evangelicalism, encouraged "the birth of interconfessional entities and movements", which paved the way for the ecumenical debate⁸. Protestantism naturally looks for a unifying synthesis in Christ which favours the common elements with respect to those derived from the confessional differences, thus opening up the possibility of federative structures to come to the full and visible unity of Christians and the Churches. As Subilia writes, "the comprehension of the value of unity respectful of individual differences is a Protestant appeal that was assumed as the ecumenical principle"⁹.

This assertion leads to make on the one hand a negative comparison with the ecumenical concept of Catholic Church and, on the other hand, a positive comparison with federalism. Both aspects delineate the profile of the two faces of ecumenism taken into consideration up to this point in which it is possible to identify more completely the ecclesial conception of unity developed by the Protestants and their "political aptitude", according to which only the equilibrium of "unity through diversity" can restore and guarantee a dimension of authentic justice and liberty to mankind.

Regarding Catholic ecumenism, Giorgio Tourn recalled that Rome, from the beginning, had interpreted "erroneously the profound ecumenical anguish as nostalgia for a lost unity", which would have been possible to remedy only through "the return to Roman obedience", seen as "the only possible form of ecumenism"¹⁰. On the basis of these radical positions, the Catholic Church refused the invitation of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches to establish the Ecumenical Movement together for more than a half century

⁷ See also Visser 't Hooft W.A., *La fede cristiana dinanzi al sincretismo. La tentazione del fronte unico di tutte le religioni*, Torino, Claudiana, 1966.

⁸ Rubboli M., *I protestanti, Da Lutero alle chiese, ai movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, op. cit., p. 93.

⁹ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, op. cit., p. 101. See also Ricca P., "Le chiese protestanti", in Filoramo G., Menozzi D. (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo*, op. cit., pp. 5-121, Vol. IV.

¹⁰ Tourn G., *Italiani e protestantesimo*, op. cit., p. 230. See also Cereti G., "L'ecumenismo cristiano", in Filoramo G., Menozzi D. (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo*, op. cit., pp. 355-396, Vol. IV.

until the Second Vatican Council. Before that time, Catholic ecumenism was characterized by a strong intransigence, also inspired in part by the rigid hierarchies upon which its Church was founded, thus preventing it from effectively having a harmonious and constructive vision of the doctrinal, ecclesiastical and confessional differences in the world of Christianity.

Hans Küng emphasized how the juxtaposition between the modern democratic paradigm and the anti-democratic Roman system, connected to the Medieval paradigm, had remained evident for all of the 19th and 20th centuries, until the Second Vatican Council. As a result, the Catholic Church opened itself up to ecumenical dialogue and a new agreement with the other Christian confessions¹¹. In Küng's view, intrinsic aspects to the Roman system were: the preservation of the absolutist system; the maintenance of the clerical state; the condemnation of human rights; the exclusion of the population and the clergy from the election of the bishops and the Pope; the concentration and centralization of power; the pyramidal system of appointments; and the principle of state religion¹². On the contrary, it is possible to glimpse in certain achievements of the modern democratic system derivative elements from the progressive process of secularization suffered by the cultural reform, such as: the end of the absolutist system; the disappearance of the orders and the abolition of the clerical state; the rights of man and the citizen; popular sovereignty and representative democracy; the division of the legislative, executive and judicial powers; decentralization; the free choice of those responsible at all levels; and the equality of rights for Jews and people of diverse faiths.

Subilia remarked that Christian liberty needed to "remain noble and normative", abhorring every "recourse to authoritative force which imposes, and does not convince, silencing contrasts without resolving them"; a "perennial temptation" which is "of institutions as much as private individuals"¹³. He maintained that the differences themselves made "the paradox of Ecumenism fruitful and vibrant"¹⁴. On the one hand, it manifested itself through "the simultaneous and harmonious growth of the dogmatic and ritualistic differences of the Church and the knowledge of the pressing reasons of their existence; and on the other hand, it manifested itself in "a fundamental subterranean unity, not in their respective traditions, however, beyond this, in the common God"¹⁵.

Therefore, the recourse to an unambiguous vision of ecumenism which identified this universal fervour with the truth of one single Church seemed

¹¹ Küng H., *Cristianesimo, essenza e storia*, op. cit., p. 722

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, op. cit., p. 100.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

totally unacceptable in the eyes of the “heretical” Churches, i.e. Protestant and Orthodox, because it was disrespectful of the different historical and confessional paths. On the contrary, Protestant ecumenism marked the end of the “ecclesiastical pharisaism” which “signifies awareness of its own justice: of its own dogmatic justice, of its own institutional justice, its own spiritual justice”¹⁶. Such a denominational pride “ignores the others and is not interested in the others”, does not look for communion, but cultivates a spirit of “exclusivism, of intolerant intransigence, of anathema”¹⁷.

No Christian confession is actually immune from this temptation, but the Ecumenical Movement and the resulting entities, gave rise to a principle of “federal” unity of part of the Christian world. Even if today the Church of Rome still puts itself on another ecumenical plane with respect to the other Christian churches, nevertheless it is possible to perceive a “change of sensitivity”, marked by the Second Vatican Council and the development of the federal structures inside the Protestant world¹⁸. In spite of the post-Council orientation adopted by the Roman Church, the Vatican continues nevertheless to pursue by means of “bilateral dialogues with the single confessions” its own uniform strategy which “remains imperialist in substance”¹⁹.

Despite this, the change which occurred in the Roman position is often characterized as an appropriation of other people’s values, rather than as a rethinking of their positions; one cannot, in fact, subtract from the impression that, in the spirit of that which we have defined as Roman cultural imperialism, Catholicism has simply reversed its positions Romanizing the ecumenical problem. The fullness of the ecclesiality remains only in the Roman communion, while the other ecclesial communities have heritages of Christian values to recover or integrate into the Roman fullness, and there “remain those which were: the lost sheep”²⁰. In fact, the 1965 text on Ecumenism (*Unitas Redintegratio*) recognized in the Catholic Church only the “fullness of the means of salvation” and the prerogative of “establishing the only body of Christ on Earth, to which it is necessary to fully incorporate all those who in some way already belong to the population of God”²¹.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Tourn G., *Italiani e protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

²¹ Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis redintegratio*, Decree on ecumenism, 3 (1964). See also Michalon P., *L’unità dei cristiani*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-224 and Feliciani G., “Il diritto di associazione nella chiesa: autorità, autonomia dei fedeli e comunione ecclesiale”, in *Vita e Pensiero*, n. 81 (1998), p. 723. Greater openness and a more conciliatory approach are revealed in the encyclical *Ut unum sint* on the commitment to ecumenism (1995).

This idea of ecumenical unity, characterized by a willingness to centralize and gradually reduce the confessional originalities to one single ecclesial body, including a legal-administrative one, clashes with the spirit which characterized Protestant ecumenism from the very beginning. Regarding this, Visser 't Hooft highlighted that "l'unité ecclésiale est autre chose que la centralisation"²². The steps forward of the New Testament, the first Secretary of the WCC wrote, "ne parlent pas de centralisation administrative; [...] l'unité ecclésiale n'implique aucune uniformité. L'Eglise du Nouveau Testament comportait une variété de ministères presque ahurissante et se réjouissait de cette diversité des dons de la grâce"²³. The Protestant idea of ecumenism is quite different, and is oriented contrary to Vatican centralism; "in our view – Pastor Bornand explained – what ecumenism requires today, the idea to follow is a sort of federation of the Churches which respects their true character and autonomy, with a credo: the Gospel; one Leader: Christ; one sign of union: the Eucharist"²⁴. In this vision the idea prevails that each Church can be autonomous and have its beliefs, its institutions, its rites and its particular dress in a unity fully respectful of diversity²⁵.

Christian unity, in fact, is not conceived as a unity in diversity, but through diversity. As Oscar Cullmann argued, in line with Protestant ecumenism, the Church of Christ is one and multiform; the diversity that originated from the primitive Church and which constitutes a gift of the Holy Spirit, is not an uncomfortable addendum to unity nor one of its corollaries, but rather that which characterizes and defines it entirely²⁶. In this respect, the Lutheran theologian stated that the characteristic of the Holy Spirit is to create unity (Pentecost). Ecumenism does not exist with the Holy Spirit. However, an essential characteristic of its action "is to create unity in diversity and through diversity [...]. Whoever seeks unity in uniformity commits, in his own way, a sin against the Holy Spirit [...]. For its own nature the action of the Holy Spirit is varied"²⁷. The objective of every ecumenism is, roughly, unity; confusing unity with uniformity signifies simplifying the fundamental requirement of ecumenism. The *Una Sancta* is not *uniformitas sancta*. In order to avoid this confusion, Cullman explained, "we must specify that unity is unity in diversity. Diversity in

²² Visser 't Hooft W.A., *Les exigences de notre vocation commune*, Genève, Labor et Fides, 1957, pp. 133-134.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Bornand R. "Convegno latino 1931. Ecumenismo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, IV, n. 8, settembre 1931, p. 25.

²⁵ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁶ Cullmann O., "L'ecumenismo dell'unità nella diversità secondo il Nuovo Testamento", in *Protestantesimo*, XL, n. 3 (1985), pp. 130.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

turn may then be simplified meaning an inconsistent pluralism which leads to dispersion, to schism. And thus diversity must be determined to be diversity in unity"²⁸. According to the Alsatian theologian, "the two terms, unity and diversity, must be taken extremely seriously [...]. The definitive, not provisional, objective which I pursue is a unity in which each church preserves its precious and inalienable elements and its own structure"²⁹. Hence, in the absence of a better term, he has defined it federation³⁰.

We come now to federalism. In the evident divergence between Catholics and Protestants on the ecumenical problem, a certain analogy with federalism can be found. The WCC itself developed along these lines, organizing itself "in a secular and vaguely federative structure" as Mario Alberto Rollier explains, which brings together the Christian Churches to the exclusion of the Roman Catholic Church, "which, enclosed in its dreams of supremacy and papal infallibility, never wanted to adhere to this structure"³¹. At the interconfessional level, ecumenism puts itself on the same plane of federalism, which operates in the field of political-constitutional engineering. Such a juxtaposition was advanced by Luigi Vannicelli³² who, comparing various aspects of supranational federalism and interconfessional ecumenism, came to the conclusion that behind the accomplishment of political federalisms (for the States) and of inter-religious federalisms there are points of fundamental and immovable understanding, among which are the concepts and necessities of peace, subsidiarity and tolerant solidarity, and of justice for all (individuals and communities)³³. Such assumptions, Vannicelli explains, stem from a common "humanistic principle", in the sense that both federalism and ecumenism permit a full regard on both the political plane and that concerning ethics and values³⁴. Therefore, federalism and ecumenism not only resemble each other as regards ideological assumptions and practical organizational systems, but they integrate themselves in their objectives. In fact, as Francesco Lo Bue observed, ecumenism can constitute the spirit of federalism or, better, one of the elements of conscience at the heart of a social

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129-130.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ From a report to the Rotary Club of Milan on May 24, 1977, p. 1, in Fondo Mario Alberto Rollier (hereinafter FMAR), b. 23, file 143, in Archivio dell'Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia, INSMILI.

³² See Vannicelli L., *Neofederalismo unitario e pluralismo interconfessionale (profili giuridici comparati)*, Roma, Goliardica, 1994; Id., *Federalismo ed ecumenismo. Dialogo e cooperazione tra Stati e tra confessioni religiose*, Roma, Edizioni Romane di Cultura, 1998.

³³ Vannicelli L., *Neofederalismo unitario e pluralismo interconfessionale*, op. cit., p. 118.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

behaviour of a federal nature³⁵. Vannicelli even went so far as to talk about "federalist spirituality", in which human virtues become a valid support for the achievement of cosmopolitan communities, organized politically on the basis of federal systems³⁶, thus drawing closer to the ecumenical-federalist concept of Denis de Rougemont and the integral federalism of Alexandre Marc.

In summary, it is possible to assert that ecumenism represents the extreme attempt to reconcile the Christian Churches, separated by ancient theological, dogmatic, historical and cultural differences, through a united movement which, departing from the common Trinitarian and Christological base, arrives at a single body without making the confessional peculiarities of each Church homogeneous. This point of departure stimulated the search for a dialogue oriented towards a cooperative reconciliation. The ecumenical development, which went from the acceptance of the principle *in uno plures* to the shared development of *e pluribus unum*, is accompanied by a strong denominational and confessional associative desire; this in the Protestant realm entailed, especially in Reformed ecclesiology, an act of federal association. For this reason, Lo Bue stated that federalism could assert itself in a climate of Protestant ecumenism. In his view, Protestant ecumenism originated from the awareness of the limits of its own religious confessionalism and overtook the self-righteousness of the Churches to finish in the union of the only Church of Christ. In the same way, national States should have acted to achieve a community of European peoples³⁷. The strict analogy between the two terms was underscored by Giovanni Miegge as well, who explained that, on the one hand, ecumenism needed "to overcome a narrow-minded confessionalism to look for Christ in unity", while, on the other hand, "the federative necessity" would have allowed to understand and meet "the need to overcome the Leviathan state in order to find man in unity"³⁸.

A direct association between religious and political systems was almost spontaneous in the ecumenical reflection matured within the Ecumenical Movement and the WCC in the 1930s and 1940s, especially that con-

³⁵ See typed minutes of the afternoon discussions which followed the "Giornate teologiche del 1945", Carte Mario Alberto Rollier (hereinafter CMAR), file 5, sheet "Giornate teologiche del Ciabas", in ASSV.

³⁶ See Vannicelli L., *Neofederalismo unitario e pluralismo interconfessionale*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³⁷ See Lo Bue's speech contained in the minutes of the afternoon discussions which followed the "Giornate teologiche del 1945", CMAR, file 5, sheet "Giornate teologiche del Ciabas", in ASSV.

³⁸ See Miegge's speech contained in the minutes of the afternoon discussions which followed the "Giornate teologiche del 1945", CMAR, file 5, sheet "Giornate teologiche del Ciabas", in ASSV.

ducted by Reformed Protestantism of Swiss, Dutch and Anglo-American origins, where political federalism was a historic and political consolidated reality. For the purposes of this study, it is interesting, however, to observe how even in Italy a Reformed-Evangelical minority was naturally drawn to Rossi and Spinelli's idea of European federalism, in part because of political-ideological roots common to the drafters of the *Ventotene Manifesto*, but also thanks to its own ecumenical vocation. This was, in fact, an inherent component of the religious sensitivity and confessional nature of the Italian Calvinist community, in which the spiritual tension of the Christian universalism was historically rooted. The Barthian vanguard flowed into the current of the Ecumenical Movement, developing a broad universal and federalist perspective, both at the confessional and political levels. For these reasons, as Rognoni emphasized, a Waldensian like Rollier joined federalism through ecumenism, like other young Waldensians. He explained accordingly that the religious and cultural context in which he developed his political ideas was already considerably predisposed to be open to the principles of European federalism elaborated in the *Manifesto di Ventotene*³⁹.

This path, which led a generation of Waldensian intellectuals to European and worldwide federalism, is evident not only in Rollier, but also in other Barthian supporters. Like him, they associated the two terms, giving life to an original ethical-political syncretism to the "overcoming of hates and barriers" and to a "new, common vocation on the pathways of justice and compassion in a dignified and concrete spirit of freedom"⁴⁰. According to Subilia, the nature of Europe after the War should have had this dual vocation. On the one hand it was profoundly "ethical" and "spiritual", because it was born from the observation of the suffering caused by the "collective egoistic particularism, refusing to recognize a superior law which is sovereign to all and to which all must be accountable, the particularism which each looks for his own personal advantage only and does not recognize the law of mutual service", which "leads to disintegration, conflict and mutual extinction"⁴¹.

On the other hand, this vocation acquires an intimately "social" and, therefore, "political" significance because "the mindset that social processes are dependent on distant but necessary religious processes and that the world of nations lacks political unity because it lacks religious unity, can logically lead to the reasoning which assumes as indispensable that a federative union of peoples is a federative union of Churches, and to the

³⁹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁴⁰ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

reasoning that the profound spirit of a union at a political level cannot be other than one at a religious level⁴².

In this way, Subilia explained, Nazism and all the forces naturally disposed to the weakening of the individual and collective homogenization are in stark contrast with the forces which, on the contrary, lean towards the type of human unity based on respect for the individual and his freedoms. It is because of this interpretation of reality that "Nazism proudly opposed the [Ecumenical] Movement, as it saw an overcoming of ecclesiastical nationalisms that could have been a dangerous and effective ally in the overcoming of political nationalisms"⁴³.

2. The World Council of Churches and the idea of a federal Europe

From the beginning of the 20th century many objectives were achieved towards the creation of international organizations aimed at interweaving inter-religious dialogue with inter-ecclesiastical cooperation in order to promote peace in Europe and in the world. We have already mentioned the significant role played by the World Alliance in the promotion of international friendship through the Churches and the still-developing Ecumenical Movement. Furthermore, during the 1930s, the zeal of the missionary organizations and the enthusiasm of the youngest generations of Protestants triggered the process which led to the formation of the WCC, organized around the figure of Dutch Reformed pastor Visser 't Hooft, its first Secretary General⁴⁴.

In his history of Christianity, Hans Küng remembered Visser 't Hooft as "one of the very few truly epochal figures in the history of the Church of the 20th century"⁴⁵. The Catholic theologian recalled that the "important active minds and international thinkers of the Ecumenical Movement" from the beginning of our century came from above all the churches with Calvinist leanings⁴⁶. Among these was the Waldensian Church, which boasted close and long-standing relationships with Geneva, where numerous Reformed pastors lived in and many Barthians studied. Geneva, the heart of European Calvinism, located in a neutral country at a crossroads between different national cultures, was a free and open centre both to cultural debate and inter-confessional confluence in a time characterized

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ See Briggs J., Oduyoye M.A., Tsetsis G. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1968-2000*, *op.cit.*

⁴⁵ Küng H., *Cristianesimo, essenza e storia*, *op. cit.*, p. 583.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

by a climate of overall ideological closure. Geneva, therefore, became the ideal place to organize the worldwide ecumenical movement. Not by chance, K ng emphasized, did the headquarters of the WCC become, not Rome or Wittenberg or Canterbury, but Geneva⁴⁷.

The genesis of the Ecumenical Movement goes back to the beginning of the 20th century; however, the modern ecumenical idea or at least the influences that determined its developments can be traced back to the mid-19th century. The 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference is generally considered the official beginning of the modern Ecumenical Movement. Edinburgh marked "a watershed in the history of the Protestant mission" and was "the beginning of a critical 'long march' that the works and churches made" in the past century⁴⁸. This path led to "a profoundly new vision of the Christian mission"⁴⁹ and to a unified tension, which is reflected in Protestantism, even today, in a "reconciled diversity"⁵⁰.

The incentive for the pursuit of an ecumenical dialogue initially came, above all, from youth organizations like the World Student Christian Federation and the YMCA. Frustrated with the rigid confessionalistic dogma, these associations were more inclined to live the faith according to the authentic spirit of evangelization. Ecumenism had also influenced the missionary organizations, which were ever more powerful due to the denominational and confessional divisions in the face of increasing social crises and the difficulties encountered in the colonial possessions following the economic and military expansionism of the European powers. It should not be forgotten, as Paolo Ricca noted, that the ecumenical tension had already found powerful stimuli in the 19th century thanks both to the "young churches" of the Third World, which had gradually emancipated from Western theological dependence, and to the missionary associations, which then converged in the International Missionary Council (IMC) created precisely in the wake of the Edinburgh Conference and formally established in 1921⁵¹.

On the basis of these considerations, the missionary movements belonging to the different Protestant Churches convened a meeting in Edinburgh to discuss the difficulties encountered in the development of their enterprise as a result of internal ecclesial disagreement. There the hypothesis was advanced of creating a World Conference of Churches aimed at coordinating the undertaking, circumventing at least in principle all confessional and doctrinal questions. On that occasion, the motto that best summed up

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Ricca P., "Protestanti nelle rivoluzioni", *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87. See also Ricca P., "Il movimento ecumenico", *op. cit.*, pp. 653-667.

the spirit of the Conference was: "we cannot continue to evangelize the world with divided churches, thus exporting the division with the mission". Later, in 1925, at the Stockholm Conference, Edinburgh's motto was replaced with the more pragmatic and proactive: "doctrine divides, action unites".

The First World War and the failure of the collaboration among the Churches for peace had prompted the confessional organizations and associations to look for a greater and more concrete unity among Christians. Among the ecclesiastical institutions was the widespread opinion that an authentic confessional reconciliation between the Christian Churches, sanctioned by an ecumenical union, would favour the achievement of long-lasting peace in Europe. On the basis of these considerations, in 1920, the Patriarch of Constantinople, concerned about the internal conflicts within Christianity, issued an encyclical with an appeal addressed to all of the Christian Churches of the world in which he advanced the hypothesis of constructing a stable league or a Council of Churches based on the example of the League of Nations. Later, Visser 't Hooft would consider such proposal one of the fundamental premises of the establishment of the Ecumenical Movement and the WCC. The idea of a Council of Churches had already been put forward in January 1919 by the metropolitan bishop Dorotheos of Bursa, Turkey, to the synod of the Church of Constantinople. He indicated the urgency of creating a permanent body for brotherhood and cooperation between the Churches with a view to their future union affirming that "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"⁵².

This new reconciliative spirit, founded on – unlike the previous experience – concrete proposals, including institutional proposals (*Koinonia ton Ekklesion*), should have stood alongside the League of Nations (*Koinonia ton Ethnon*) conceived by President Wilson, thus providing a substantial contributions to the reinforcement of the spiritual and political ties between the peoples and nations of Europe. In this respect, the Metropolita indicated the delay of the Churches in organizing an institution similar to the League of Nations in the religious sphere, reiterating that in such way the Churches would have continued "to fall piteously behind the political authorities who, truly applying the spirit of the gospel and of the teaching

⁵² Visser 't Hooft W.A., *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

of Christ, have under happy auspices already set up the so-called League of Nations in order to defend justice and cultivate charity and agreement between the nations”⁵³.

Behind these initiatives two Protestant movements made an appearance which, after a series of meetings and conferences, led to the establishment of the WCC. The first movement, *Life and Work*, prompted a collaboration among the Churches in order to coordinate their practical activities, especially in the area of social assistance. The second, *Faith and Order*, aspired instead to the attainment of the unity of Christians on the basis of a confessional and doctrinal convergence⁵⁴. Both movements oriented their actions in an ecumenical sense from the outset, organizing the first conferences after the First World War. The first of these was prepared and announced in Stockholm in 1925 by the *Life and Work* movement, while the second, organized by *Faith and Order*, took place in Lausanne in 1927. These were followed by the meetings in Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, where the two movements had gathered with the intent of pursuing a common strategy and a stricter coordination among the Churches in order to impede a new nationalistic shift.

Christian unity was by now perceived as a binding necessity and an essential fact to avert the catastrophe of a new conflict. They thus came to a project for creating a new body aimed at the formation of a supra-ecclesiastical entity able not only to proceed internally with confessional reconciliation, but also to establish itself externally as a representative authority of the common will of all of the Churches⁵⁵. A year later, at the Utrecht Conference, the constitutive principles of the Provisional Committee of the WCC were formulated, to be formalized during the Amsterdam Conference in 1948. In a “post-Christian” era, in which the obscuration of Christian values in the face of unchecked vitalism in new ideologies was perceived, Subilia noted that the time had come for the Churches to practically collaborate and federate so as not to be more absent in a Christian way from a society in distress, but to address with a spirit

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁴ *Life and Work*, born during the First World War on the initiative of Swedish Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Soderblom, aspired to maintain open contact between Christians and the belligerent countries. *Faith and Order* was founded on the initiative of American Episcopalian Bishop Charles Brent. The aim of the movement was to create opportunities for dialogue and exchange among the Churches on theological and doctrinal questions in order to identify a minimum foundation of shared values. See Rouse R. and Neill S.C. (eds.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1517 al 1948*, *op. cit.* and Fey H.E. (ed.), *Storia del movimento ecumenico dal 1948 al 1968*, *op. cit.* See also Visser 't Hooft W.A., *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ See Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

of compassion the economic and international problems with which the people struggled⁵⁶.

These questions, at the heart of the ecumenical discussion from the end of the 1930s, stimulated in some leaders of the WCC a profound reflection on the political state of Europe, divided by nationalism, leading them to look for a definitive remedy for the war, a way to "liberate humanity from its physical, moral and spiritual ravages"⁵⁷. That "international way" of thinking revealed the originality of the WCC and the real change that its Provisional Committee was effecting on European and world Protestantism. The leaders of the ecumenical organization, in fact, did not limit themselves to condemning the war solely on the basis of Christian principles. They instead reiterated that justice and peace between the nations and peoples of Europe would be possible only through a drastic limitation of the sovereignty of the national States, "the abandonment on the part of each state of the demand to be the judge of its own cause"⁵⁸. This point of view guided the men of the WCC to propose a federal system for Europe.

The Provisional Committee of the WCC was composed of men who came from areas and countries where federalism was a well-established reality. Among these, it is worth remembering its first President, Anglican Archbishop William Temple (1881-1944)⁵⁹. He was a theologian, a Labour Party member and author of numerous influential essays, such as *Church and Nation* (1915), *Christianity and the State* (1928), *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942) and *The Church Looks Forward* (1944). Alongside him, was pastor Marc Boegner (1881-1970), first President of the French Protestant Federation (1929) and staunch supporter of Christian unity. Boegner, who later participated in the work of the Second Vatican Council⁶⁰, was the Vice President of the Provisional Committee and author of numerous essays on the ecumenical question. He was also a member of the French Resistance during the Nazi occupation, actively contributing to keeping contact between the Resistance and the leaders of the WCC open⁶¹. In the 1950s, the French pastor became part of the international

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁷ See "Documenti. Il messaggio della Conferenza di Oxford alle Chiese Cristiane", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, XI, n. 1 (gen. - feb. 1938), p. 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁹ For more details on Temple, see Kent J., *William Temple. Church, State and Society in Britain, 1880-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

⁶⁰ Boegner participated as observer at the third and fourth sessions of the Second Vatican Council. See Boegner M., *L'exigence œcuménique. Souvenirs et perspectives*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1968.

⁶¹ See the list of French members in FMAR, b. 9, file. 82, in INSMLI. See also Boegner P., *Les carnets du pasteur Boegner (1940-1945)*, Paris, Fayard, 1992; Boegner M.,

organizing committee sponsoring a petition in favour of a "federal union pact" for Europe. The other Vice President of the WCC was Methodist John Mott (1865-1955), American pacifist, leader of the YMCA and the World Student Christian Federation, to whom was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946⁶².

The Associate Secretaries were William Paton (1886-1943) and Henry Smith Leiper (1891-1975). Both were federalists and close to the British Federal Union movement⁶³. The former committed himself deeply not only to pursuing the ecumenical objectives promised by the WCC, but was also one of the main supporters of the federal model for Europe, proposed within the Provisional Committee of the Council during the war. Paton occupied a prominent position within the Ecumenical Movement and fully devoted himself to the reconstruction of the Church after the Great War. During the Second World War, his ecumenical work was directed mainly towards the maintenance of the ecumenical relations among the Churches. His work *The Church and the New Order* had a wide following and a considerable influence on Christian public opinion not only in the United States and Great Britain, but also in old Europe, and fostered the debate on the construction of a federal peace in Europe⁶⁴.

The latter, Leiper, an American, was an outspoken critic of the Nazis who preached in churches around the world against German aggression.

"L'influence de la réforme sur le développement du droit International", in *Recueil des cours*, vol. 6, a. I (1925), pp. 241-324; *Id.*, "Les missions protestantes et le droit International", in *Recueil des cours*, vol. 29, a. VI (1929), pp. 187-286. On his ecumenical commitment, Boegner M., *L'exigence œcuménique. Souvenirs et perspectives*, *op. cit.* On his life, see Mehl R., *Marc Boegner, une humble grandeur*, Paris, Plon, 1987.

⁶² See Mathews B.J., *John R. Mott, World Citizen*, New York: Harper, 1934; Fisher G.M., *John R. Mott: Architect of Cooperation and Unity*, New York, Association Press, 1953; Hopkins C.H., *John R. Mott, 1865-1955*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979.

⁶³ On Paton and the Federal Union, refer to archival documentation in War file: *Peace and disarmament, 1928-1940*, box 3: Federal Union, Reverend William Paton, in the World Council of Churches Archives (hereinafter WCCA). On the British federalist movement, see Pinder J., "Federal Union 1939-194", in Lippens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, I Vol., *Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, 4 Vols., Berlin-New York, Walter De Gruyter, 1985, pp. 142-144; Bosco A., "Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement (1938-40)", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July 1988), pp. 465-502; Pinder J., "Tre fasi nella storia del federalismo britannico", in Preda D., Rognoai Vercelli C. (eds.), *Storia e percorsi del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-402, Vol. I; Pinder J., Mayne R., *Federal Union. The Pioneers. A History of Federal Union*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ See Paton W., *The Church and the New Order*, New York, Macmillan, 1941. On Paton, see Jackson E.M., "Paton, William" in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, edited by Gerald H. Anderson, New York, Macmillan Reference USA, 1998, p. 519. On his political vision, see Paton W., *World Community*, London, Student Christian Movement Press, 1938.

Leiper concentrated in particular on Nazi tactics against religion and religious figures. He was also one of the advisers of the Federal Union on behalf of the American section of the WCC⁶⁵, and during the war he organized the escape of many Jews from Nazi Germany in collaboration with Bonhoeffer⁶⁶. Leiper, like Paton, was also close to the group of theologians of the "new world order", influenced by "Christian realism", which maintained the necessity of the entry of the United States into the war and the subsequent formation of a new international arrangement, founded and organized around the American leadership⁶⁷.

The soul and true spiritual and organizing force of the WCC, however, remains its Secretary General Visser 't Hooft. As a result of his effort during the war, the WCC not only kept its relationships with all of the Churches of the countries open, which were busy and involved in the conflict, but also succeeded in maintaining good relationships with representatives of the allied governments by means of two important offices of connection: one in London, coordinated by Paton; and one in New York, directed by Leiper. Visser 't Hooft played a pivotal role in the establishment and maintenance of a broad network of clandestine relationships among various representatives of the European Resistance, from the Dutch and German Resistance movements through Bonhoeffer, to the French and Italian ones⁶⁸.

On this point it is necessary to stress Bonhoeffer's role in the German anti-Nazi conspiratorial organization and the close relations with Visser 't Hooft as well as the activities of the WCC during the war. In fact, even among the German Protestant components of the Resistance, the ideal of a federal European unity had taken hold and spread, confirming the convergence of multiple political tendencies in the European Resistance on Europeanist and federalist positions⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Regarding his ecumenical perspective and policy, see Leiper H.S., *Christ's Way and the World's*, in *Church, State, and Society*, New York, Abingdon, 1936; Id., *World Chaos or World Christianity. A Popular Interpretation of Oxford and Edinburgh*, Chicago, Willett, Clark & Co, 1938.

⁶⁶ Barnett V.J., "The Role of the Churches: Compliance and Confrontation", in *Dimensions*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1998).

⁶⁷ See Warren H.A., *Theologians of a New World Order. Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920-1948*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

⁶⁸ On the contact between Visser 't Hooft and various representatives of the Allied governments and European Resistance, see Lippens W., Loth W. (eds.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, 4 Vols., Berlin-New York, Walter De Gruyter, 1985-1991; Dulles A.W., Petersen N.H., *From Hitler's Doorstep. The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942-1945*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. See also Visser 't Hooft A.W., *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ See Lippens W., *Europa-Föderationspläne der Widerstandsbewegungen*, München, R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1968.

Among the core groups of the German Resistance more clearly oriented towards federalist solutions was the noted Kreisau Circle⁷⁰. Certain members of this group were part of the conspiratorial cell inside *Abwehr*, the secret military service of the Reich. The *Abwehr* was led by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris (1887-1945), director of the German military intelligence organization from 1935 to 1944, and Deputy Commander Hans Oster (1897-1945). They organized a conspiratorial anti-Nazi network, known also as the *Schwarze Kapelle*, which had branches inside the Regime operations both in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as in the military ranks. From the outset of the war, various civilians were involved in the activities of the *Abwehr* to provide cover to missions abroad, officially motivated for military or counter-espionage reasons but who in reality were constructing a network of contacts with the Allies or the Resistance movements in the occupied countries.

Among the figures involved with Oster to that end it is worth recalling lawyer Hans von Dohnanyi; his brother-in-law Bonhoeffer; Munich attorney Joseph Müller (1898-1979); Hans Bernd Gisevius (1904-1974), agent of the *Abwehr* in Switzerland who had taken part in the assassination attempt on Hitler in 1938; and Helmuth James von Moltke (1907-1945), leader of the *Kreisauer Kreis*. The *Abwehr*, freeing Bonhoeffer from the obligation of communicating his movements, had instructed the German theologian to travel throughout Europe (Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Italy) to make contact with the Allies and supporters of the European Resistance. Bonhoeffer visited Switzerland from August 29th to September 25th, 1941, meeting Visser 't Hooft several times⁷¹. In May 1942, the Bishop of Chichester, George K.A. Bell, received unofficially in Stockholm two German theologians, Bonhoeffer and Hans Schönfeld, ostensibly for religious reasons but in reality for espionage aims (Schönfeld worked both for the WCC and the Foreign Affairs Office of the German Evangelical Church). Schönfeld had been sent to Stockholm by the Kreisau Circle⁷². On that occasion, besides informing

⁷⁰ See Winterhager W.E., *Der Kreisauer Kreis. Porträt einer Widerstandsgruppe*, Berlin, von Hase & Koehler, 1985. On the political proposals of the Kreisau Circle, see Dell'Acqua S., "L'Europa del Kreisauer Kreis. Proposte politiche e contatti internazionali del circolo di Helmuth James von Moltke", in Rognoni Vercelli C., Fontana P.G., Preda D. (eds.), *Altiero Spinelli, il federalismo europeo e la Resistenza*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2012, pp. 511-532.

⁷¹ See "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Willem Visser 't Hooft: memorandum on 'The Church and the new order in Europe'", in Lipgens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration, op. cit.*, pp. 395-397, Vol. I.

⁷² The details of the meeting are known only thanks to the Bishop of Chichester's account. Regarding the same, see Bell G.K.A., "The background of the Hitler Plot", in *Contemporary Review*, No. 68 (Oct. 1945), pp. 203-208, reprinted in *Id.*, *The*

the Bishop of the strength and composition of the opposition groups in Germany, Schönfeld brought him the programme of the *Kreisauer Kreis*, which envisaged a European federation of free states endowed with a common executive power under which a European army would be created for the lasting preservation of European peace and security⁷³. Furthermore, the fundamental principles of the future European federation would have conformed to the values of Christian life, respecting human rights⁷⁴.

In addition to the *Abwehr* network, the *Kreisauer Kreis*, led by von Moltke, relied on other figures tied to Protestant ecumenism, such as Evangelical theologian Eugen Gerstenmaier (1906-1986)⁷⁵, future President of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Adam von Trott zu Solz (1909-1944)⁷⁶, Protestant lawyer and diplomat. Both acted as liaisons between the Kreisau Circle and Visser 't Hooft. It was as a result of the close relations with the WCC Secretary that the agents of the *Kreisauer Kreis* succeeded in establishing contacts with the Allies⁷⁷.

During the phases of the conflict, some members of the Provisional Committee of the WCC were part of the allied system of intelligence

Church and Humanity, London, Longman, 1946, pp. 165-176. More information can be obtained from correspondence between Bell and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. See Bell G.K.A., "Die Ökumene und die innerdeutsche Opposition", in *Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte*, vol. V, n. 4, (1957), pp. 373-392.

⁷³ Bell G.K.A., "Die Ökumene und die innerdeutsche Opposition", *op. cit.*, p. 372.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ On Gerstenmaier, see Gniess D., *Der Politiker Eugen Gerstenmaier 1906-1986*, Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 2005.

⁷⁶ On von Trott zu Solz, see Sykes C., *Troubled Loyalty. A Biography of Adam von Trott zu Solz*, London, Collins, 1968. On his conspiratorial activities, see Malone H.O., *Adam von Trott zu Solz. Werdegang eines Verschwörers 1909-1938*, Berlin, Siedler, 1985; Sears K.A.E., "To Strive and Not to Yield". *Opposing Hitler. Adam von Trott zu Solz, 1909-1944*, Brighton-Portland, Sussex Academic Press, 2009. See also Groeben W., "Adam von Trott zu Solz", in Sigler S. (Hrsg.), *Corpsstudenten im Widerstand gegen Hitler*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2014, pp. 217-225.

⁷⁷ On the proposed policies in a federal sense which circulated within this network, see the political propositions of peace prepared by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and conveyed by Visser 't Hooft to von Trott zu Solz in 1943, see "Adam von Trott: comments on the peace programme of the American Church", in Lippens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-442, Vol. I. On the events of the German Resistance, see Ritter G., *I cospiratori del 20 luglio 1944*, Torino, Einaudi, 1960; Rothfels H., *L'opposizione tedesca al nazismo*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1963; Roon G. van, *Neuordnung im Widerstand*, München, R. Oldenburg Verlag 1967; Brocker M., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, XVI Vol., *Conspiracy and Imprisonment, 1940-1945*, 16 Vols., Minneapolis, Fortress Press 2006, Vol. XVI; Dulles A.W., Petersen N.H., *From Hitler's Doorstep*, *op. cit.*

organized by Allen Welsh Dulles (1893-1969), Head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Switzerland. Foster made use "of religious groups for contacts and information"⁷⁸ in the 1940s, having as a point of reference inside the European Protestant environment his brother, John Foster Dulles (1888-1959), a member of the WCC and engaged in the Ecumenical Movement⁷⁹. He was also co-founder as well as one of the most active participants of the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, an internal commission of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America which was committed to studying and redesigning the European political arrangement in the post-War scenario. Among A.W. Dulles's main collaborators were the Secretary General of the WCC, known by the code name "Source 474"⁸⁰. Petersen, in fact, explained that Dulles "maintained close ties with Visser 't Hooft throughout the war", above all for the "extensive international connections"⁸¹ of the Dutch pastor.

We turn now to the prospects of the new international order hoped for by the WCC and the concrete projects promoted and discussed by its members. In July 1939, an important conference on the international situation was held in Geneva on the initiative of the Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. It was, Visser 't Hooft writes, "a small but representative group of specialists on international questions and Church leaders".⁸² Among these were J.F. Dulles, the Swiss Max Huber⁸³,

⁷⁸ Dulles A.W., Petersen N.H., *From Hitler's Doorstep*, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

⁷⁹ The Dulles brothers were sons of American Presbyterian Church pastor Allen Macy Dulles. Allen Welsh, after the Second World War, would later become the director of the CIA, while John Foster was the Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959 during the Eisenhower presidency. The latter was a staunch supporter of European unification. On the Dulles brothers, see Immerman R.H., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989; Marks F., *Power and Peace. The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles*, Westport, Praeger, 1995; Kinzer S., *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War*, New York, Times Books, 2013.

⁸⁰ Dulles A.W., Petersen N.H., *From Hitler's Doorstep*, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Rouse R., Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 707, Vol. II.

⁸³ Max Huber (1874-1960) was a Swiss lawyer and diplomat who represented Switzerland at a series of international conferences and institutions. He was the first President of the Permanent Court of International Justice of Aja and was President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of Geneva from 1928 to 1944. See Thürer D., "Max Huber. A Portrait in Outline", in *The European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2007), pp. 81-95.

the French M. Charles Rist⁸⁴, the Dutch Frederik Mari van Asbeck⁸⁵ and the German Otto H. von der Gablentz⁸⁶.

Among these, Huber developed the idea of "constitutionalization", a supranational ethos of the universal Church as a basis for international law. He argued that "only Christians, as members of the *Una Sancta*, understand the deep foundations of a legal order, which can extend beyond the limits of the national communities"⁸⁷. Only on the basis "of the *Una Sancta* can a supranational ethos be built up. Without such an ethos, all law, especially international law, which has behind it no power or compulsion or only limited and insecure forces, remains a fragile structure"⁸⁸. Another follower of this first group of thought, J.F. Dulles,

⁸⁴ M. Charles Rist (1874-1955), an economist, professor at the University of Montpellier and the Paris Law Faculty at the Sorbonne, he was Vice-Governor of the Bank of France in 1926. An expert on monetary policy and international finance, he published, together with Charles Gide, *Histoire des doctrines économiques* (1909). In 1928, he became a member of the French *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* and in 1933, with the economic support of the Rockefeller Foundation, established the *Institut de recherche économiques et sociales* (IRES). See Dehem R., "Rist, Charles (1874-1955)", in Eatwell J., Milgate M. and Newman P. (eds.), *The New Palgrave. A Dictionary of Economics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.

⁸⁵ Frederik Mari van Asbeck (1889-1968), a professor of law at Leiden University and of international law at the Batavia Law School in the Dutch East Indies. During his stay in the Dutch East Indies, he developed a passion for the history of the colonies, which inspired him to specialize in international colonial law. From 1948 to 1954, he was elected President of the Commission of Churches for International Affairs of the WCC and from 1959 to 1964, was one of the judges of the European Court of Human Rights.

⁸⁶ Otto Heinrich von der Gablentz (1898-1972), close to the confessional component of the German Socialist Party led by Paul Tillich, in 1925 was hired by the *Statistischen Reichsamts* (Reich's Statistical Office). With the rise of Nazis to power, he lost the job, finding work in a chemical factory. In 1940, he entered into contact with von Moltke. Moltke was one of the principle conspirators of the Kreisau Circle, on which he exercised a strong influence. It was through them that the July 20th, 1944, assassination attempt on Hitler was planned. During the course of the war, he collaborated with the WCC and Visser 't Hooft's group. After the war, he taught political science at the Free University of Berlin (*Freien Universität Berlin*).

⁸⁷ Rouse R., Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 578, Vol. II.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* See also Huber M., "Some Observations upon the Christian Understanding of International Law", in Marquess of Lothian, *et al.*, *The Universal Church and the World of Nations*, Chicago-New York, Official Oxford Conference Books, 1938, Vol. VII, pp. 97-146. Present in the same volume are essays by Lord Lothian (*The Demonic Influence of National Sovereignty*), J.F. Dulles (*The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World*) and O.H. von der Gablentz (*The Material Foundations of an International Order*). *The Universal Church and the World of Nations* is part of a series of publications that contain the proceedings of a number of conferences held in Oxford on religion and international relations. The Official Oxford Conference Books include: *The Church and its Function in Society* (vol. I), *The Christian Understanding of Man* (vol. II), *The Kingdom of God and History* (vol. III), *Christian Faith and the Common Life*

in collaboration with the “theologians of the new world order”, in 1941 established a special internal commission of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America to design a system capable of guaranteeing a just and lasting peace⁸⁹.

A few months after the start of the war, Visser 't Hooft wrote to Paton, underlining the importance and role of the Ecumenical Council regarding “the problem of the preparation of a future international settlement”⁹⁰. In the letter the Secretary General reiterated that the WCC represented the only Christian organization able to work in this direction since, firstly, “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 involved in a future settlement”⁹¹. A month later, in another letter addressed to the Vice Secretary of the WCC, Visser 't Hooft pointed out the need for the Churches, represented by the WCC, to draft a memorandum able to define the proposals and the points aimed at the implementation of the most stable possible pacific international order. He proposed that a number of “special memoranda” be prepared on the peace aims by a group of experts among which he suggested different countries: “Great Britain (Chatham House)⁹², France (André Siegfried)⁹³, the USA (Foster Dulles), etc. Furthermore, he recommended memoranda on ‘Germany and the West’ (myself) and ‘Russia and Europe’

(vol. IV), *Church and Community* (vol. V), *Church, Community, and State in Relation to Education* (vol. VI).

⁸⁹ See Warren H.A., *Theologians of a New World Order*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ See W.A. Visser 't Hooft's letter to W. Paton of November 7, 1939, in the file “War files: Bishop Berggrav's peace efforts 1939-40 and other documents 1939-45, ref. code 301.1.02, box 4: *Bishop Berggrav's peace action. Correspondence W. A. Visser 't Hooft*”, in WCCA.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Known also as the Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House is a non-governmental organization founded in London in 1920, with the aim of studying the questions of international politics. It was the outcome of the stimulus of the 1919 Paris Conference, presided over by Lord Robert Cecil of Chelwood (1864-1958), an English diplomat and Nobel peace prize winner in 1937. The Honorary Secretary of Chatham House was Lionel Curtis (1872-1955), a British federalist and member of Federal Union.

⁹³ André Siegfried (1875-1959), of Protestant origin, the son of a French minister of commerce, was a noted historian, sociologist, geographer and political scientist. He became particularly interested in religious and political questions, supporting in 1905 the law of separation between the church and state proposed by Aristide Briand. A member of the French *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* and later the first President of the *Fondation nationale des sciences politiques*, Siegfried was responsible for the management of the French section of the economic office of the League of Nations from 1920 to 1922. See Sanguin A.-L., *André Siegfried, un visionnaire humaniste entre géographie et politique*, Paris, Editions L'Harmattan, 2010.

(Paul Anderson⁹⁴)⁹⁵. The Secretary General concluded with the wish “that we will get other and further proposals from your group in Britain”⁹⁶. In fact, Paton had relationships with the English federalists of the Federal Union from whom he had received proposals and advice. The British federalist association, through one of its founders, Charles Kimber⁹⁷, had sent Paton a “draft report” on the political perspectives that the British association considered most valid for the future continental structure; in this document Kimber stated without hesitation “that although we have a long way to go [...], the Federal approach” was of extreme importance and this “is valuable as a preliminary introduction”⁹⁸ in the perspective of a new world order. Paton’s perspective did not distance itself much from that of the Federal Union so much so that in his last book, *World Community*, the Vice Secretary of the WCC made an explicit reference to the ideas of the British movement, explaining that “some, like the Marquess of Lothian [...], and others of the Round Table group, definitely envisage the idea of a world-State”, agreeing with them on the establishment of a “council of sovereign States” to resolve in a definitive manner “the central problem of unchecked national sovereignty”⁹⁹.

As a result of the work of the leaders of the WCC, Geneva had become the centre of an intense reflection and planning on the future international order. Visser ’t Hooft had worked tirelessly for this goal, organizing con-

⁹⁴ Paul Anderson (1894-1985), a member of the American section of the YMCA, was its Secretary during the First World War. Sent to Russia in 1917, he organized first aid for the prisoners of war and, subsequent to the establishment of the communist regime, assisted Russian political refugees in Berlin. He was one of the top YMCA experts regarding the religious question in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Anderson directed the Russian Student Christian Movement from 1926 to 1977. In 1930, he established the Russian Superior Technical Institute in Paris and in 1938 became Secretary of the International Committee for Europe in the American section of the YMCA. Once back in the United States, he collaborated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 1945 to 1947.

⁹⁵ W. Visser ’t Hooft’s letter to W. Paton of December 12, 1939, in the file “The WCC: in process of formation, 1929-1970, ref. code 301.009, box 3: *Study Department docs: Responsibility of the Church for international order Jan 1940*”, in WCCA.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Charles Kimber (1912-2008) was one of the first in the United Kingdom to support the idea of a European federation. In 1938, he founded, together with Patrick Ransome and Derek Rawnsley, the Federal Union, the first British federalist movement. A pragmatic idealist, he criticized from the outset the League of Nations, which, in his opinion, was incapable of guaranteeing peaceful international order. See Bosco A., “Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement (1938-40)”, *op. cit.*, pp. 465-502.

⁹⁸ Letter from C. Kimber to W. Paton, December 31, 1940, with the attachment titled “The policy of Federal Union”, in folder “War file: Peace and disarmament, 1928-1940, box 3: Federal Union, Reverend William Paton”, in WCCA.

⁹⁹ Paton W., *World Community*, *op. cit.*, p 156.

ferences and consulting international religious, political and economic personalities through their offices in unoccupied Europe and across the Atlantic, particularly in the United States and Canada. It was of extreme importance for the Secretary of the WCC to outline the principles and the instruments that could have concretely given life to a new international political and economic system after the war in accordance with Christian and ecumenical values. In that sense, he stressed that "the problem of international order includes the problem of international law"; in consideration of this, "the specific Christian contribution in this connection is to test the projects of federalism (whether on a global, a European, or more restricted scale) or proposals for a reorganized League of Nations on the basis of the realistic Christian concept of history and man, of nation and state"¹⁰⁰. Nevertheless, Visser 't Hooft could not help but conclude: "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?"¹⁰¹. This question was followed by Paton's critical reflection on the legitimacy of each State to exercise its power indiscriminately and the resultant warning to intervene addressed to the Churches. He recalled that many "are prepared to admit that the demand of each national State to be judge of its own cause is a potent cause of international disorder, and the abrogation of absolute National sovereignty is a duty that the Church should urge upon the nation"¹⁰².

As we have seen, the idea of an international system based on federal principles had immediately provided to the WCC officials a course of political action. This was in part due to the political tradition relative to the States from which the Churches and the leaders of the Ecumenical Council came (Switzerland, Holland, Great Britain-Commonwealth, the United States), and in part to the political tradition relative to the by now developed belief that a simple league or confederation of States, modeled after the League of Nations, was completely insufficient against the emergence of nationalisms and wars. In Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, this consideration for federalism had already manifested itself at the beginning of 1940, when certain theologians and American Churches declared themselves in favour of a new and more constructive foreign policy of overseas power, which specifically contemplated the promotion of and a direct American commitment to the organization of a new world order, based on a federal system, as in part already supported by the so-called theologians of the

¹⁰⁰ See report by the Study Department of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, in folder "WCC: in process of formation, 1929-1970, ref. code 301.009, box 3: *Study Department docs: Responsibility of the Church for international order Jan 1940*", in WCCA.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Paton W., *World Community, op. cit.*, p 156.

new world order¹⁰³. This is clearly expressed by Reverend G.A. More of the Church of Minneapolis in a letter addressed to Paton, in which he criticized the lack of participation by the United States in the League of Nations and the system itself of the international institution. In More's opinion, it was necessary to promote a federalization of the League of Nations, "because under it the Nations were trying to get away from the evils of Nationalism, without themselves living up to Nationalism (each law unto itself, looking out only for its interests; consequently the system of continual struggle and 'survival of the fittest!')"¹⁰⁴.

Nevertheless, More continued, it was necessary to establish a primary federative nucleus, explaining that the next best thing to do was to "accomplish a start, a nucleus, of a new world government by a group of nations whose interests are such as to enable them to do so"¹⁰⁵. Such objective was seen as consistent with American Protestantism as a duty and pressing need. As the very same More wished to emphasize: "it is vitally important to every American to see that the 'right' start is made in World Government"¹⁰⁶. Regarding this, it is probable that the thinking of Reverend More was influenced by Clarence K. Streit, whose book, *Union Now*,¹⁰⁷ had a large circulation, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant world, thus confirming the spread of interest in the federal project in Geneva of the WCC as well. In fact, More highlighted that "Protestants are therefore particularly vitally concerned with the *Union Now* proposal" and he believed that the Churches were obligated to fully grasp the importance of reflecting on the hypothesis of contributing to the realization of the future world federation¹⁰⁸.

On the basis of these considerations, the hypothesis of a European federation, hoped for and, for many, achievable at the end of the conflict, gained ever more ground inside the Ecumenical Council. In a confidential document of March 1941 containing some considerations concerning the post-war settlement, Visser 't Hooft pointed out to John Foster Dulles that by now there was a widespread awareness in European ecumenical

¹⁰³ See also Warren H.A., *Theologians of a New World Order*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ See G.A. More's letter to W. Paton, February 7, 1940, in the folder "War files: Bishop Bergrav's peace efforts 1939-40: other documents 1939-45, ref. code 301.1.02, box 6: Attitudes of American Christians", in WCCA.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Streit C.K., *Union Now. A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1939. Clarence K. Streit (1896-1986) was an American journalist and pioneer of Atlanticism. See Stella T., *Federalismo e atlantismo nella politica estera degli Stati Uniti: il contributo di Clarence Streit*, doctoral thesis, University of Pavia, academic year 1998-99.

¹⁰⁸ See G.A. More's letter to W. Paton, February 7, 1940, *op. cit.*

circles and it would have been “impossible to go back to the old European disorder in which the various European countries tried to shut themselves off from each other, both politically and economically”¹⁰⁹. This brought Visser ’t Hooft to affirm 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”¹¹⁰. As he observed, “most countries will probably be willing to accept a considerable limitation of their sovereignty for the sake of the security of a larger community, 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 independence”¹¹¹.

He was clearly aware that it was now inconceivable to think of returning to the League of Nations, which had helped to promote the nationalisms, supporting the principle of self-determination of the peoples, without creating a supranational system able to act against any type of local claim, whether nationalistic, regionalistic or micronationalistic. For this reason, the federal system seemed to the leaders of the WCC to be the most ideal way to guarantee the unity of the European peoples. Such a system, in fact, would have affirmed the presence of supranational institutions able to act against nationalisms, without offending and compromising the historical, cultural and confessional traditions, indispensable for maintaining the identities of each population. This interpretation was inseparable from the religious and ecumenical vision of the leaders of the WCC, as they were unable to observe the surrounding reality with anything other than “Christian eyes”. For them, the new world order, founded on justice and liberty of peoples and individuals, necessarily included the concept of divine order and will.

Because of this link, it was necessary to find the political, economic and social system closest to “God’s command”. In a September 1941 memorandum entitled *The Church and the New Order in Europe*, Visser ’t Hooft and Bonhoeffer addressed their considerations on the matter to the Church of England¹¹². Behind the reflections which led to the drafting of the document, as Walter Lipgens notes, there were the considerations that Paton had expressed in his *World Community*. He clearly stated that “the basic

¹⁰⁹ Document entitled “Some considerations concerning the post-war settlement”, March 1941, written and sent by W.A. Visser ’t Hooft to J.F. Dulles, in the folder “The WCC: In process of formation: 1929 – 1970, ref. code 301.009, box 8: *Papers re post-war settlement 1941*”, in WCCA.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² On the memorandum, see “Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Willem Visser ’t Hooft: memorandum on ‘The Church and the new order in Europe’”, in Lipgens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-397, Vol I.

idea of 'freedom' is not enough in itself" to guarantee a pacific order, and that therefore "the omnipotence of the State must be broken in the name of a rightful order that subjects itself to God's command"¹¹³. Therefore, the federal system would not only have ensured the limitation of absolute sovereignty of national states, but would have finally put at the centre of the common interest man, assuring a new dimension of justice and liberty. Such system, therefore, seemed to Paton and to the other men of the WCC to be that closest to the *Civitas Dei* or the Commonwealth of God, namely that system in which, more than in others, the principles of Christian ethics could have been most fully carried out.

Proof of this gradual convergence between Christian thought and federalism is a declaration issued during a Conference of the WCC collaborators, convened in July 1944 to discuss the role of the Christian Churches in relation to the future international order. Paragraph 7 of the declaration had a rather unambiguous title, *Un ordre politique fédéraliste, basé sur la justice, sur le plan national, continental et mondial*. The drafters of the document not only agreed on the preference for a federal system, but also confirmed the priority that this project should have had for a Christian in light of the evangelical message. In fact, the text left no doubt as to the concept of the future European and world order:

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 différents surgissant entre les peuples.¹¹⁴

On the list of collaborators invited to the Geneva Conference under the heading "uncertain" there was also Rollier, who was probably unable to participate because of the obligations related to the Resistance which kept him in Italy¹¹⁵. In that same period in Geneva, however, Rossi and Spinelli,

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

¹¹⁴ "Programme de la Conférence de Collaborateurs du Conseil Oecuménique des Eglises", Présinge (Genève) 7 au 9 juillet 1944, in the folder, "The WCC: In process of formation: 1919-1956, ref. code 301.011, box 1: 'Conference of WCC collaborators from European countries, Présinge July 1944'", in WCCA.

¹¹⁵ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 141. See also Pantagruel's (pseudonym of Spinelli) letter to "Pessimista attivo" [Active pessimist] (pseudonym of Rollier), undated [1943?], in Fondo Partito d'Azione (hereinafter FPdA), clandestine archive, busta 2, fasc. 8, in Archivio dell'Istituto piemontese per la storia della Resistenza e della società contemporanea ("Giorgio Agosti"), Torino

not without a direct link to Rollier, were working, thanks to the collaboration of Visser 't Hooft, on the *International Federalist Declaration of the Resistance Movements*. This was the evidence that, among the ecumenical and international Geneva sphere¹¹⁶ and the principal leaders of the Italian MFE, there existed not only a convergence of strategic interests at the level of the anti-Nazi fight, but also a true ideological understanding as to the long-term political objectives related to a European and worldwide federalist order.

Rossi and Spinelli's intention to advance the principles of their movement in Europe had its start in the very inception of the MFE in Milan in August 1943. It was under these circumstances that the two thought to go to Switzerland to initiate an intense propaganda effort and to spread the federalist idea beyond the Alps¹¹⁷. There, the founders of the MFE immediately began to establish the first contacts with other refugees with the intention of organizing a conference which gathered the representatives of the various European Resistance movements. Spinelli recalled accordingly in a letter to Rollier the difficulties in preparing "an international federalist conference in Switzerland", since it was not possible "to seek official support" from any organization as, he explained, these "did not lend themselves to work which here today can only be illegal (in fact any type of political activity on the part of foreigners is prohibited)"¹¹⁸. Spinelli, concluding the letter, affirmed that in Switzerland there were present in any case "groups which were not strictly political, and people also of considerable worth oriented in the same sense as us"¹¹⁹.

A few months later, they received help in that sense precisely by Visser 't Hooft, who had decided to make his home in Geneva available for Spinelli's project, because of the great affinity which the Secretary of the WCC felt towards the ideas of the Italian federalists. Visser 't Hooft, in fact, would remember later in his *Mémoires* how Rossi and Spinelli

(hereinafter ISTORETO). The letter is undated, but it is possible to place it between October and December 1943, close to the Swiss National Council elections, which Spinelli mentions and which were held on December 15th, 1943.

¹¹⁶ See Castro S., "Geneva between Cosmopolitanism, Resistance Movements and Federalism", in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), *Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*. *Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-130. In the same volume, see also Bosco A., "Federal Union et la tentative d'apporter la bataille fédéraliste sur le continent", pp. 131-164.

¹¹⁷ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.* On Rossi and Spinelli's activities in Switzerland, see Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo. Da "Giustizia e Libertà" ad Altiero Spinelli*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1996; Graglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008, pp. 191-282.

¹¹⁸ Pantagruel's letter to Pessimista attivo, undated [1943?], *op. cit.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

“n’eurent aucun mal à me décider de collaborer avec eux, car ce qu’ils proposaient cadrait tout à fait avec les pensée set les projets du mouvement œcuménique”¹²⁰. Spinelli gave Visser ’t Hooft credit for having welcomed them in a difficult period; in fact, as the Italian federalist recalled, for “such a respectable figure it was considerably bold to offer his house to refugees for an action which according to the law of the country hosting us was illegal. However, those were times in which the most conscientious people sometimes felt the duty to infringe some laws”¹²¹.

It was Jean-Marie Soutou¹²², a member of the French Resistance who collaborated with the newspaper *Témoignage chrétien* and put them in contact with him¹²³. Spinelli, however, also mentioned the role played by Egidio Reale¹²⁴, an Italian federalist operating in Switzerland who knew

¹²⁰ Visser ’t Hooft A.W., *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires, op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹²¹ Spinelli A., *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio, op. cit.*, p. 396.

¹²² Jean-Marie Soutou (1912-2003), a journalist and collaborator on Emmanuel Mounier’s *Esprit*, he fought until 1942 in the group *Amitié Chrétienne*. He was arrested by the Gestapo for his anti-fascism in 1943. Released in April of the same year, he expatriated to Geneva, Switzerland. In 1945, he was Secretary to the French embassy in Belgrade, continuing to work in the French cabinet for foreign affairs. On Soutou and his role in the Resistance, see Soutou G.-H., “Jean-Marie Soutou e la Dichiarazione federalista internazionale dei movimenti di resistenza”, in Rognoni Vercelli C., Fontana P.G., Preda D. (eds.), *Altiero Spinelli, il federalismo europeo e la Resistenza, op. cit.*, pp. 327-354; Visser ’t Hooft A.W., *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires, op. cit.*, p. 226; Spinelli A., *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio, op. cit.*, p. 391; Braga A., *Un federalista giacobino. Ernesto Rossi pioniere degli Stati Uniti d’Europa*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007, *passim*. On his collaboration with *Esprit*, see Winock M., *Histoire politique de la revue “Esprit” 1930-1950*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1975.

¹²³ On his contribution to the French Resistance, see Caraffini P., “La contribution française à la Déclaration fédéraliste internationale des mouvements de Resistance”, in Giordano F.M. and Dell’Acqua S. (eds.), “*Die Welt war meine Gemeinde*”. *Willem Adolf Visser ’t Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism, op. cit.*, pp. 189-215.

¹²⁴ Egidio Reale (1888-1958), a lawyer and representative of the Italian Republican Party, was constrained to flee to Switzerland in 1926, with the advent of fascism, establishing himself in Geneva. He was a member of the League of Nations’ *Association des journalistes accrédités*. He worked with numerous Swiss, Spanish and American newspapers and magazines. During the war, he taught at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, at the Hague Academy of International Law and in the secondary schools of Ticino. After September 8th, 1943, he joined the PdA and took action to maintain contact with the *Comitato di liberazione nazionale Alta Italia-CLNAI* (National liberation Committee for Northern Italy), and its representatives in the allied governments. After meeting Ernesto Rossi, he joined the MFE, collaborating with him on federalist and actionist propaganda in Geneva and throughout Switzerland. After the war, he was sent to Switzerland as an envoy of the Italian embassy. See Castro S., *Egidio Reale tra Italia, Svizzera e Europa*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012. See also Zanetti A., “L’esilio ginevrino” and De Ziegler H., “Egidio Reale a Ginevra”, in Ingusci P., De Donno A., Schiavetti F. et al., *Egidio Reale e il suo tempo*, Firenze, Quaderni del Ponte, La Nuova Italia, 1961, pp. 107-148.

and had exposed Visser 't Hooft to the ideas of the MFE. The invitation to participate in the international federalist conference was extended by Spinelli to all of the representatives of the European Resistance in November 1943. This invitation was followed by the organization of the first preliminary meetings which, Spinelli recalled, "began in March '44 [and] were all held at Visser 't Hooft's home"¹²⁵. As Rossi remembered in a letter, the preliminary meeting was held on March 31st¹²⁶. Among the participants were "P.[antagrue], E.[mpirico] and another Italian; Pierre¹²⁷ and two others from the French Resistance; two from the Dutch Resistance; one Czech; one Pole; one Norwegian and a member of the international trade unions"¹²⁸. During the meeting, "the first question which arose was whether or not to call the Germans"¹²⁹. During the April 29th meeting, the official establishment of an international federalist force of the European Resistance movements was foreseen; indeed, Rossi continued, "at the end of the month we will have the second meeting in which we will approve the definitive text which whoever is in agreement with will send for approval in their respective countries, and we will establish the permanent liaison committee"¹³⁰. In reality, the April meeting was not sufficient to reach a definitive agreement between the parties involved and another meeting followed in May 1944¹³¹. The approval of the definitive text of the *International Federalist Declaration of the Resistance Movements* was signed on May 20th, 1944, at Visser 't Hooft's house, a few days before

¹²⁵ Spinelli A., *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

¹²⁶ See "Lettera rendiconto" of E.[mpirico] (pseudonym of Ernesto Rossi) most likely to M.A. Rollier, April 2 [1944], entitled "Accordi per un lavoro comune federalista con gruppi della Resistenza degli altri paesi", in FPDa, clandestine archive, busta 2, fasc. 8, in ISTORETO.

¹²⁷ Pierre was Soutou's pseudonym.

¹²⁸ See "Lettera rendiconto" of E.[mpirico] to M.A. Rollier, *op. cit.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ On the Geneva meetings, see Braga A., "The 1944 Meetings at the House of Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft", in Giordano F.M. and Dell'Acqua S. (eds.), *Die Welt war meine Gemeinde. Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, a theologian for Europe between ecumenism and federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-187. See also Giordano F.M., "Il progetto di dichiarazione federalista dei movimenti di resistenza europei - 20 maggio 1944", in *La Cittadinanza Europea*, fas. 1 (2011), pp. 161-170. On the drafting of the document, see Lippens W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I; Visser 't Hooft A.W., *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires*, *op. cit.*, Spinelli A., *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, *op. cit.*; Voigt K., "Die Genfer Föderalistentreffen im Frühjahr 1944", in *Risorgimento. Rivista di storia italiana e contemporanea*, n. 1 (1980). For a detailed discussion of the events which led to the internationalization of Rossi and Spinelli's federalist action in Switzerland, see Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-165. See also Rollier M.A., "L'azione federalista sul terreno internazionale", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 4 (mag.-giu. 1944).

the start of the WCC conference on the new world order. The Declaration bore the signatures of the representatives of the Resistance movements of France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Holland, Germany and Czechoslovakia, while the Danish and Norwegian Resistance movements did not endorse the document¹³².

The relationship between Visser 't Hooft and the Italian federalists did not end after the meetings in Geneva, especially with Rossi. Even during the war the Dutch pastor entrusted Rossi with the conveyance of WCC documents on the international order to Rollier, in order to inform the Waldensian Church about the orientations of the ecumenical organization on international politics¹³³. For his part, Rossi too had dwelt on the proposals of the WCC relating to international politics and the new world order, declaring his intention to "écrire un article sur l'attitude des églises chrétiennes non catholiques à l'égard des problèmes internationaux"¹³⁴. Finally, in another letter, Visser 't Hooft asked Rossi a copy of his *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*¹³⁵, showing his interest in the thinking of the Italian federalists¹³⁶.

It is quite evident that at that time in Switzerland federalism had become the cornerstone of reflection on future international relations, on which many opponents of nationalism almost spontaneously converged. Among these were men of even rather diverse ideological, cultural and religious backgrounds such as Visser 't Hooft and Spinelli. However, they were all equally convinced that the woes of Europe lay in the system of the national states, founded on the principle of absolute sovereignty, and that the time had now come to overcome this historical phase through the establishment of the European federation. Therefore, we can affirm that in Geneva the events and demands of international Evangelical Europeanism that depended on the WCC and those of the European federalism born in the Ventotene *Manifesto*, even those organized in the home of an Italian Protestant, intertwined.

Both of these experiences, even though arising in very diverse environments and for rather different reasons, originated from very similar ideas and considerations. It is possible, however, to identify a direct link

¹³² See "La dichiarazione Federalista Internazionale", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 5, (lug.-ago. 1944).

¹³³ See W.A. Visser 't Hooft's letter to E. Rossi, July 29, 1944, in ER 1915-1999, dossier 21, microf. 6, in Archivio storico dell'Unione europea, Firenze (hereinafter ASUE).

¹³⁴ See E. Rossi's letter to W.A. Visser 't Hooft, July 27, 1944, in ER 1915-1999, dossier 21, microf. 6, in ASUE.

¹³⁵ See Storeno (pseudonym of Rossi), *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, Lugano, Nuove edizioni di Capolago, 1944. See also facsimile edition of Rossi E., *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, Torino, Celid, 2004.

¹³⁶ See W. A. Visser 't Hooft's letter to E. Rossi, August 1, 1944, in ER 1915-1999, dossier 21, microf. 6, in ASUE.

at the outset with precisely those Barthian Waldensians coming from an ecumenical training who had supported the MFE. They, strongly influenced by their own Reformed origins, reread the principles of federalism in light of the evangelical message and from an ecumenical perspective. It was therefore natural, Cabella explained, that from the collaboration born during the Second World War between Visser 't Hooft and the "numerous anti-fascist federalists, together with whom he drafted [...] an important 'International federalist declaration'", there originated in September 1945 "the *Giornate teologiche* of Ciåbas in the Waldensian Valleys on *The Ecumenical Movement and Federalism*"¹³⁷.

3. The federalist perspective in the young Barthians: the "Giornate teologiche" of 1945

Ecumenism is part of the religious sensitivity of the Waldensian people and Church. Subilia recalled on the occasion of the official birth of the WCC in 1948, that the Waldensians "carry" in their tradition "a spiritual, ideological and historical ecumenicity that is not of today and that today must not be neglected and compromised with belated nationalizations"¹³⁸. The ecumenical openness of the Waldensians, in fact, is age-old and is ideally positioned in the historical interconfessional solidarity with the Reformed world and, subsequently, in the wider context of the "Protestant International". The Waldensian Church has an entire tradition of ecumenicity: "its own history, its own sufferings in the great persecutions of the past, [...] could not have helped but create in it a sense of brotherhood towards all these Christian churches"; and it is because of this that "the Waldensian Church had already acceded to the Ecumenical Council of the Churches [...], and had taken an active part in the big Ecumenical Conferences"¹³⁹.

In reality, the official accession of the Waldensian Church to the WCC occurred in 1945, following an exchange of epistolaries between Sommani and Visser 't Hooft. The moderator reminded the WCC Secretary General of the long-held Waldensian aspiration of being part of the greater Ecumenical Movement, confirmed by a deliberation of the Board in January 1939, in which they presented the consensus and the availability of the Waldensian

¹³⁷ Cabella A., "Radici storiche e culturali del nazionalismo. La sacralizzazione dello stato", in *Protestantesimo*, a. L, n. 4 (1995), p. 267.

¹³⁸ Subilia V., *Il movimento ecumenico*, op. cit., p. 103.

¹³⁹ Sommani V., "Adesione della Chiesa valdese al Consiglio Ecumenico delle Chiese", in *La Luce*, n. 30 (30 gennaio 1946). On the accession of the Waldensian Church to the WCC, see Ricca P., "L'adesione della Chiesa valdese al Consiglio ecumenico delle chiese", in Balmas E. (ed.), *I Valdesi e l'Europa*, op. cit., pp. 391-406.

Church to accede to the WCC, at that time being formed¹⁴⁰. The true spirit of Waldensian ecumenism, however, was constituted by the Barthian vanguard, which immediately perceived the value and historical importance of the Ecumenical Movement, and which actively took part in its first European conferences ahead of the formation of the WCC¹⁴¹. Among the first Barthians to follow the Ecumenical Movement was Rollier, who participated in the worldwide conference organized by the Christian youth in Amsterdam in 1939¹⁴². Rollier at that time lamented the absence of delegates of the Waldensian Church at the first two ecumenical conferences in 1937, rebuking the same ecclesiastical institutions for not having understood the importance of the "new theological tendencies" that were "giving tone to the Ecumenical Movement"¹⁴³. In a special edition of *Gioventù Cristiana* in 1938, the Barthians reported the most significant aspects and results achieved at the Oxford and Edinburgh ecumenical conferences. These conferences had also put the discussion of precise political questions on the table, demonstrating how ecumenism "had become a reality with its own fundamental importance not only on the theological front, but also, and it is in this way that Barth had conceived it, on the political front"¹⁴⁴.

In that regard, suffice it to recall the issues addressed in Oxford, all aimed at analyzing the relationship between politics and religion, including those between the Church and the nation; the Church and the State; the Church, the nation, and the State in relation to economic order and education; and finally that between the universal Church and international problems. Among the topics of this last section the problem of the war was on the agenda, the work on which was overseen by Visser 't Hooft¹⁴⁵.

Therefore, if political reflection certainly could not have been terrain for ecumenical discussion for the official Waldensian Church, it had become so instead for the Barthians. They had already focused their attention on the nature of the nation state, on nationalism and on the problem of the international order, above all in relation to the political system most suited to the full affirmation of Christian values. The Barthians debated at length on these themes during the fascist regime, giving rise in the period after the war to the reflection on the possible and hoped for federal reconstruction of Europe, within which the design of the Ecumenical

¹⁴⁰ Ricca P., "L'adesione della Chiesa valdese al Consiglio ecumenico delle chiese", *op. cit.*, pp. 392-394.

¹⁴¹ See Vinay V., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", *op. cit.*

¹⁴² See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-61.

¹⁴³ Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, *op. cit.*, p. 353, Vol. III.

¹⁴⁴ Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁵ See *Gioventù Cristiana*, a. XI, n. 1 (gen.-feb. 1938), pp. 1-40.

Movement would have been able to most completely become a reality. According to the Barthians, federalism and ecumenism seemed to be two ideologies not only closely related to each other but also fully consistent with the sensitivity and propositions of Reformed Protestantism, both at a spiritual and a political level. The idea that the Christian Churches, overcoming national and confessional constraints, could have joined each other in a universal assembly appeared to be a revolutionary vision which conflicted with both the ecclesiological rigidity of Roman Catholicism and the gradual nationalization of the European Protestant Churches, especially the Lutheran Church. In other words, the ecumenical system represented for the Barthians a shared solution of interecclesiastical convergence particularly appropriate for the manifestation of the Spirit. Federalism was considered not only as the ideal political terrain through which to express its ecumenical vocation, but also the only remedy for nationalism.

The national State, with its process of political-administrative centralization, tended to standardize the nation in all its sectors of associated life, thereby often limiting free and autonomous expression. Such process was accentuated under the totalitarian regimes of fascist nature, which demanded control and management of every aspect of national life, including culture and religion. In the context of nationalization implemented by the fascist regime in Italy from the second half of the 1920s, the Waldensian expressions of identity suffered progressively harsher limitations and the Waldensian populations of the Valleys were constrained to conform with the rest of the country. In fact, everything which appeared different from the national values and the canons of "Italian character" imposed by the fascist regime was understood to be an expression of xenophilia and therefore potentially dangerous to the State. As a result, the profession of Reformed faith in a predominantly Catholic country, the traditional use of the French language, its ecumenical vocation and its historic ties with Protestant countries beyond the Alps made the Waldensian community seem potentially dangerous and an enemy of the State and the regime.

We find here the reasons for the religious and ethical resistance advanced by the Barthians with regard to the Church of Rome and the fascist State: the former conducted on the basis of a confessional and theological debate; the latter characterized by a criticism with respect to the nationalist and totalitarian policy. This resistance stemmed from the antithetical religious and political positions with respect to those which characterized the Catholic Church as well to the fascist regime, both characterized by centralism and strong totalizing claims. To these attitudes, in fact, the Barthians responded with the ecumenical model in the confessional domain and with the democratic and federal model in the political realm.

Regarding this combination, the most significant moment of the political-religious reflection of the Barthians was achieved in the period immediately after the war, on the occasion of the *Giornate teologiche* of 1945, during which the habitual meeting of the Barthians was entirely dedicated to the “Christian ecumenism and European federalism” theme. At that time the Waldensian federalists, as well as representatives of the Barthian youth, had felt the pressure to dedicate their days of study to that, which in their eyes had appeared to be a unique historic occasion in order to give concreteness to the idea of European political unity, in a climate of prevailing ecumenical optimism¹⁴⁶. If ecumenism had given proof, during the global conflict, of a spiritual communion among the Christian Churches, federalism seemed to be the system to consolidate from a political point of view the solidarity and material cooperation that the war had developed between the allied countries against Nazism. This would offer the defeated countries as well the opportunity to reintegrate themselves into a democratic European system¹⁴⁷.

The meeting in the small church of the *Ciabàs* took place in the climate of the Liberation, in which to the restored regime of political freedom were added the hopes reflecting the new international prospects¹⁴⁸. In this context, federalism and ecumenism represented for the Barthian Waldensians a valid opportunity to overcome nationalism and ecclesiastical particularism. Sponsored by Giovanni Miege, the *Giornate teologiche* of 1945

¹⁴⁶ See Cabella A., “Congresso universitario ecumenico. Basilea, 6-13 giugno 1946”, in *L'Eco delle valli Valdesi*, n. 30 (27 luglio 1946).

¹⁴⁷ See Monnet J., *L'Europe et l'organisation de la paix*, Lausanne, Centre de recherches européennes, Université de Lausanne, 1964; Id., *Mémoires*, Fayard, Paris, 1976 (ed. italiana, *Cittadino d'Europa*, Napoli, Guida, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ The *Giornate teologiche* of 1945 were held from September 1-3. The acts of this conference, never published, are conserved in part in CMAR, fasc. 5, in ASSV. The fund gathered the following documents: the text of two typewritten programmes, one provisional and one definitive, of the *Giornate teologiche* of 1945; the inaugural message of the moderator Virgilio Sommani; the “welcome address” by M.A. Rollier; the typewritten text of Giorgio Peyronel's summary (*Valdismo e autonomie alla luce dei rapporti fra ecumenismo e federalismo*); the typewritten minutes of the afternoon discussions of the first and second days; the letter autographed by Virgilio Sommani written to M.A. Rollier on August 28, 1945, with “greetings to the attendees”; and finally Leopoldo Bertolè's letter to M.A. Rollier dated September 21, 1945, in which he refers to a future publication of the reports. From the documents listed it is possible to reconstruct the convention programme: 1) worship presided over by Pastor Giovanni Miege; 2) “greetings to the attendees” by M.A. Rollier; 3) Tina Rieser Pizzardo, “*Presentazione del federalismo, soprattutto nei suoi aspetti spirituali ed etici*”; 4) Francesco Lo Bue, “*Le condizioni religiose del federalismo*”; 5) introductory worship on the second day presided over by Pastor Edoardo Aime; 6) Vittorio Subilia, “*Unità e varietà nella fede e nella Chiesa*”; 7) Giorgio Spini, “*Aspetti e postulati politici dell'ecumenismo*”. See Rognoni Vercelli C., Mario Alberto Rollier, *un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 119-121; Genre E., Rostagno S. (ed.), *Una visione della vita e della teologia*, op. cit.

were organized primarily by Barthian federalists Rollier, Peyronel and Lo Bue, who were joined by Tina Rieser Pizzardo¹⁴⁹, member Secretary of the Turin section of the MFE and other young scholars such as Spini, Subilia and Leopoldo Bertolè¹⁵⁰, all in agreement on the existence of a profound link between ecumenism and federalism. Those days were for this reason directed towards the search for similarities, complementarity and the objectives common to the two perspectives.

Peyronel had traced the tangible reasons for Waldensian ecumenism which, in his view, were not limited to spiritual perception and confessional openness, but were sought after above all in its cultural cosmopolitanism¹⁵¹. In fact, if on the one hand the typical ecumenicity of Waldensianism had its roots in the “missionary spirit” of its Church and in the “long uninterrupted solidarity with all of the Protestant churches”, on the other hand that singular inclination was due to the particular historical and cultural conditions in which the first Waldensian communities were formed¹⁵². These constituted a mixed-language population which had participated in the life of two great European cultures; a fact which had allowed the Waldensians “to lift themselves above the nationalistic particularity of the many religious sects that even in Italy, as in France, did not fail to arise”¹⁵³. Its “cultural and linguistic characteristics, its strong historical personality rich in civic and moralistic virtues” always distinguished this *popolo-chiesa* from the nearby alpine populations, although these distinct elements were not “theoretically separable from its religious life”, but rather appeared to be “diverse aspects of the same reality”¹⁵⁴. In this respect, federalism was the direct reflection in the

¹⁴⁹ Tina Rieser Pizzardo (1903-1983), a militant communist, was Altiero Spinelli's partner between the 1920s and 1930s. Arrested in 1927, she was sentenced to one year in prison. After her release, she dedicated herself to teaching. In the 1940s, she drew closer to the Turin group of GL and in 1943 she joined the PdA and the MFE. She was Secretary of the Turin section of the MFE from 1945 to 1947. See Pizzardo T., *Senza pensarci due volte*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1996. See also De Luna G., *Donne in oggetto, l'antifascismo nella società italiana 1922-1939*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1995, pp. 273-302.

¹⁵⁰ Leopoldo Bertolè (1909-1974), a notary and anti-fascist, was part of the Barthian Waldensians from its inception. Having entered into contact with the actionist and federalist environment of the Waldensian Valleys, he participated in the organization of the first armed Resistance. During the war, he was a promoter of the CLN notaries, while after the conflict he served as Secretary of the *Commissione Regionale di epurazione* (Purge Regional Commission).

¹⁵¹ See also Dell'Acqua S., “Diritti delle minoranze, autonomie locali e prospettiva federalista”, *op. cit.*

¹⁵² See Peyronel G., “Valdismo e autonomie alla luce dei rapporti fra ecumenismo e federalismo”, in CMAR, fasc. 5, cartella “Giornate teologiche del Ciabàs”, in ASSV.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

political life of an ecumenical conscience; in other words, ecumenism constituted "one of the living spirits of federalism"¹⁵⁵.

The political and religious relationship between ecumenism and federalism became tightly and directly linked with respect to the identity of intents and principles, given by the formula of "unity in diversity". Moreover, Rollier affirmed that unity, "in respecting diversity, where this [was] necessary", represented a common value to ecumenism "in the ecclesiastical realm", similar to federalism "in the political and economic domain"¹⁵⁶. A point of view which signaled to the Waldensian federalists the awareness of "the existing similarities between the articulation of freedoms in the setting of a federal unity, and the establishment of the historical churches as concrete expressions of the Christian spirit faithful to its ecumenical unity"¹⁵⁷. Such consideration was not intended to be "a useless rhetorical game nor an attempt to confuse two profoundly different orders, such as politics and religion", but a reflection on the "spirit of an era, no longer pointed towards the abstraction of uniformity as myth, but to the concreteness of particular experiences, revealing in the profound adherence to their reality, immediate universal values"¹⁵⁸.

In that sense, as Peyronel argued, the "federalist *ratio*" was in the "Waldensian intelligence" in the same way as the "ecumenical *vocatio*" was present in the religious sensitivity of its people. It is after the maturation of this intimate correlation that the Italian Barthians introduced a new religious and political sensitivity within their evangelical community. The juxtaposition of ecumenism and federalism, Rollier explained, is not random, but is "justified by the fact that in political legislation there was and there is always a reflection of religious thought"¹⁵⁹. If, indeed, "in the political field one can go beyond a unity which is a simple codification of the differences", in ecumenism unity reaches and is effected by "maintaining intact the various confessions"¹⁶⁰. In other words, for the Barthians nationalism was to the political field what the pharisaism of the churches was to religious life. Thus, if it had been demonstrated that because of ecumenism confessional pluralism could be overcome in the theological arena, in the political field the pluralism should have been organized in

¹⁵⁵ Rollier M.A., "Saluto ai convenuti", in CMAR, fasc. 5, cartella "Giornate teologiche del Ciabàs", in ASSV.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Peyronel G., "Valdismo e autonomie alla luce dei rapporti fra ecumenismo e federalismo", *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Rollier M.A., "Saluto ai convenuti", *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

a federative system capable of reducing or impeding the risk of potential armed conflicts¹⁶¹.

The *Giornate teologiche* of 1945 clearly expressed the perspective of the Waldensian federalists who, after discussing the correlation and link between “ecumenism and federalism”, and “conscious of the exceptionally severe responsibility that at the end of the Second World War are placed in front of the Christian Church in general and the Waldensian Church in particular”, concurred on the following declaration:

1. convinced of the fundamental importance that the Ecumenical Movement has had for the life of the Church in the recent conflict and which it has at present, request: that the ecumenical problem be proposed to the constant and preeminent attention of the Waldensian Church, that the resumption of the ministry in Italy transpire in the spirit of the Ecumenical Movement and the conscience of its implications which exclude every form of ecclesiastical nationalism, [...], that contact with the churches in other countries and with the Ecumenical Movement be resumed and intensified as soon as possible.
2. considering that a position of agnosticism towards political and social problems on the part of the church subjects believers as citizens to the possibility of disorientation and inconsequentiality towards the Gospel, remember how the duty to summon believers to their responsibility of choice and decision with regard to political and social problems, even if in the awareness of transience of all human and technical policy which excludes the possibility of the recommendation of a political party on the part of the Church as specifically Christian, falls on the Church.
3. having examined the characteristics of the Ecumenical Movement and its repercussions on the political and social landscape believe that the theological need which it expresses may influence contemporary political and social thought in the sense of the federal surpassing of the European national States.
4. having recognized the gravity of the moment in which Italy must give itself a new constitution, reaffirm the absolute necessity that the principles of freedom of conscience and worship, of separation of church and state and respect for minorities be ratified by the Italian Constitution, as the constitutions of every European state, thereby constituting an essential postulate of the institution of a single European citizenship¹⁶².

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² The document lacks a date, but it is possible to pinpoint its drafting to September/October 1945. The sheet is typewritten on the letterhead of the bimonthly magazine *L'Appello* and is found in Archivio del Movimento Federalista Europeo, Pavia (hereinafter AMFE) and in Archivio Mario Alberto Rollier (hereinafter AMAR), fald. VII (Al servizio della democrazia), cartella “25 Aprile 1945”, deposited in the Archivio del Dipartimento storico-geografico dell'Università di Pavia (hereinafter ADSGP).

The ecumenism-federalism link was not only an aspect of the theological and political reflection of the Italian Barthians, but was also an object of consideration on the part of the leaders of the WCC. Both, persuaded by the conformity of this correlation with the principles of the new Protestantism, had chosen to support tendencies of thought and movements of a federalist orientation. The ecumenical perspective accompanied by a political reflection on European federalism gave proof of the existence of a federal *forma mentis* in Reformed Protestantism. However, the presence in the culture of Protestantism of a federal attitude, a propensity to "think" and organize the associated (religious, social and political) life in federal terms, originated from the difficulties over the course of the centuries in coordinating in ecumenism the diverse manifestations of the Reform¹⁶³. The Protestant approach to ecumenism injected the psychological perception of diversity as a positive factor and plurality as a dynamic and necessary element of an articulated and free unitary order. It is no coincidence, Cabella observed, that pluralism succeeded in expressing itself more in Switzerland and the United States, two examples and models of federal society with a Protestant majority¹⁶⁴. This was possible, according to the Waldensian federalist, due to the Protestant culture, "which is more respectful of the rights of minorities and more open to dialogue between cultures"¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶³ See Rouse R., Neill S.C. (eds.), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ See Cabella A., "Radici storiche e culturali del nazionalismo. La sacralizzazione dello stato", *op. cit.*, p. 267.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*



II. Federalism within Anti-Fascism and Waldensian Resistance

1. The Waldensian world faced with Fascism: a "silent resistance"

The adhesion of a part of the Waldensian intellectual world to Europeanism and federalism, which occurred in the 1900s, was also the result of a long series of experiences and aspirations which had marked the historical events of the Church and the Waldensian community.

This past had exerted an influence on the Waldensian society, and many politically involved intellectuals identified in federalism an ideology useful to implement at a political level the principles and values which these laypeople and members of the clergy considered constitutive of their own historical and cultural patrimony. In short, the latent reasons for this adhesion can be sought in part in the confessional nature of the Waldensian culture; in part in the historical predisposition of the Waldensians towards the themes of peace and Europeanism; in part in reasons attributable to the framework of their religious values; and, finally, in a particular historical conscience that especially the Barthians knew how to cultivate when faced with the phenomena of nationalism. In that sense Spini's description of M.A. Rollier and the characteristics which made him an "anomaly" in the anti-fascist activism and European federalism is paradigmatic:

The personality of Mario A. Rollier – Spini wrote – presents characteristics of strong originality, respect to those of other leaders of the Action Party for the fact that his political militancy is ultimately his own discovery of European federalism derived from his reformed Christian faith, profoundly conscious of the value of the Protestant specificity. His rebellion against fascism derived directly from the Protestant concept of personal responsibility and freedom of conscience. The European federalism itself was to a certain extent a projection of that anxiety of overcoming the traditional barriers which had pervaded Protestantism after the First World War, pushing him onto the path of the first ecumenical conferences, despite the haughty rebuffs of papal Rome, the violent hostility of fascist nationalism and the closure [...] of communist Russia.¹

Rollier's experience summarizes well the path of reflection and formation of a part of the Italian Evangelicals in the face of the confessional-

¹ Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, op. cit., p. 91.

ism and nationalism of the first decades of the 20th century. This helps to understand the reasons that pushed many Waldensians to contrast the national perspective and, in the end, the nationalist perspective, with the federalist perspective, knowing to refer to the “‘Protestant’ cornerstones of the federalist mindset”, verifiable in the Protestant idea of “peace, ethics, responsibility, justice and control of power”².

To begin with, however, let us examine the historical conditions which pushed a consistent part of the Waldensian society and, in particular, the group of young Barthians to join the PdA and the MFE, in order to subsequently examine the aspects and contributions of their activism.

The generation of Barthians grew up in the shade of fascist propaganda, even though the Evangelical environment was scarcely permeated by the principles imposed by the regime at a national level. The Waldensian society strongly opposed their historical, cultural, linguistic and confessional tradition. This heritage and the peculiarity of the Waldensian community had for centuries reinforced a spirit of autonomy and awareness of their diversity, without undermining their sense of belonging first to the House of Savoy and then the Italian one. For this reason as well, the Barthian opposition to the regime sprang from typically confessional and cultural motivations, even before strictly political considerations. These matured together with and subsequent to their moral resistance and were oriented by those ideologies which more than others best suited their religious formation.

The Barthians identified in fascist totalitarianism not only the presence of blatant contradictions with Christian values, but also understood the dangers of the nationalistic propaganda which pushed the European nations from an ideological confrontation to a political one with the risk of falling into the most disastrous military confrontation ever. The harsh criticism of nationalism which manifested itself also in the life of the European churches and corrupted the evangelical spirit induced the Barthians to recognize in the liberal activism and in the European federalism of Rossi and Spinelli the best political-ideological response matured in Italian anti-fascism against any form of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. From their point of view, federalism, which organized the national State politically and institutionally both downwards and upwards, would have allowed a better articulation of the liberties for individuals as well as communities, finding itself in harmony with the values of a human being. In this sense, the position of the Barthian Waldensians was linked to the perspective of Christian personalism delineated by Emmanuel Mounier and Denis de Rougemont³.

² Gardiol G., “I veri padri del federalismo”, in *Riforma*, a. XVI, n. 30 (25 luglio 2008).

³ See Rougemont D. de, *Politique de la Personne*, Paris, Editions “Je Sers”, 1946. *Politique de la Personne* is a volume which collects various of Rougemont’s writings published for the most part in 1934 in the magazine *Esprit*.

With the rise of fascism in Italy it is possible to identify four distinguishable positions within the Waldensian society, three of which are rather similar regarding the institutions of the regime: that of public opinion, constituted for the most part by farmers and artisans; that of the local middle class; that of the official Church; and that of the Barthians. The first three, more conservative, were initially inclined to be cautious and to maintain a wait-and-see attitude, oscillating between indifference, an interested acceptance and an ambiguity of judgement. Such conduct was later interpreted critically by Jean-Pierre Viallet, who underlined that prudence could be confused with conformity⁴. Viallet spoke, in a highly critical manner, of *ecclesia silens*, recovering from the accusation that several pacifist, socialist and liberal supporters from the preceding generation had turned to the Church, which had been unable or unwilling to speak out in a more decisive manner against the regime. Neither were those who adhered to fascism and collaborated with the regime lacking, although there numbers were few⁵.

The fourth position, that of the Barthians, was instead critical from the outset regarding fascism, condemning the conduct of the regime, especially for its repressive policy related to the liberties and for its nationalistic tones. The possible consequences arising from this last aspect were perceived clearly by the Barthians from the beginning, while more generally the Waldensian population, at first, was unable to discern clearly the intentions of the regime, which exploited national values and the tradition of national unity for the purposes of totalitarian propaganda.

Miegge recalled how the fascist campaign in support of "national values" exercised in principle a strong attraction on a great part of the Waldensians, who had reservations on the domestic policy of the regime but who adhered to its foreign policy, at least until the outbreak of the war⁶. This policy, Miegge noted, "seemed to conform with the patriotic sentiments that the Protestants shared with their fellow citizens"; pertaining to "sincere sentiments, they were tempted to show them, [...] to better safeguard, with respect to the State, the spiritual work of the churches"⁷. Indulging in such proposition, in particular the Church, Viallet explains, ended up compromising itself, giving "the impression

⁴ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 181-230.

⁵ See Rochat G., *Regime fascista e Chiese evangeliche. Direttive e articolazioni del controllo e della repressione*, Torino, Claudiana, 1990; Gay Rochat D., *La Resistenza nelle Valli valdesi*, Torino, Claudiana, 1985.

⁶ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., p. 193. Miegge's reflection cited by Viallet can be found in Miegge G., *L'Église sous le joug fasciste*, op. cit.

⁷ *Ibid.*

too often”, from the middle of the 1930s, “of being left contaminated by blind nationalism”⁸.

A first tepid consent of the regime was induced in the inhabitants of the Valleys by the anti-clericalism and anti-socialism which characterized the so-called revolutionary phase of the fascism. The compliance with such viewpoint was especially evident in the ecclesiastical and liberal middle class environments, in which hostility was very intense towards the People’s Party and socialists, the former considered a threat to the religious realm, the latter held to be the cause of political and social chaos⁹. Although fascism was seen at that time with a certain approval, as a barrier to Catholics and socialists, however it never succeeded in gaining a solid consensus. One reason for this lies in the geographical nature of the Valleys and the uneven distribution of its population. These aspects represented a true obstacle to the governmental authorities of the regime charged with the fascistization of the Alpine region. In addition, the scarce presence of institutional representation of the regime in the Valleys until 1929 reduced the ideological penetration and rendered fascism a phenomenon substantially foreign to the majority of Waldensians.

It is necessary to remember that the Protestant culture was able to preserve its own identity above all as a result of the religious association which promoted a constant renewal of interests related to confessional and social themes. The Protestant association, Bruna Peyrot wrote, succeeded in being “a solid reference for the young people who lived through the Fascist period, both for those from the common people of churches with the *Unioni [Valdesi]* and for those who became involved in more intellectual groups and tied to the internationalist dimensions of the ACDG”¹⁰. In particular, the latter “kept alive the ideal of a brotherhood among Evangelicals above and beyond the various nationalisms which were slowly becoming the dominant values of the youth culture at the time”¹¹. The associations had a wide following among the young Evangelicals, thus removing a large part of them from the influence of the young fascist organizations.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 84. See also Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, III Vol., *op. cit.* In particular, on the anti-socialist controversy, which found widespread support in the liberal and conservative Waldensian press, see for example Jalla A., “La prova del Socialismo”, in *L’Avvisatore Alpino*, n. 2 (1921); *Id.*, “I due miracoli dei fascisti”, in *L’Avvisatore Alpino*, n. 5 (1921); *Id.*, “I colpevoli”, in *L’Avvisatore Alpino*, n. 13 (1921); Pasquet A., “Fascismo rinnovatore”, *Il Pellice*, n. 45 (1922). The socialists never had a large following in the Valleys, even after the Great War, when the Socialist Party reached 27 % of the electoral consensus, compared to 53 % reached in Piedmont.

¹⁰ Peyrot B., “Resistere nelle valli valdesi. Gli anni del fascismo e della guerra partigiana”, in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Saldesi*, n. 174 (1994) (supplemental issue), p. 16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

In that sense, the Protestant associations were able to predispose many youngsters to anti-fascism, subsequently pushing some of them to join Resistance movements¹².

In addition to these reasons which kept fascism at a distance from the Waldensian world, a more attentive reflection on the real intentions of the regime arose from some members of the old liberal class, the one more influenced by Einaudi and Giretti's liberalism. The demands of the regime to conform to the national culture raised among these serious concerns about the traditional bastions of Waldensian autonomy: school, language and religion.

Such preoccupations were not unfounded; in fact, the 1923 *Riforma Gentile* (the Gentile Reform) culminated in damage to the traditional Waldensian educational structures. The legislative measures constrained many neighbourhood schools to close, and the *Scuola Normale* in Torre Pellice lost its state recognition. In addition, the fascist regime had taken measures against the widespread bilingualism in the Valleys as well. The same educational reform, in one of its articles, provided for the primacy of the Italian language. French, the language of Waldensian worship and identity, was thus banished from mandatory subjects and scholastic programmes. Finally, as regards religious freedom, which in any case was never questioned, all the religions different from the Catholic ones were progressively marginalized. After the 1929 Lateran Pacts, signed by the State and the Catholic Church, the Italian Reformed Protestants, along with the members of other religious minorities, found themselves on a lower plane, suffering forms of discrimination. Consequently, the activities of the Waldensian Church and associations were subject to restrictions on the part of the regime as well¹³.

Faced with these initiatives, the "old" liberals, including several professors of the College of Torre Pellice, proponents of local industry and various professionals, made use of the local press to express their opposition¹⁴. They were in any case unable to express an unambiguous and general position of condemnation against fascism. In addition, despite the worsening of the authoritarianism, the introduction of the *Leggi fascistiche* (extremely fascist laws) between 1925 and 1926 and the unhappy

¹² See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 17-32; Spini G., *Italia di Mussolini e protestanti*, op. cit., pp. 195-209; Vinay V., "Giovanni Miege e la sua generazione", op. cit.

¹³ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 105-138. See also Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, III Vol., op. cit.

¹⁴ For a more precise and detailed analysis of the positions assumed by the Waldensian press during the regime see Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 95-111.

Concordat with the Church of Rome in 1929, the Waldensians failed to express a unified and organic disapproval towards the totalitarian policies of the regime. This prudent approach can be found in the local newspapers, in which conflicting positions were often wielded, but never with full disapproval or denial. The only episode which elicited a firm reaction of condemnation of the fascism on the part of the Waldensian community was the promulgation of the racial laws in 1938¹⁵. In this case too, the first to declare himself against the racial laws was Falchi, who wrote a harsh anti-fascist article¹⁶.

Regarding the position of the Waldensian press¹⁷, among the most widely read newspapers was *La Luce*, the official publication of the Waldensian Church, which was characterized by an ethical-religious tone. Its editorial staff resented the totalitarian attitude of the regime and at times did not withhold a few severe reprimands on some aspects concerning the direction of domestic policy, especially on the initiatives which closely affected the interests of the community. Despite this, *La Luce* expressed a bland opposition to fascism in terms of principle rather than in truly political terms. One of the most critical voices of *La Luce* was that of theologian Ugo Janni¹⁸, who worked with the publication until 1924. Alongside the official publication of the Church, there was the liberal press, above all *L'Avvisatore Alpino* and *Il Pellice*, which maintained an uncertain position and followed the prevalent and ambivalent interests of the local bourgeoisie¹⁹. Finally, there was *L'Echo des Vallées Voudoises*, which was charac-

¹⁵ See Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, op. cit., pp. 39-45.

¹⁶ See Falchi M., "Quello che l'umanità gli deve...", in *La Luce*, 3 agosto 1938.

¹⁷ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 95-111.

¹⁸ Ugo Janni (1865-1938), a theologian and ecumenism pioneer, after having been through a profound spiritual crisis, in 1901 became involved with the Waldensian Church, of which he was a pastor. He collaborated with numerous newspapers and magazines, among them *Rivista Cristiana*, *Bilychnis* and *Conscientia*. Close to Pan-Christian thought, he was among the first supporters of ecumenism from the time of its emergence. He insisted on the need for the Waldensian Church to return to its own traditional medieval origins in order to contribute to the renewal of the Catholic Church in collaboration with the reformist environments of Italian Catholicism. See Milaneschi C., *Ugo Janni, pioniere dell'ecumenismo*, op. cit.; Ferreri G., *Un apostolo moderno: Ugo Janni*, Torre Pellice, Tipografia Subalpina, 1987 See also Ricca P., "Ugo Janni", in Lossky N. et al. (eds.), *Dizionario del Movimento ecumenico*, Italian edition edited by G. Cereti, A. Filippi, L. Sartori, Bologna, Edizioni Dehoniane, 1994 and Biographical cards, "Ugo Janni", n. 108 and "Carte Ugo Janni" in ASTV.

¹⁹ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., p. 387.

terized by a greater tone of controversy, often influenced by the moods of its editor, Alberto Sibille, professor at the College of Torre Pellice²⁰.

Definitely, if the criticism by the Waldensian press of the dictatorship became harsher during moments of particular tension, as in the case of the Matteotti homicide, when all the newspapers joined forces with positions of sharp disapproval, or in the face of the already mentioned Concordat, it is undeniable that the Waldensian press was essentially conformist. Similar to the press and certain interest groups of a liberal-conservative leaning, the Waldensian Church as well was not always consistent with the nature of its principles. The ecclesiastical institutions never went beyond the formal disapproval of the most marked aspects of fascist violence, avoiding all firm condemnation with regard to the political conduct of the regime. Such behaviour clashed with the intransigence of the Barthians, who took as an example the *Bekennende Kirche* and its sturdy opposition to Nazism. The Barthians harshly criticized the ecclesiastical institutions and their lack of courage and of a decisive stance.

During the fascist period, the tension between the Waldensian leadership and the Barthian youth was constant. The climax of the conflict occurred on the occasion of the Synodal session in 1943, when Subilia suggested the adoption of an agenda in which the Waldensian Church was asked to follow the example of the German Confessing Church and pronounce an admission of guilt. This episode marked the split between the young Barthians and the old ecclesiastical leadership for theological reasons and, not least, because of political-ideological differences²¹. Further evidence of this unbridgeable gap between the liberal generation and that of the Barthians was the controversy which arose between vice moderator Roberto Nisbet and political commissioner Roberto Malan, who was close to Miegge's group, on the participation of the Waldensian pastors in the Resistance and on the opposition of the Church in seeing its pastors compromised by the armed struggle.

This being said, it is possible to find in the considerations expressed by Spini, and endorsed again by Viallet, an objective and definitive judgment on the Church in the period of the dictatorship and during the War. This judgement does not absolve completely the ecclesiastical institution but recognizes the difficult choice in abstaining from the confrontation with

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

²¹ See Bouchard G., *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-79. On the theological differences, see Vinay V., *Facoltà valdese di Teologia (1855-1955)*, Torino, Claudiana, 1955; Id., "Giovanni Miegge e la sua generazione", *op. cit.*; Peyronel G., "Contrappunto a nove anni di 'Gioventù Cristiana'", in *Protestantesimo*, a. XXV (1970), pp. 210-218; Santini L., *Gli evangelici italiani negli anni della crisi (1918-1948)*, Torre Pellice, Società di Studi Valdesi, 1981. See also "Ricordo di Giovanni Miegge", in *Protestantesimo*, a. XLVII (1992), with writings of G. Spini and S. Rostagno.

the fascism. Moreover, even though the Church had not always avoided compromises, "there is no doubt that the most important of the Italian Evangelical Churches constituted, on the whole, a rather refractory environment for fascism before providing to militant anti-fascism a number of supporters which was not negligible"²². Spini also emphasized that the reason for this would also be in the fact that "the Christian freedom of assemblies and of ecclesiastical organizations was not overwhelmed by the incessant pressure of a totalitarian environment". Likewise, "the bonds of Christian fellowship with the believers of other nations" were never interrupted, "not even in moments in which nationalist frenzy touched its limits"²³.

It must be acknowledged that the Resistance to the fascism consisted of young laypeople, pastors and theologians. They had recognized themselves in Barthianism and, thanks to Miegge, succeeded in promoting a renewal of Italian Protestantism in the anti-fascist fight and in the Resistance as well. In this sense, Miegge's group redeemed the Waldensian Church, dissolving the fear of being compromised by its policy of liberal Protestantism which it invoked. On the contrary, Barthianism was capable of promoting an attentive reflection on the relationship between Church and State, on the difficult relationships with Catholicism and on the ecumenical nature of interconfessional relationships. For these reasons, the Waldensian youth in the end drew closer to Miegge's group, in the attempt to express the strongest evangelical cohesion in the face of the atrocities of Nazism and the War. Moreover, the Barthians were really those who favoured the wakening of the consciousness, conferring on the Waldensian youth that spiritual cohesion and that historical and political awareness which it needed.

2. From spiritual to armed resistance: in favour of a federal Europe

Thus far we have attempted to clarify the role of the Barthians in Waldensian society, explaining how they had become a point of reference for the Italian Evangelical world in the fascist regime and how they represented, in a more general sense, an impetus for renewal of Italian Waldensianism and Protestantism. These young Protestants clashed from the beginning not only with the Concordat policy of the State in relation to the Catholic Church but also with the corporate ideology, nationalism and the totalitarian design of the fascist regime. Miegge's group tried, using the German Confessing Church as an example, to oppose the infiltration of nationalism in the spirit and the institutions of the European Churches.

²² Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

²³ Spini G., *I protestanti in Italia*, Marchirolo, Edizioni Uomini Nuovi, 1965, p. 16. See also Cavallaro I., Sambin P. (eds.), *Macerie della storia e speranza cristiana*, Padova, Liviana, 1981, p. 113.

In this sense, the Barthians resumed the old liberal ecumenism of the start of the century, revising its theological premises. As Vinay recalled, the new generation evaluated the conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh, in a more differentiated and positive way²⁴. At those conferences, as Miegge observed, "theology had entered successfully into the movement of practical Christianity" imparting on ecumenism a new character, no longer only religious but also more aware of the necessity of opposing illiberal and totalitarian regimes, professing a civil and political resistance²⁵.

On these basis, in the first half of the 1930s, the Barthians openly defended the fundamental principles of autonomy and unity in the Universal Church against any perspective or demand to bend the national churches to the interests of whatever State or ideology. In addition to these claims, then, the Barthians included those of independence, liberty, democracy and internationality, which arose from the tradition of the Church and the Waldensian population and their history of struggle and resistance to persecution. These perspectives, in Miegge's opinion, could have been fully achieved only in a *Communitas Christi* capable of preserving in the unity of "a wide *complexio oppositorum* all that is alive and vital emerged from the millennial trunk of the Christian faith" and respecting the particular spiritual sensitivity, as well as civil and moral sensitivities, and the "robust historical individuality" of all of the Churches and peoples of Europe²⁶.

After having conducted for years a moral resistance and a covertly anti-fascist cultural activity with their magazine *Gioventù Cristiana*, the Barthians emerged into the open and in 1940 decided to publish the anti-Nazi letter to the French Protestants written by Karl Barth, translated by Rollier and introduced to Italian readers by Miegge. The position of the Italian Barthians was thus clarified when the Swiss theologian declared in a letter:

After having transformed Germany into a place of fear and terror, Hitler's National Socialism has become a growing threat for all of Europe: this threat has awakened the people [...]. In such circumstances the Church must not silence its testimony [...]. It would be deplorable for the Christian Churches, after having, in the preceding wars, assumed so lightly a nationalistic and militaristic position, to take now an equally casual neutral and pacifistic position [...]. In all countries, the Church will have much to console in the dark times where we are going. But that cannot give true consolation if not warning at the

²⁴ See Vinay V., *Storia dei valdesi*, op. cit., pp. 347-395, Vol. III. See also Rollier M.A., "L'ecumenismo e noi: pessimismo attivo, La partecipazione italiana a Oxford e Edimburgo", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, (gen-feb 1938), pp. 12-17; Visser 't Hooft W.A., "L'ecumenismo e la distretta della chiesa", in *L'Appello*, (mar-apr 1943), pp. 42-56.

²⁵ See Miegge G., "N. S. (nuova serie)", in *Gioventù Cristiana*, (lug-ago 1931), p. 3.

²⁶ Miegge G., "Ecumenismo cattolico", in *Protestantesimo*, n. 3 (1961), pp. 151-153.

same time, without hate, without self-righteousness, and without illusion on the abundance of man, if not stating clearly that resistance today is necessary.²⁷

After the letter's publication, *Gioventù Cristiana* was forced to cease its activities but the Barthians continued their struggle through another small magazine, *L'Appello*. September 8th, 1943 coincided for many of these young Evangelicals with the passage from conscientious anti-fascism to militant anti-fascism and the entry into the Resistance movement. As Spini recalled, "the theological opposition" of the Barthians in the aftermath of the Italian Armistice, "assumed the character of a political opposition; the clandestine PdA [in Torre Pellice] consisted of the theologians Miegge, Subilia and Vinay, and the politicians Rollier and Peyrone!"²⁸

The political inclinations of the Barthians were mirrored more closely first by the GL and then by the PdA²⁹. The liberal socialism of Aldo Capitini and Guido Calogero, as well as of the Rosselli brothers, succeeded in expressing better than any other political ideology the liberal and social-democratic inclinations of this group of Waldensians who decided to participate in the Resistance³⁰. However, it was not only the Barthian elite who

²⁷ See Karl Barth's letter to the Protestants of France, in *Gioventù Cristiana*, a. IX, nn. 2-3 (mar.-giu. 1940), pp. 85-88.

²⁸ See transcription of the November 12, 2003 interview of Giorgio Spini (Fiesole), the audiotope of which can be found at the ADSGP.

²⁹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 75; Gay Rochat D., *La Resistenza nelle Valli valdesi*, op. cit., p. 167. On the GL and the PdA, see Giovana M., *Giustizia e Libertà in Italia. Profilo di una cospirazione antifascista 1929-1937*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2005; De Luna G., *Storia del Partito d'Azione*, Torino, UTET, 2006.

³⁰ See Jallà A., *La Valle del Pellice sotto il peso dell'oppressione, 8 settembre 1943 - 25 aprile 1945*, Torre Pellice, Editrice Libreria L'Alpina, 1947; Prearo A., *Terra Ribelle*, Torino, Silvestrellie Cappelletto, 1948 (facsimile reproduction Claudiana, Torino 1995); Mastrogiovanni S., *Un protestante nella Resistenza: Jacopo Lombardini*, Torino, Claudiana, 1985; Malan R., *Amici, fratelli, compagni, memorie di un valdese del XX secolo*, edited by E. Lo Bue, Cuneo, L'Arciere, 1996; Cavaglion A. (ed.), *Minoranze religiose e diritti. Percorsi in cento anni di storia degli ebrei e dei valdesi (1848-1948)*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2001; Egidi Bouchard P., *Frida e i suoi fratelli. Il romanzo della famiglia Malan nella Resistenza*, Torino, Claudiana, 2003; Boccalatte L. (ed.), *Un filo tenace. Lettere e memorie 1944-1969: Williy Jervis, Lucilla Jervis Rochat e Giorgio Agosti*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2008; Artom E., *Diari di un partigiano ebreo (gennaio 1940-febbraio 1944)*, edited by G. Schwarz, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2008. On the connections between the PdA and the Waldensian Resistance, see Valiani L., *Tutte le strade conducono a Roma. Diario di un uomo nella guerra di un popolo*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1947, (2nd ed., Bologna, il Mulino, 1983); Valiani L., Bianchi G., Ragonieri E. (eds.), *Azionisti cattolici e comunisti nella Resistenza*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1971; Dellavalle C. (ed.), *8 Settembre 1943: Storia e Memoria*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1989; Bergamaschi C., Agosti P. (eds.), *Giorgio Agosti nelle lettere ai familiari dal 1915 al 1987*, Torino, Inside out edizioni, 2004; Agosti G. and Livio Bianco D., *Un'amicizia partigiana. Lettere 1943-1945*, Torino, Claudiana, 2007. On the activi-

joined the GL and the PdA, but also common people who participated in the Resistance in the Valleys. The GL developed in the Valleys, as elsewhere, a methodical political education, which could generally be defined as "liberal-socialist"³¹.

In any case, this adhesion to the liberal-socialistic tendency and the push towards the Resistance was influenced also by the religious specificity of this Evangelical minority. As Spini recalled the "way towards anti-fascism, rather than religious in general, was specifically denominational, Protestant"³², and thus, "when the PdA emerged, in 1942, it was obvious that the group of Barthians would join it"³³. This observation seems to be confirmed by Viallet as well, who points to the fact that the ideas circulating within the party corresponded "fully to the expectations of the Waldensian intelligentsia"³⁴.

Likewise, federalism, which had inserted itself in the political reflection of some of the representatives of the PdA³⁵, had found immediate validation among the Waldensians, some of whom had participated in the formation of the MFE. It is necessary to remember that the PdA had inherited from the GL a strong Europeanist vocation which, following the formation of the MFE and Rossi and Spinelli's membership in the PdA, had become stronger in the members of the PdA closest to the signers of the *Manifesto di Ventotene*. De Luna, talking about the various characters of actionism, recalled that many members of GL had merged with the federalist actionism and that it was "above all among *giellisti* (GL members) that the federalist hypotheses aroused a staunch consensus"³⁶.

ties of the Waldensian Resistance, see also *Il Pioniere, giornale d'azione partigiana e progressista. Reprint della collezione del periodo clandestino (1943-44)*, anastatic edition, Torino, Claudiana, 1976; Malan G., "Come nacque e si organizzò la Resistenza a Torre Pellice e nelle Valli valdesi", in *L'Avvenire delle Valli*, (15 maggio 1965), and *Id.*, "La Resistenza in Val Pellice vide uniti cattolici e valdesi", in *Resistenza*, dicembre 1964. On the military organization of the GL and PdA, see Mercuri L., Tartaglia G. (eds.), *Partito d'azione dalle origini all'inizio della resistenza armata*, Roma, Archivio Trimestrale, 1985; De Luna G., Camilla P., Cappelli D. et al. (eds.), *Le formazioni G.L. nella Resistenza*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1985.

³¹ See Aquilante S. (ed.), *Chiesa e Stato. Il ruolo del protestantesimo nell'Italia che cambia*, Torino, Claudiana, 1998, p. 146. See also Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, op. cit., pp. 89-111; Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 63-84.

³² Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, op. cit., p. 89.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa Valdese di fronte allo stato fascista*, op. cit., p. 316.

³⁵ On the federalist leanings of the PdA, see De Luna G., *Storia del Partito d'Azione*, op. cit. Regarding Europeanism in GL, see Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit.

³⁶ De Luna G., *Storia del Partito d'Azione*, op. cit., p. 70.

The federalist component of the PdA had contributed to the insertion of the international priority of the European federation into the political programme of the party³⁷. Rollier had arrived to the PdA directly from his experience as a *giellista*, while Spinelli had embraced actionism because he had “arrived at the conclusion that for all its defects, in the party [were present] almost all of the elements [...] contemporary with which [it was] possible to agree politically”³⁸. The first of these, certainly, was the idea and aim declared by the PdA in wanting to achieve a European federation³⁹. While for Spinelli the PdA remained a vehicle through which the idea of a European federation could be disseminated, for Rollier it represented also a means by which to continue to cultivate that liberal socialism which had always characterized his political thinking⁴⁰.

The MFE was born during a clandestine meeting held on August 27th-28th, 1943, at Rollier's house in Milan⁴¹, during which the directives of the Movement were decided and the “political thesis”⁴² was drawn up. These turned the ideological positions contained in the Ventotene *Manifesto* into programmatic and organizational recommendations⁴³. The thesis declared the epoch of national States at an end and considered the Second World War a historic occasion to overcome nationalism and international anarchy and to affirm that the coveted objectives of justice, liberty and autonomy were possible only in the setting of a European federation.

The Milan meeting marked a watershed in the history of the movements in favour of European unification and expressed a clear political will; a precise programme of action for the achievement of a European federation

³⁷ See “Programma del Partito d’Azione”, in *Italia Libera*, n. 1 (gen. 1943).

³⁸ See Pantagrue's (Spinelli) letter to the “Pessimista attivo” (Rollier), undated, but presumably written in December 1943, in FPdA, archivio clandestino, busta 2, fasc. 8, in ISTORETO.

³⁹ See Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 168-179.

⁴⁰ See Giordano F.M., “Dalle Valli all’Europa. Mario Alberto Rollier e la prospettiva europea della ‘Carta di Chivasso’”, in Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della ‘Dichiarazione di Chivasso’ (1943)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2015, pp. 103-116.

⁴¹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 85-112; *Id.*, “Da Ventotene a Milano: via Poerio 37”, in Zucca F. (ed.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Lombardia dal Risorgimento all’Unità europea*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007, pp. 149-185. See also Comba A., “Mario Alberto Rollier nella vita politica dell’Italia contemporanea”, in *Nuova Antologia*, fasc. 2015 (marzo-giugno 1984). On the archives which maintain the documentation relative to the MFE and the other movements in favour of European unity, see Rognoni Vercelli C., “Gli archivi dei movimenti per l’unità europea”, in Melchionni M.G. (ed.), *Fonti e luoghi della documentazione europea. Istruzioni per l’uso*, Roma 2000, pp. 69-83.

⁴² See “Il primo Convegno federalista. Tesi politiche”, in *L’Unità Europea*, n. 3 (set. 1943).

⁴³ See Spinelli A., Rossi E., *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, op. cit.

was then outlined and the movement distanced itself from 19th-century utopianism. As Norberto Bobbio later recalled, these federalists intended to substantiate this historical consciousness with a revolutionary programme, passing from “a declaration of principle” to a “programme of action”⁴⁴.

Besides Rollier, there was another Waldensian close to the Barthians present at the Milan convention, Willy Jarvis⁴⁵, who afterwards took part in the Resistance in Piedmont, establishing an important link with the Allies through Switzerland. Alongside these Waldensians were also the wife of Lelio Basso⁴⁶ and Lisli Carini⁴⁷. Both of the Basso were linked

⁴⁴ Bobbio N., “Il federalismo nel dibattito politico e culturale della resistenza”, in Pistone S. (ed.), *L'idea dell'unificazione europea dalla prima alla seconda guerra mondiale*, op. cit., p. 221. See also Grimaldi U.A., Rovati L. (eds.), *Resistenza ed Europa. Dalla lotta di Liberazione all'unità europea*, Milano, La Pietra, 1982, in particular pp. 149-210; Colombo A. (ed.), *La Resistenza e l'Europa*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1984.

⁴⁵ Willy Jarvis (1901-1944), an Olivetti engineer, was closely linked to the group *Gioventù Cristiana*. An expert alpinist, after September 8th he performed numerous liaison missions in Switzerland between the Italian Resistance and the Allies. He was a member of the Military Committee of the Turin PdA before being captured and condemned to death by the fascists. See Tibaldo L., *Quando suonò la campana. Willy Jarvis (1901-1944)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2005; Boccalatte L. (ed.), *Un filo tenace. Lettere e memorie 1944-1969*, op. cit. See also Miegge G., *L'Église sous le joug fasciste*, op. cit., pp. 71-72, 83; Malvezzi P., Pirelli G. (eds.), *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza italiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1955, p. 198; Eid. (eds.), *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza europea*, Torino, Einaudi, 1956, p. 496.

⁴⁶ Lelio Basso (1903-1978), a noted scholar on Marxism and the Protestant Reform, collaborated in the political and cultural magazines *Rivoluzione Liberale*, *Critica sociale*, *Il Caffè*, *Avanti!*, *Quarto Stato* and *Pietre*. Arrested in 1928, he was sent into exile on the island of Ponza. After having returned to Milan in 1934, he recommenced his political activities, managing the *Centro interno socialista* with Rodolfo Morandi, Lucio Luzzatto, and Eugenio Colomi. He participated in the formation of the *Movimento di unità proletaria* (Movement of Proletarian Unity) in 1943, becoming part of the leadership. He participated in the Resistance and, together with Sandro Pertini and Rodolfo Morandi, formed the clandestine executive committee of the *Partito socialista italiano di unità proletaria*-PSIUP (Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity). Elected deputy to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, he was part of the Commission “of the 75”, charged with the drafting of the text of the future Republican Constitution. He was elected deputy and senator more than once and in 1976 founded the *Lega internazionale per i diritti e la liberazione dei popoli* (International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples). See Carrannante A., “Ripensando Lelio Basso”, in *Giornale di storia contemporanea*, giugno 2006, pp. 243-271; Craveri P., “Lelio Basso”, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXIV, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana Treccani, Roma, 1988, pp. 298-306. See also Canestri G., Contorbia F., Livorsi F. et al. (eds.), *Lelio Basso nella storia del socialismo*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1980.

⁴⁷ Lisli Carini (1906-1996), profoundly influenced by Protestant culture, was linked to Rita Rollier by their old friendship. In the period after the Second World War, she distinguished herself for her civil and social commitment to education and peace. Until 1963 she was the Secretary and driving force of the *Comitato italiano per il disarmo nucleare* (Italian Committee for Nuclear Disarmament). At the end of the 1950s, she intensified her literary activities. She is the author of *Il sole sorge a ponente* (1959), *La grande memoria* (1974) and *Io-Tu* (1988). After Lelio's death, she worked with the *Fondazione Lisli e Lelio Basso di Roma*.

by an old friendship to Rollier. Lelio, in particular, together with the great scholar and expert on the history of Southern Italy, Manlio Rossi Doria⁴⁸, also present at the federalist convention in Milan, had participated in the cultural season of Italian Protestantism at the beginning of the 20th century, writing in the magazines *Bilychnis* and *Conscientia* and taking part in the activities of the ACDG and, later, in *Agàpe*⁴⁹.

Rollier was the first to popularize the programme of the PdA in the Valleys and the principles of European federalism, which found in Piedmont and, in particular, in the Waldensians a large following and numerous supporters. He became the ideological guide and point of reference for the first actionist anti-fascist movement politically organized in Torre Pellice⁵⁰. As Leo Valiani recalls, "since 1942 the Waldensians Mario and Guido Rollier had brought, from Milan, where they resided, to Torre Pellice, where they had the family home, the news of the formation of the PdA and conveyed the programme"⁵¹. In Torre Pellice, M.A. Rollier had found "an environment quite ready to welcome the ideas of the new party"⁵², which could also be said for those of the MFE. In fact, the strenuous defence of the historic personality of the Waldensian people, of religious freedom, and the rejection of the barriers erected by national-fascism among Italians and the culture derived from the Reform in Europe formed the fertile ground in which its participation in the Resistance and its adhesion to the federalistic principles was rooted⁵³.

⁴⁸ Manlio Rossi Doria (1905-1988) was a writer and politician. In the 1920s, he approached Emilio Sereni, Giorgio Amendola and Umberto Zanotti Bianco, sharing political ideas and an aversion towards fascism. Member of the *Partito comunista italiano*-PCI (Italian Communist Party), he was arrested in 1930 and sentenced to fifteen years in prison. After July 25, 1943, he drew closer to the actionist environments, collaborating with Leone Ginzburg on the editorial staff of *Italia Libera*. After the Second World War, he dedicated himself to university teaching and in 1959 founded the *Centro di specializzazione e ricerche economico-agrarie per il Mezzogiorno* (Center for Economics-Agrarian Specialization and Research for Southern Italy). In the 1960s and 1970s, he was elected senator more than once as member of the *Partito socialista italiano*-PSI (Italian Socialist Party). See Rossi Doria M., *La gioia tranquilla del ricordo. Memorie 1905-1934*, Bologna, the Mulino, 1991. See also Bevilacqua P. (ed.), *Gli uomini e la storia. Ricordi di contemporanei*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1990.

⁴⁹ *Agàpe* marked the continuation of the *Giornate teologiche* organized by the Barthians. The initiative was launched by Tullio Vinay in 1947. See Vinay T., *L'amore è più grande. La storia di Agàpe e la nostra*, Torino, Claudiana, 1995.

⁵⁰ Spini confirms the central role of Rollier and his family in the spread of actionist and federalist ideas in Evangelical circles. Spini G., *La strada della Liberazione. Dalla riscoperta di Calvino al Fronte della VIII Armata*, op. cit., p. 91.

⁵¹ Valiani L., "Il Partito d'Azione", in Valiani L., Bianchi G., Regionieri E. (eds.), *Azionisti cattolici e comunisti nella Resistenza*, op. cit., pp. 84 ss.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 3.

Shortly after September 8th, 1945, the first clandestine meetings with the Piedmontese section of the PdA, whose leaders had decided to leave Turin to take refuge in a safer place, were held in Rollier's house in Torre Pellice⁵⁴. While Rollier acted as a liaison between the Milan and Turin actionists, establishing in Torre Pellice one of the first centres of actionist resistance, Francesco Lo Bue, professor at the College of Torre Pellice, acted as an intermediary between the actionist and federalist leadership and the Waldensian youth, who soon after would form the first partisan groups. Since 1938, in fact, he had had a certain influence on his young students at the College and had been able to arouse in many of them a critical reflection with respect to fascism and a lively Europeanist sentiment. Lo Bue was also the best cultural mediator between the Barthians and the youngest students interested in theological questions, such as Alberto Cabella⁵⁵, future federalist leader, and the Malan brothers, Roberto and Gustavo⁵⁶, at that time young university students, then actionist partisans⁵⁷.

In Torre Pellice, therefore, the first Resistance armed groups against Nazifascism were established in Piedmont between 1942 and 1943. Indeed,

⁵⁴ See Gobetti A., *Diario partigiano*, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁵ Alberto Cabella (1927-2014), an anti-fascist and Europeanist, was one of the founding members of the *Unione europea dei federalisti-UEF* (Union of European Federalist) in Montreux in 1947. He worked as part of the editorial staff of the Turin edition of *L'Unità Europea* and immediately after the war committed himself to federalist mobilization and propaganda. In 1963, he was the promoter of an initiative committee for the foundation of a European federalist party, coming into conflict with Spinelli. In 1982, he transferred to Paris as a representative of the Italian Cultural Institute and Professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle. Since 1992 he has been the Vice President of the *Centro Studi Piero Gobetti* in Turin. See "Alberto Cabella segretario nazionale aggiunto del Mfe", in *Europa federata*, n. 51 (set. 1951), p. 4.

⁵⁶ Gustavo Malan (1922-2004), an anti-fascist and the son of a Waldensian pastor, participated in the Resistance when he was very young. In 1942, he had already made contact with several representatives of the PdA and after September 8, 1943, he collaborated on the organization of the first partisan groups in *Val Pellice*. Head of the news service of the *Divisione Alpina GL* (GL Alpine Brigade) he worked in the clandestine press, assuming management of *Il Pioniere*. In December 1943, he took part in the Chivasso Conference where the *Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine* was signed. After the Liberation, he was a representative of the press office of the PdA and subsequently collaborated with the editorial staff of *L'Unità Europea*. In 1952, he contributed to the foundation of the *Istituto universitario di studi europei* (University Institute of European Studies), of which he was the General Secretary until 1977. See Egidi Bouchard P., *Frida e i suoi fratelli. Il romanzo della famiglia Malan nella Resistenza*, op. cit. e Malan R., *Amici, fratelli, compagni, memorie di un valdese del XX secolo*, op. cit.

⁵⁷ See "Professore al Collegio di Torre Pellice", in *L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi*, del 20 aprile 1979. See also Malan R., *Amici, fratelli, compagni, memorie di un valdese del XX secolo*, op. cit., *passim*; Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

many of the participants at the first federalist meeting in Milan, including Spinelli, sought refuge from Milan in the Valleys, right in Rollier's home, where several clandestine conferences directed at popularizing the MFE's plan were held⁵⁸. As Rognoni writes, in 1943, "in early September Spinelli held a conference in Torre Pellice on federalism. According to Gustavo Malan, it had most probably to do with Spinelli's first public speech on European federalism"⁵⁹. Spinelli himself in his autobiography recalls that precise moment, slightly ahead of his departure for Switzerland, where he had tried to put himself in contact with other supporters of the European Resistance:

I held my first federalist conference at a Waldensian cenacle, in Torre Pellice, under the protective gaze of a great portrait of Cromwell, who was still remembered in those valleys for having induced, with his threatening ships, the Savoy king to renounce the vexations which he inflicted on his Calvinist subjects. His image seemed to assure us that once again the descendents of his people were close to the shores to help us⁶⁰.

As also indicated by Spinelli, the cultural and confessional particularities of the Waldensian Valleys made them a primary choice for the reception of federalist thought. In addition, their geographic location made them an ideal bridge between occupied Italy and the rest of Europe during the Resistance, between the Milanese-Turin actionist anti-fascist movement and the supporters of Italian anti-fascism displaced in Switzerland during the fascist regime⁶¹. Many figures of the Italian anti-fascism passed through the Valleys, stopping at Rollier's house before continuing on to Switzerland to spread the new ideas and establish new contacts or remaining in clandestinity in Nazi-occupied Italy to coordinate Resistance activities⁶².

In this sense, one of the figures who acted as a connection between the Valleys and Switzerland was M.A. Rollier's brother, Guido (1911-1971),

⁵⁸ As Arialdo Banfi remembered, in the early days of September 1943 many representatives of federalist and actionist anti-fascism passed through Torre Pellice. Besides Giorgio Agosti and Banfi, many others attended meetings at Rollier's house, as opportunities presented themselves, including Roberto; Gustavo and Frida Malan; Silvia Pons; Giorgio Diena; Silvio Baridon; Giorgio Spini; Francesco Lo Bue; Mario Falchi; Jacopo Lombardini; Giorgio Peyronel; Osvaldo Coïsson; Bruno Revel; Leopoldo Bertolè; Altiero Spinelli; Michele Giua; and, naturally, the Rollier brothers, Mario and Guido; and Jacqueline. See Mastrogiovanni S., *Un protestante nella Resistenza: Jacopo Lombardini*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁵⁹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Spinelli A., *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

⁶¹ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*

⁶² See Valiani L., *Tutte le strade conducono a Roma*, *op. cit.* See also Foa V., *Il cavallo e la Torre. Riflessioni su una vita*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991; Savino E., *La diaspora azionista. Dalla Resistenza alla nascita del Partito radicale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2010.

also an actionist and federalist, who moved with his family to Switzerland in 1943. The brothers remained in contact with Rossi, Spinelli and other refugees, and succeeded, through correspondence with his brother, in maintaining relationships with various supporters of anti-fascism in Italy⁶³. Guido enjoyed greater liberty as a result of his marriage to a Swiss citizen, Jacqueline Porret, and was a point of reference for the federalists in Switzerland. He succeeded, thanks to his acquaintances, in publishing in 1945 through the Neuchâtel publisher *La Baconnière*, one of the most important federalist texts of that period, Ernesto Rossi's *L'Europe de demain*. Nor it should be forgotten that Guido Rollier had been the means through which in 1941 Rossi and Spinelli's *Manifesto* managed to arrive in Milan from Ventotene, where Banfi and the Rolliers laboured to recopy it and spread it in the anti-fascist circles⁶⁴.

The first core group of Waldensian federalists took shape around Rollier, in his house in Torre Pellice; the majority of them were Barthians, among whom should be mentioned, besides Guido and Eric⁶⁵, M.A. Rollier's brother and father, Lo Bue, Peyronel, Revel, Osvaldo Coïsson⁶⁶, Bertolè, Subilia and then the younger Cabella, G. Malan and Alberto Roland⁶⁷, all activists or MFE sympathizers. All of these, together with others, formed – at least at the beginning – the backbone or, as Sergio Pistone calls it, the “hard core” of Piedmontese federalism⁶⁸, whose history cannot be separated from this particularly active component, ideologically characterized

⁶³ See correspondence between Guido and Mario Alberto Rollier, in AMAR.

⁶⁴ See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁶⁵ Eric Rollier (1885-1948), a merchant and owner of a tannery in the Valleys, had an active role in the community and the Waldensian Church, working on matters of ecclesiastical politics. An anti-fascist, in 1943 he participated in the Resistance, offering help to refugees, evacuees and persecuted politicians. After September 8, his home was for a time the headquarters of the Piedmont PdA.

⁶⁶ Osvaldo Coïsson (1912-2000), an anti-fascist and federalist, in December 1943 took part in the Chivasso Convention where the *Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine* was signed. Several of the first meetings in the Valleys of the anti-fascists happened in his mountain house near Torre Pellice. After moving to Tuscany, he participated in the Florentine CLN. After the war, he worked with the *Società di Studi Valdesi* (Society of Waldensian Studies) and in 1972 became an active member of the *Associazione degli autonomisti delle Valli occitane* (Association of Autonomists in the Occitane Valleys). He was the editor of the magazine *Novel Temp* and defended until he died the linguistic minorities.

⁶⁷ Alberto Roland (1925-2002), a Waldensian student from Torre Pellice, an anti-fascist and Europeanist, wrote for *La Voce del Pellice*, *Il Pioniere* e *L'Unità Europea*. He was the author of a federalist pamphlet for the clandestine series *Quaderni di Gioventù d'Azione*. See Roland A., *Per gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, Torino, Quaderni di Gioventù d'Azione, 1945.

⁶⁸ Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta dell'unità europea negli anni 1945-1957”, in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.),

by elements of strong originality. First among these elements is a religious nature; second is an historical-cultural background; and third is the geographic position.

In consideration of this, it now seems opportune to dedicate the last part of this study to the federalist commitment of the Waldensian component of the MFE. In fact, several of the most important happenings and most relevant initiatives which marked, at least at the beginning, the history of the Piedmontese and national MFE really took place thanks to the effort of the Waldensian supporters of the Movement. Their activism etched deeply into the characterization of the Piedmontese MFE, but meaningful actions on their part in addition at the national and international level were not lacking. The originality of the Waldensian contribution to federalism is clearly identifiable in the concrete contributions which marked the federalist commitment of its members. Among these should be mentioned the global orientation of federalism and the intense journalistic activity and cultural commitment which were reflected in the Turin edition of *L'Unità Europea*⁶⁹ followed the end of the Second World War and the foundation of the *Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei* of Turin. This component played a significant role at the moment of Spinelli's withdrawal from the MFE in 1945 and during the "Campagnolo leadership" of the Movement. During this phase, the Waldensian federalists steadfastly maintained Spinelli's principles. In the end, among the diverse contributions which the Waldensians gave to federalist thought and action we must highlight that of the *Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine* (Declaration of the representatives of the Alpine population), which – in addition to integrating the European federalism of the Ventotene *Manifesto* with a reflection on internal federalism – succeeded in summarizing and explicating the profound reasons for the Waldensian adhesion to federalism.

Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali, la Resistenza e i trattati di Roma (1957), Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 1999, p. 44.

⁶⁹ See *L'Unità Europea 1943-1954*, anastatic edition edited by *Consiglio regionale del Piemonte* and by *Consulta europea*, Torino, 2000.

III. The Waldensian Contribution to European Federalism: A Cultural and Political Battle

1. The United States of Europe: towards the idea of a supranational federation

Pistone distinguishes two categories of activists within the Piedmontese federalist leadership: the so-called "hard core" group, formed predominantly by independents and whose members chose to work exclusively in the MFE without binding themselves to any party; and that of the federalists inserted in the framework of a party or working on the unionist front¹. We can place almost all of the Waldensians within the first group, especially after the disappearance of the PdA, mainly due to essentially cultural and ideological motivations, which imposed on them an exclusive involvement in the struggle for the European federation, considered the main purpose of their political commitment.

It must be mentioned that the structure of the MFE was not so much that of a conventional party, but rather that of a transversal movement, however framed and united around its objectives and programme². This had allowed some Waldensian federalists like Cabella and Malan to participate actively in the MFE, maintaining themselves independent or, in the case of pastor Lo Bue, to adhere to the ideas of the Movement without compromising his position inside the Waldensian Church³. The MFE was originally structured on the network of anti-fascist parties, starting with the PdA, but not in its entirety⁴. This confirmed its inter-party and transversal nature, and its political desire to translate into

¹ See Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali*, op. cit., p. 44.

² Usellini G., "Movimento o Partito?", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. I, (agosto 1943), clandestine edition.

³ See Lo Bue's letter to M.A. Rollier, dated May 2, 1945, in FMAR, (1909-1980), fald. 4-3, "Movimento federalista europeo", MFE Congresso del 9-10 Settembre 1945, cart. 4, in AMFE.

⁴ The federalists did not belong only to the PdA, but came from politically diverse families: Christian Democrats, liberals, socialists and communists. See Rognoni Vercelli C., "Autonomismo e federalismo nella Resistenza", in Preda D., Rognoni Vercelli C. (eds.), *Storia e percorsi del federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 603-646, Vol. II.

actions the principles upon which it based its theory, moving in concert even within the national political forces. In fact, it would have been difficult to imagine a Waldensian federalist belonging to the Communist Party or the Christian Democrats. However, the structure of the Movement and its membership conditions allowed the Waldensians to pursue the objectives of European and global federalism in a more autonomous manner, without the ideological interferences originating from the national parties.

The Waldensians, in fact, fully identified themselves in the orientations of the *Manifesto di Ventotene* in which Spinelli had clearly set out the movement on the international plane of the line of division between the forces of progress, those which sought to construct a solid international state and therefore fought for the European federation, and the forces of preservation, those of the traditional parties and the conquest of national political power⁵. In addition, the federalists of the Valleys also inserted themselves in the wake of the Piedmontese Europeanist tradition which had as a point of reference Luigi Einaudi (1874-1961)⁶, Attilio Cabiati (1866-1945) and Giovanni Agnelli (1872-1950)⁷, forerunners of the idea of a European federation. Finally, they also recognized themselves in the tradition of intranational and integral federalism⁸, whose manifesto remained *L'ordine politico delle Comunità* of Adriano Olivetti (1901-1960)⁹, whose orientation found a strong echo in De Rougemont's Christian personalism.

⁵ See Spinelli A., Rossi E., *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁶ See Einaudi L., *La guerra e l'unità europea*, *op. cit.* In the debate on European integration Einaudi was among the maximum supporters of the idea of a European federation. For a bibliographical indication of his works, see Firpo L., *Bibliografia degli scritti di Luigi Einaudi (dal 1893 al 1970)*, Torino, Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1971; Faucci R., *Einaudi*, Torino, Utet, 1986. See also Silvestri, P., *Il liberalismo di Luigi Einaudi o del Buongoverno*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2008. On Einaudi's federalist thought, see Morelli U., *Contro il mito dello Stato sovrano. Luigi Einaudi e l'unità europea*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1991; *Id.*, "Luigi Einaudi e l'unità federale europea", in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali, la Resistenza e i Trattati di Roma (1957)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-98; Cressati C., *L'Europa necessaria. Il federalismo liberale di Luigi Einaudi*, Torino, Giappichelli, 1992.

⁷ At the end of the Great War, Agnelli and Cabiati together with Einaudi were among the first to criticize the League of Nations system and to propose a European federation. See Agnelli G., Cabiati A., *Federazione Europea o Lega delle nazioni?*, Torino, Fratelli Bocca, 1918. See also Malandrino C. (ed.), *Alle origini dell'europeismo in Piemonte. La crisi del primo dopoguerra, la cultura politica piemontese e il problema dell'unità europea*, Torino, Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1993.

⁸ See "Federalismo integrale", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 8 (gen. - feb. 1945) clandestine edition.

⁹ Olivetti A., *L'ordine politico delle Comunità. Le garanzie di libertà in uno Stato socialista*, *op. cit.*; *Id.*, *L'ordine politico delle Comunità dello Stato secondo le*

It is therefore not possible to underestimate the influence that these figures exerted on the Piedmontese Europeanists in general and that, in some way, predisposed the generation coming out of the war to welcome the programme of the MFE¹⁰. As Cabella noted, for these reasons as well as for the originality of political thought, Piedmont distinguished itself in the world of Europeanist culture, placing itself during the war “at the forefront of the diffusion of Europeanism and federalism, both through its underground press and its activism at an intellectual and popular level”¹¹. It must be also noted that a considerable part of this activism, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, originated from the Waldensian world.

Following September 8th and the Nazi-Fascist occupation, many of the federalists who had convened in August 1943 at Rollier’s Milan home, forced into clandestinity, decided to seek refuge in Piedmont in the Waldensian Valleys. If in Milan the MFE was born thanks to the support of the Waldensians, in the Valleys the Movement had found during the Resistance a suitable place for spreading its ideas as well as a conspicuous number of supporters and militants¹². While Rollier and Peyronel, who remained the Lombardian MFE’s greatest Waldensian leaders, continued to operate in Milan, in Torre Pellice the Movement was able to establish itself, particularly after the War, thanks to a group of men and women who had fought during the Resistance and who were convinced of the need to construct a European federation. Among these, the greatest exponents were Cabella, Malan, Coïsson, Augusto Comba¹³ and Anna

leggi dello spirito, Roma, Edizioni di Comunità, 1946. On Olivetti, see Ochetto V., *Adriano Olivetti. La Biografia*, Edizioni di Comunità, 2013. See also Mornese, M., *L’eresia politica di Adriano Olivetti*, Milano, Lampi di stampa, 2005; Chiti-Batelli A., “L’idea federalista nel pensiero di Adriano Olivetti”, in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali, la Resistenza e i Trattati di Roma (1957)*, op. cit., pp. 251-263.

¹⁰ See Malandrino C. (ed.), *Alle origini dell’europeismo in Piemonte*, op. cit.

¹¹ Cabella A., “Europeismo e federalismo fra due guerre mondiali”, in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali, la Resistenza e i Trattati di Roma (1957)*, op. cit., p. 19.

¹² See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit. On the organization and spread of the MFE in Piedmont see Pistone S., “*Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta dell’unità europea negli anni 1945-1957*”, op. cit.

¹³ Augusto Comba (1923) was a professor at the University of Turin and editor of the *Bollettino della Società di Studi valdesi*. A member of the Italian Freemasons, he was a member of the Council of the Grand Orient of Italy for nine years.

Marullo¹⁴. In Turin, instead, during the Nazi-Fascist occupation, it was Lo Bue who conducted constant liaison and propaganda activities for the MFE. He was part of its clandestine Committee until October 1943. The Committee was composed of Colombino, Luigi Gorini¹⁵, Fausto Penati¹⁶ and Tina Rieser Pizzardo.

The new Committee met for the first time in January 1945 in Turin, near the Albergo Nazionale, at that time the headquarters of the German command. Despite the substantial difficulties owing to the military occupation and the risks of clandestine activity, the Turin group succeeded in organizing a vast and ramified structure of federalist propaganda. As Lo Bue remembered, in the days of the insurrection, *L'Unità Europea* was "the first anti-fascist newspaper sold on the roadways"¹⁷, on the streets of Turin, "in the working-class neighbourhoods and offices, the last bundles of the latest issue of the clandestine newspaper were being sold out, even before the centre of the city was cleared of Germans and fascists"¹⁸. At the same time numerous federalist rallies were organized, the first of which occurred in the SPA factories¹⁹. This extensive and constant information allowed the MFE to establish itself in Turin and make its ideas known.

After the liberation, in September 1945, the first unrestricted meeting of the Turin section of the MFE was held²⁰. During the meeting, presided

¹⁴ Anna Marullo (1910-2004), leader of the GL, was an anti-fascist and took part in the Resistance. In 1944, together with Mirella Bein and Rosa Toja, she formed a humanitarian organization for the collection of food, clothing and medicine for the partisans. During the War, she acted as a liaison and courier and organized the distribution of clandestine publications.

¹⁵ Luigi Gorini (1903-1976) was a professor in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at Harvard Medical School and a member of the National Academy of Sciences. See Beckwith J., Fraenkel D., "Luigi Gorini, November 13, 1903 – August 13, 1976", in *Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. 52, Washington, National Academy of Sciences, 1980, pp. 203-221.

¹⁶ Fausto Penati (1904-1984), a doctor, scholar and member of the political leadership of the Piedmontese PdA, was a member of the Liberation Committee of the City of Turin. See Vaccarino G., "Ricordo di Fausto Penati (1904-1984)", in *Mezzosecolo. Annali 1994-1996*, n. 11, pp. 439-443.

¹⁷ Lo Bue F., "Mfe in Italia. Le date salienti", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 8 (20 Aprile 1946).

¹⁸ Lo Bue F., "Federalismo salvezza d'Europa", in *Il Pioniere*, 26 Aprile 1946.

¹⁹ Lo Bue F., "Mfe in Italia. Le date salienti", *op. cit.*

²⁰ The provisional Committee of the Turin section coincided with the regional section, at least in the early stages. In March 1946, the activities of the citizen section joined that of a regional section.

over by Augusto Monti²¹, the provisional Committee was formed²². Among the attendants were Silvio Colombino²³, President (PdA), Domenico Chiaramello²⁴, Vice President and Deputy Mayor of Turin (PSIUP), Franco Antonicelli²⁵, President of the Regional Council (PLI), Aroldo Arnaud (PRI), Federico Chiantore²⁶ (PSIUP), Terenzio Grandi²⁷ (PRI), Paolo

²¹ Augusto Monti (1881-1966), a noted proponent of Turin culture, was a professor at the Massimo d'Azeglio Secondary School, where he educated an entire generation of anti-fascists, among whom were Cesare Pavese, Massimo Mila, Giulio Einaudi, Leone Ginzburg, Salvatore Luna, Giancarlo Pajetta, Franco Antonicelli, Vittorio Foa and Tullio Pinelli. He was a contributor to newspapers and magazines such as *La Voce*, *Nuovi doveri*, *L'Unità*, *Rivoluzione Liberale*, *Il Corriere della Sera* e *Baretti*. In 1929, he joined the GL party, in 1934 was arrested for political reasons, and in 1936 was sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the *Tribunale Speciale* (Special Tribunal). After the War, he was appointed Superintendent of regional schools by the *Comitato di liberazione nazionale-CLN* (National Liberation Committee). He carried out an intense federalist activity, participating in the organization of the Turin section of the MFE, and was the editor of *L'Unità Europea* from 1945 to 1946. See Graglia P., "Il magistero di Augusto Monti", in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali*, op. cit., pp. 195-217; Tesio G., *Augusto Monti: attualità di un uomo all'antica*, Cuneo, L'Arciere, 1980. On his political thought, see Monti A., *Realtà del Partito d'Azione*, Cuneo, Araba Fenice, 1993.

²² See Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", op. cit.

²³ Silvio Colombino (1878-1955), a Turin doctor and a member of the Committee of the Turin section of the MFE from 1945 to 1946.

²⁴ Domenico Chiaramello (1897-1976), who survived the Great War, joined the Italian Socialist Party in 1917. Beginning in 1925, he served in the ranks of anti-fascism, liaising with the dissident movements in France. After the war, he was appointed Deputy Mayor of Turin. A member of the *Assemblea costituente* (Constituent Assembly of Italy), he was elected Deputy in 1948 and again in 1953. He was Undersecretary of the Treasury in 1950 and 1954.

²⁵ Franco Antonicelli (1902-1974), a poet, politician and essayist, took part in the Resistance in the capital and was part of the Piedmontese regional CLN, of which he became President. During the war, he joined the MFE and became a member of the regional governing bodies. In 1968, as a left-wing independent, he was elected senator for the Communist Party in Piedmont. See Bobbio N., *Franco Antonicelli. Ricordi e testimonianze*, Torino, Bollati-Boringhieri, 1992; Mazzoleni O., *Franco Antonicelli: cultura e politica 1925-1950*, Turin, Rosenberg & Sellier, 1998.

²⁶ Federico Chiantore (1881-1946), a socialist, participated in the Resistance and joined the MFE during the war. See Grandi T., "Un nostro lutto, Federico Chiantore", in *L'Unità Europea*, 20 novembre 1946.

²⁷ Terenzio Grandi (1884-1981), a defender of republican ideas, joined the Italian Republican Party, founded and led numerous magazines committed to the social front and pacifist activism. During the Resistance, he decided to join the MFE, contributing to the organization of the Turin section and holding several positions at a regional level. It was his print shop which printed the federalist newspapers *L'Unità Europea*, *Il Federalismo nel mondo*, *Europa Nuova*, *Popolo Europeo*, *EU*.

Greco²⁸ (PLI), Giuseppe Grosso²⁹ (DC), Eugenio Libois³⁰ (DC), Francesco Lo Bue (independent), Tina Rieser Pizzardo, Secretary (independent), Thesia (PSIUP), Franco Venturi (PdA)³¹ and Margherita Villa (PCI)³².

At the meeting Lo Bue underlined, in the name of the Committee and the propaganda section of which he was part, the importance of the experiences of the workers' unions, organized by the MFE in some local industries: at the SPA factories, at the FIAT Mirafiori factory, at the Aeronautics factories and at the national railway facilities. These activities demonstrated the

²⁸ Paolo Greco (1889-1974), a university professor and noted scholar on commercial and private law, was the Provost of the Bocconi University in Milan during the Second World War. A liberal and anti-fascist, he participated in the Resistance, holding important positions in the regional Piedmontese CLN. A member of the Italian Liberal Party, after the war he participated in the campaign for the Constituent alongside the *Concentrazione democratico-repubblicana* (Republican Democratic Concentration), led by Ferruccio Parri and Ugo La Malfa. A staunch Europeanist, he joined the MFE and was elected Turin delegate to the *Congresso del Popolo Europeo* (Congress of European People) in 1957. In 1952, he was among the founders of the *Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei*. See Galante Garrone A., "Paolo Greco uomo del CLN e uomo di cultura", in *Mezzosecolo*, 8, 1989, pp. 103-114.

²⁹ Giuseppe Grosso (1906-1973), a professor at the University of Turin, an anti-fascist, during the war took part in the Resistance. In 1945, he became the Dean of the Faculty of Law and in 1950 became a member of the *Accademia delle Scienze* (Academy of Sciences). In 1946, he was elected city councilor as a Christian Democrat. A Catholic committed to local politics, from 1951 to 1965 he was President of the Province of Turin and was elected Mayor of the Piedmont capital in 1965. See Bobbio N., "Giuseppe Grosso", in Borio F. (ed.) *I sindaci della libertà. Torino dal 1945 ad oggi*, Torino, EDA, 1980, pp. 183-192.

³⁰ Eugenio Libois (1889-1966) was a Turin lawyer, an anti-fascist and correspondent with Piero Gobetti. He participated in the Resistance as partisan, becoming a member of the regional CLN.

³¹ Franco Venturi (1914-1994), an historian and Italian academic, joined the GL and conducted intense anti-fascist propaganda activities. He sought refuge in France and attended the Sorbonne, where he graduated in 1945. In Paris he entered into contact with the exiled anti-fascists, drawing closer to the Rosselli brothers, Salvemini, Nitti and Garosci. In 1940, he escaped to Spain where he was arrested by the Francoists. After two years, he succeeded in entering into contact with the PdA leadership. Having returned to Turin after July 25, 1943, he became the editor of the clandestine press of the PdA, dealing with the publication and dissemination of *L'Italia Libera*, *Voci d'Officina* and *Quaderni dell'Italia Libera*. After the war, he eventually distanced himself from politics, dedicating himself to historical studies. In 1948, he was the cultural attaché of the Italian embassy in Moscow and in 1959, after the disappearance of Federico Chabod, became the editor of *Rivista storica italiana*. See Guerri L., Ricuperati G. (eds.), *Il coraggio della ragione. Franco Venturi intellettuale e storico cosmopolita*, Torino, Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1998; Albertone M. (ed.), *Il repubblicanesimo moderno. L'idea di repubblica nella riflessione storica di Franco Venturi*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2006.

³² Missing from the meeting were socialist Rodolfo Morandi, busy in Milan with the *Comitato di liberazione nazionale Alta Italia-CLNAI* (National liberation Committee for Northern Italy), and actionist Vittorio Foa, just released after a ten-year prison sentence and called back to Rome by the Secretary of his party.

willingness of the Movement to be present at all levels and in all social categories. The left-leaning orientation of the MFE was due to the massive presence of political exponents of the leftist parties in the ranks of the federalists, the same forces which had played a prominent role in the organization of the Resistance. The existence of a developed industrial fabric and a strong working class can therefore explain the reason why the Piedmontese MFE intensified its propaganda activities in the factories. With this aim, the Turin section formed various groups which referred to specific sector committees autonomously able to contribute to the federalist propaganda in the different work environments. Therefore, many committees were established, including railway workers, factory workers and students³³.

In the following months, the MFE held numerous conferences and radio conversations on Radio Torino, staged rallies in the squares and organized the first public demonstrations³⁴. In a short time, the number of members and sections multiplied. Besides the sections in Torre Pellice, Turin (headquarters of the Regional Secretary), Ivrea and Cuneo, which together represented the backbone of the federalist organization in Piedmont, other sections were established in Biella, Asti, Pinerolo, Alessandria, Acqui, Novara and Vercelli. A numerous and well-structured federalist force was taking shape in which the Waldensian component was represented³⁵.

The importance and role of this component became more evident when, after Rossi and Spinelli left the MFE, the disorientation of the Movement loomed large after a brief period in the so-called "Campagnolo crisis"³⁶. Indeed, immediately after the war, Rossi e Spinelli believed that the conditions considered necessary for the fulfillment of the federalist revolution had ceased to exist. During this crisis, which was a delicate transitional phase in the history of the MFE, the Waldensian federalists would have guaranteed the continuity of the original ideological line, preventing the dissolution of the Movement with the sudden loss of its top leaders. Then, in August 1947, the Waldensians joined Rossi and Spinelli and participated with them in the relaunch of the new strategy of the MFE.

Cabella recalled that "in spite of the disillusionment of the standstill of the Resistance movement which did not succeed in achieving its potential federal-

³³ See "Attività del Centro piemontese", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 8, 5 febbraio 1946.

³⁴ See Lo Bue's letter to Rollier, dated May 2, 1945, *op. cit.* and Cabella A., "Federalismo Piemontese", in *Il Mondo Europeo*, n. 1, 15 gennaio 1948.

³⁵ See Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta dell'unità europea negli anni 1945-1957", *op. cit.*

³⁶ Preda D., "Declino e rilancio del Mfe tra fine della guerra e piano Marshall", in Dumoulin M. (ed.), *Plans des temps de guerre pour l'Europe d'après guerre (1940-1947)*. Wartime Plans for Postwar Europe (1940-1947), Bruxelles-Milano-Paris-Baden-Baden, Bruylant-Giuffré-LGDJ-Nomos Verlag, 1995, pp. 489-525.

ist premises”, the Piedmontese federalists “never capitulated, contributing to give the MFE an organizational framework” and continuing with the work of gradual penetration of the “original” federalist ideas undertaken by propaganda bodies³⁷. As stated before, the structure of the MFE in Piedmont was imposed by its regional executives – which included Cabella (Secretary General) and Malan – through an articulated and specific division for categories and areas of interest and action to which corresponded six committees and offices³⁸. In addition to these, there were the committees for young and global activities, particularly desired by Cabella and the other Waldensian federalists³⁹.

In order to emphasize the Waldensian federalists’ contribution to the internal reorganization process of the MFE from 1945 to 1948, it is necessary to contextualize their action within the scope of congressional activities at a national level⁴⁰.

In September 1945, the first National Conference of the MFE was held in Milan, during which Umberto Campagnolo⁴¹, promoter of an uncompromising and revolutionary federalist action, came to the fore, in direct opposition to Spinelli’s stance⁴². The merger of the MFE and the *Associazione dei*

³⁷ Cabella A., “Federalismo Piemontese”, *op. cit.*

³⁸ The six bodies were the organizational and finance offices, the one concerning *L’Unità Europea*, the press and culture office, the one dealing with social questions and the one concerning the information sector.

³⁹ See the informational letter sent to the Secretary General, the members of the *Comitato direttivo nazionale* (National Executive Committee), and all the centres and sections of the MFE and the President of the *Bureau Exécutif* and the Secretary of the UEF of the *Centro regionale piemontese-CRP* (Regional Piedmontese Section) of the MFE, in Fondo Walter Lipgens, FWL, cart. 81.26, in ASUE.

⁴⁰ The congresses which will be taken into consideration are those in Milan on September 9-10, 1945, Florence on January 8-9, 1946 and Venice on October 5-7, 1946. Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-266. See also Preda D., “Declino e rilancio del Mfe tra fine della guerra e piano Marshall”, *op. cit.* and *L’Unità Europea 1943-1954*, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Umberto Campagnolo (1904-1976), a philosopher and professor of the history of political doctrines at the Universities of Padua and Venice, was a student of Austrian jurist Hans Kelsen at the *Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales*. Secretary General of the MFE from 1946-1947, he was the founder of the *Società Europea di Cultura-SEC* (European Society of Culture) and the magazine *Comprendre*. Starting in the mid-1940s, he carried out a continuous study and promotion in favour of European political unity and culture, seeking to maintain an open dialogue between Eastern and Western European intellectuals. See Bobbio N., “Un uomo del secolo: Umberto Campagnolo”, in *Nuova Antologia*, n. 580 (1988), pp. 35-44. On Campagnolo’s positions with respect to the MFE, see Graglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-291, 3003-306 and *passim*. On Campagnolo, see Campagnolo U., *Verso una costituzione federale per l’Europa. Una proposta inedita del 1943*, Milano, Giuffrè, 2003.

⁴² See Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, *op. cit.* and *Id.*, *Altiero Spinelli*, *op. cit.* See also *Appunti sullo svolgimento del Congresso Federalista Europeo, Milano 9-10 settembre 1945* (ed. by the YMCA office), in FMAR, busta 7, fascicolo 69, in INSMLI.

federalisti europei-AFE (Association of European Federalists)⁴³ was decided upon during the same conference. In order to achieve the unification of the two movements a mixed commission was appointed with the task of drafting a new statute. The Statutory Commission was composed of Francesco Lo Bue, Aldo Garosci⁴⁴ and Altiero Spinelli, representing the MFE and Paride Baccarini⁴⁵, Giacomo Devoto⁴⁶ and Vittorio Rizzardi⁴⁷ for the AFE⁴⁸.

Notwithstanding its long gestation, the statute was approved in its definitive form in October 1946, during the National Congress in Venice.

⁴³ The AFE was founded in Florence on January 27, 1945 by Piero Calamandrei and Paride Baccarini. See Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 246-252.

⁴⁴ Aldo Garosci (1907-2000), an historian, politician and Piedmontese anti-fascist, participated, together with Mario Andreis, in the publication of the clandestine leaflet *Voci d'officina*. In 1932, while escaping arrest, he fled to Paris where, together with Franco Venturi and Carlo Levi, collaborated on the editorship of Carlo Rosselli's weekly, *Giustizia e Libertà*. In 1937, he participated in the Spanish Civil War alongside the anti-Franco forces. With the eruption of the war, he took refuge in the United States. In New York he was one of the main organizers of the Mazzini Society and he collaborated in the *Quaderni italiani* of Bruno Zevi. In 1943, after returning to Italy, he took part in the Resistance among the ranks of the PdA. Immediately after, he joined the MFE, sharing the ideas of the Ventotene *Manifesto*. In the period after the war, after the dissolution of the PdA, he enrolled in the PSI and in 1947 aligned himself with Giuseppe Saragat and his "Atlantic socialism", joining the *Partito socialista dei lavoratori italiani*-PSLI (Italian Socialist Workers Party). Garosci collaborated in Mario Pannunzio's *Il Mondo*. Works by Garosci include *Vita di Carlo Rosselli* (1945), *Storia dei fuorusciti* (1953), *Gli intellettuali e la guerra di Spagna* (1959). On his life, see *San Marino tra mito e storia. Ripensando Aldo Garosci e la storiografia sulla Repubblica*, Atti del Seminario (18, ottobre 2010), 2 Vols, Repubblica di San Marino, Biblioteca Stato Beni Librari, 2011, vol. II.

⁴⁵ Paride Baccarini (1910-1946), a painter, architect and anti-fascist, was a combatant of the Resistance. In 1945, he founded, along with Piero Calamandrei, the AFE and in May of the same year he participated in the birth of the *Movimento autonomista di Federazione europea*-MAFE (Autonomist Movement of the European Federation), founded in Rome by Guglielmo Usellini and Veniero Spinelli.

⁴⁶ Giacomo Devoto (1897-1974), an illustrious linguist, was a professor at the Universities of Cagliari, Padoa and Florence. In 1936, he founded with Bruno Migliorini the magazine *Lingua Nostra* and in 1963 became the President of the Accademia della Crusca. A fierce supporter of European unification, in 1945 he took part in the foundation of the AFE. By him, Devoto G., *Pensieri sul mio tempo*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1945. About his life, see Caraffini P., "Giacomo Devoto e l'unità europea", in *Research Paper CSF*, Centro Studi sul Federalismo, Torino (Novembre 2010), pp. 1-35.

⁴⁷ Vittorio Rizzardi, a novelist, essayist and anti-fascist, after having served in the Alpine troops during the war, he took part in the Resistance. In 1945, he was one of the founders of the AFE and in the 1950s collaborated with many newspapers and magazines. After abandoning politics in the 1970s, he dedicated himself entirely to literary activities.

⁴⁸ Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit.; Id., Altiero Spinelli, op. cit. Se also FMAR (1909-1980), fald. 4-3, cart. 1 e 2, in AMFE, where the agendas, motions, projects, proposals and statute outlines, as well as the minutes of the discussions of the Milan National Congress of September 9-10, 1945, are conserved.

There emerged two directions: one minimalist (headed by Devoto) and one maximalist (overseen by Campagnolo). The first orientation, more conservative, still considered practical the fulfillment of the European federation through the spontaneous act of the European nation states renouncing their sovereignty. For this reason, the minimalists aimed at the consolidation of intergovernmental relations through the action of movements in favour of European unification. On the contrary, they believed that the time had come to create a federal European state through a "revolutionary" bottom-up action, imposing the will of European public opinion on the governments of the countries of the Old Continent. Lo Bue warned of the oversimplifications, maintaining that the fundamental question of the divergence between the two viewpoints rested on the strategy and praxis to be applied to the maximalist hypothesis⁴⁹.

Despite the divergent strategies, the definitive statute confirmed the original name of the *Movimento federalista europeo* and its transversal nature with respect to the national political parties which the new organisation would assume. In point 2 of the document, in fact, it was clarified that the MFE was not a political party and that both members or non members of a political party could join it, provided that they pursued the ideals and final objectives of the Movement "beyond all nationalistic, ethnic, economic, religious or partisanship prejudice". Finally, the statute foresaw the institution of a General Presidency Council which was to meet every three months⁵⁰.

The merger of the two organizations made the federalist presence in Italy more uniform and articulated, and in addition to the centres of Turin and Milan there were those of Florence and Bologna, where the AFE had a larger following. The disagreement between Spinelli and Campagnolo increased; the fracture was mended at first by the Garosci agenda, which established centres of activity on which to impose the national strategy of the MFE. Campagnolo pushed for a radical and revolutionary action, while Spinelli was more realistically in favour of a reflection on the concrete possibility for a federalist action. Spinelli believed that clear directives for developing "a democratic action in order to assist the government" were necessary, guiding the political forces in power towards federalist initiatives⁵¹. Garosci, with his more moderate position, stood in the middle between these two extremes. With a view to uniting the AFE and the

⁴⁹ Lo Bue F., "Postille al nostro Congresso di Venezia", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 21 (20 nov. 1946).

⁵⁰ See "Lo statuto del Mfe approvato al Congresso", *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 19-20 (25 ottobre 1946). On the formulation of the statute, see documentation in the AMFE, fald. 1946-47, cart. MFR 4, doc. 4.40.1.

⁵¹ See *Svolgimento del Congresso Federalista Europeo. Milano 9-10 settembre 1945*, in FMAR (1909-1980), fald. 4-3, cart. 2, in AMFE. On the various positions of Spinelli

MFE, these advocated the construction of a cultural centre committed to the study of federalism, the organisation of a strong propaganda activity for the mobilization of public opinion and a more intense political activism directed at making known the position of the federalists on international politics⁵².

Garosci's agenda prevailed (14 votes versus 12 for the Campagnolo document and 7 for that of Spinelli) and Milan became the centre of the federalist propaganda; Rome assumed a leading role in political activity and liaison with the parties, and Florence hosted the centre for studies and documentation. Turin, instead, maintained its primacy of the press since the Piedmontese group was entrusted with the direction of *L'Unità Europea*, which had passed from the hands of Spinelli and Rollier to those of Monti and Lo Bue⁵³.

The year 1945 opened with the internal fracture of the MFE and with Rossi and Spinelli officially announcing their exit from the MFE in a letter delivered at the end of the Florence Congress. In fact, they now considered a rapid federal unification of Europe impossible due to the worsening of the confrontation between the USA and USSR⁵⁴. The Florentine convention should have served to consolidate the federalist strategy; instead, it brought to light the internal differences within the organization, allowing Campagnolo to affirm his intransigent policy in open contrast to that of the founders of the MFE. The new revolutionary direction finally prevailed at the October 1946 National Congress in Venice.

The Milan and Florence conventions had in any case emphasized the limitations and weakness of the MFE. The Movement was undermined by the international events which confirmed the birth of a two-party order and disappointed the hopes of creating a European federation, a third independent and equidistant axis from the two superpowers. A certain disappointment pervaded many militant federalists, facilitating the rise

during the European integration process, see Spinelli A., *Una strategia per gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, edited by S. Pistone, Bologna, il Mulino, 1989.

⁵² See *Ordine del giorno dei lavori del convegno*, IN FMAR (1909-1980), fald. 4-3, Movimento federalista europeo, Congresso Mfe del 9-10 settembre 1945, cart. 1, in AMFE.

⁵³ *L'Unità Europea* was the first national newspaper of the MFE. Published starting in May 1943 as a clandestine edition, it continued its activity until February 1945, changing headquarters several times (Rome, Bergamo, Milan and Switzerland). After the war, it was published in Milan under Spinelli and Rollier's authority and guidance from April 29 to July 28, 1945. Starting in October of the same year, the task of publishing and distributing the newspapers passed to the Piedmontese MFE until 1954, the last year of its publication. See Pistone S., "Introduzione", in *L'Unità Europea 1943-1954*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-34.

⁵⁴ Spinelli A., "Il Movimento Federalista Europeo e la realtà politica dell'ora", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 7 (20 gen. 1946).

of Campagnolo and the affirmation of an authoritarian and personalistic direction. The paralysis of the federalist action and the risks of disintegration of the Movement were however blocked initially by the creation of a provisional National Organization Committee, promoted during the conclusion of the work of the Florentine convention in view of the first National Congress in Venice. Among the members of the new body the figure of Giorgio Peyronel stood out⁵⁵. In addition, while the task of reflecting on the "characteristics and nature of the European federation" had been entrusted to Campagnolo, Rollier was assigned with reorganizing the entire Movement, paralyzed by the abandonment of its founders⁵⁶. These events confirmed the strong Waldensian presence inside the MFE and assured a certain continuity with the old Spinelli's line.

With regards to this, it should be remembered that at the Venice Congress, Campagnolo, elected by the Secretary General of the MFE, had tried to distance himself from the previous federalist tradition, increasing his control on the Movement. As Piero Graglia observed, with the appointment of the members of a new Central Committee and Executive Committee all of the principal representatives of the historic MFE as well as the AFE had been eliminated (Rollier and Giussani) (Devoto)⁵⁷. Indeed, Guglielmo Usellini⁵⁸, a secondary figure in the elaboration of federalist thought⁵⁹, was the only one to remain in positions of power from the group that had given life to *L'Unità Europea* and which in 1943 had participated in the founding meeting of the Movement in Milan. Campagnolo was therefore assured control of the MFE, eliminating ties with the past. However, besides Usellini, the Milanese centre with Rollier and Peyronel, and the Piedmontese centre with Cabella, Lo Bue and Malan remained anchored to it.

⁵⁵ See "Il Convegno del Movimento federalista di Firenze, 8-9 gennaio 1946", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 7 (20 gen. 1946).

⁵⁶ See "Ordine del giorno per la seduta del consiglio generale del movimento. Firenze 8 e 9 gennaio 1946", in Fondo Altiero Spinelli, FAS, dep. 1-8, in ASUE. See also Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 261-262; Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 185-192.

⁵⁷ Graglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., p. 304

⁵⁸ Guglielmo Usellini (1906-1958), a writer and publicist, joined the Socialist Party in the 1920s, aligning himself with the anti-fascists. Some time later, after entering into contact with Colormi, Rossi and Spinelli, he adhered to the *Manifesto di Ventotene* and participated in the foundation of the MFE. After a first arrest, he succeeded in fleeing to Switzerland, where he organized an intense federalist propaganda campaign on behalf of Rossi and Spinelli. In 1947, he participated in the Montreux Congress and the foundation of the UEF. In 1948, he was elected Deputy Secretary General of the supranational federalist organization, of which he became Secretary General from 1950 until his death. See Rognoni Vercelli C., Fontana P.G. (eds.), *Guglielmo Usellini (1906-1958). Un aronese antifascista precursore dell'Europa unita*, Milano, Unicopli, 2012. See also "Guglielmo Usellini", in *Comuni d'Europa*, n. 1 gennaio 1959, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹ Graglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., p. 304.

This delicate phase of the history of the MFE is meaningful to this study because it allows us to stress the significant role of the Waldensian federalists both in the reorganisation of the Movement and in the attempt to preserve as much as possible the federalist thinking born in Ventotene.

Rollier remained one of the main supporters of the Lombardian and national MFE and, unlike Rossi and Spinelli, “did not leave the Movement even when it became clear [...] that European unity could not have been achieved in a short time”⁶⁰. He continued with “his proselytism in that small Waldensian world which he himself had led to federalism, nor interrupted his participation in the life of the Movement, continuing to perform managerial functions at a local and national level”⁶¹. During Campagnolo’s leadership, Rollier, together with Peyronel, assured the continuity of the ideas of the founders in Milan, often taking a critical position with respect to the revolutionary current and Campagnolo’s personalism. At the Venice Congress, Rollier reminded the new Secretary that the Movement had been born with the decision “not to create from the federalist need the basis of a political party, but only the basis of a movement among anti-fascist conspirators”⁶². According to Rollier, the MFE “had teachers and luminaries [...] but did not have a leader”⁶³. The Waldensian federalist saw in Campagnolo “a new Marx”, who unequivocally opposed, rejecting his “scientific federalism”. Notwithstanding the resistance to this new federalism, Rollier remained on the sidelines of the new policy launched by the incoming Secretary, who by now held national control of the MFE and could rely on the support of the Venetian and Lombard majorities⁶⁴.

In Turin and Piedmont, instead, the situation was different⁶⁵. The presence of a “hard core” of federalists characterized by a strong ideological and organizational autonomy, contributed to the relaunch of federalist activity, representing during Campagnolo’s management a centre of reference and continuity with the Ventotene federalism. Alongside Lo Bue, Cabella and Malan, engrossed in the organization of the Turin and regional MFE

⁶⁰ Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., p. 186.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² See Rollier M.A., *Il primo congresso nazionale del Movimento federalista europeo, Venezia 5-6-7 ott. 1946*, in fald. n. 7 (Al servizio della democrazia), cart. 2 giu. 1946, in AMFE.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See Frosio Roncalli M., *Il federalismo come rivoluzione. Organizzazione, azione politica, dibattito interno nei primi anni di vita del Mfe (1943-1950)*, doctoral thesis discussed at the University of Pavia, a.a. 2001-2002, (supervisor Prof. Guido Guderzo), pp. 183-187.

⁶⁵ For a broader framework on the role of Piedmont, the Europeanist forces and regional federalists in the European integration process, see Castronovo V. (ed.), *Il Piemonte nel processo di integrazione europea*, Milano Giuffrè, 2008.

and the publication of *L'Unità Europea*, other young Waldensian federalists stepped forward. Among these were Luciano Sibille⁶⁶, who would later be among the founders and principal directors of the Italian section of the *Jeunesses Fédéralistes Européennes*-JEF (Young European Federalists), the youth organisation of the *Union européenne des federalists*-UEF (Union of European Federalists). Sibille had been Secretary General of the YMCA in Florence and had distinguished himself in the JEF⁶⁷, especially for his numerous contacts with the Italian and international Protestant world. For his vast network of contacts, Sibille was later appointed Secretary General of the European Youth Campaign⁶⁸, of which he was initially responsible for Northern-Central Italy while for Southern-Central Italy was Virginio Angelini-Rota⁶⁹. It was, again, mainly thanks to the work of Sibille and Anna Anfossi⁷⁰ that the *Centro regionale piemontese*-CRP (Regional Piedmontese Section) of the GFE became one of the most important and active in Europe⁷¹.

However, by the late 1940s, Cabella progressively established himself at the regional level, becoming in the subsequent decade the most

⁶⁶ Luciano Sibille (1922-1991), an anti-fascist and partisan, participated in the Resistance in Val Chisone. Persuaded by the ideas in the Ventotene *Manifesto*, he immediately joined the MFE. After the war, he participated in the international activities of the YMCA and studied at the *Istituto Tecnico di Montevideo* in Uruguay, attending a programme in administrative and social sciences. Recruited into the YMCA, he joined the group of consultants in international affairs of the *Alliance Universelle*, a technical committee of the Protestant youth association. In the early 1950s, he joined the Piedmontese *Gioventù federalista europea* (GFE). In 1951, he was appointed International Secretary for Youth of the European Movement (EM) a Parigi. On him, see Fondo Mouvement Européen (hereinafter FME), cart. 161.2, in ASUE.

⁶⁷ See Preda D., "Le Jeunesses Fédéralistes Européennes (1948-1969)", in Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l'unità europea. 1954-1969*, Pavia, Università di Pavia, 1996.

⁶⁸ An organization linked to the European Movement which was active from 1951 and 1958 and aimed at informing and educating youth groups. See Palayret J.-M., "La campagna europea della gioventù", in Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l'unità europea. 1954-1969*, op. cit.

⁶⁹ See *Bureau de étude et de propagande*, n. 5, 7 dicembre 1951, in FME, cart. 157.1, in ASUE. On Sibille's activity in the GFE, the JFE and the European Youth see the wealth of material present in FME, cart. 157.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, in ASUE. See also Caraffini P., *Costruire l'Europa dal basso: il ruolo del Consiglio italiano del movimento europeo, 1948-1985*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008, pp. 192 e ss.

⁷⁰ Anna Anfossi (1923), an antifascist and Europeanist, during the war fled to Ivrea, where she met the Olivetti family. Thanks to Olivetti she came into contact with the federalists in Turin and joined the MFE. From 1950 to 1953, she was Secretary General of the JEF. See Regalia L., Bagnasco A. (eds.), *L'esperienza della modernità. Scritti in onore di Anna Anfossi*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1999.

⁷¹ Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", op. cit., p. 47. See also *Seminario formazione Torre Pellice, 1-2-3 maggio 1953*, in FME, cart. 157.2, in ASUE and Gianni Merlini's letter to Luciano Sibille, dated May 6, 1953, in FME, cart. 157.2, in ASUE.

important Piedmontese federalist leader in Italy. After carrying out his political activity at the local level, Cabella distinguished himself for his militant commitment at both the national and international level. In 1946, he was elected Secretary of the Turinese section of the MFE and in 1947 became the Regional Secretary. In that position, as previously stated, Cabella, together with Lo Bue and Rollier⁷², played an important role during the Campagnolo crisis ensuring the political-ideological continuity with Spinelli's federalism. At the Venice Congress in 1947, the tension between Campagnolo and the Piedmontese federalists had already worsened following the resistance opposed to the authoritarianism and centralism of the National Secretary.

In Venice, in fact, Campagnolo had made the maximalist hypothesis, which did not allow for compromise, prevail without consenting to comparisons with the sections⁷³. A heated debate broke out between Milan (the management and organisational centre of the MFE) and Turin (centre of the federalist press), which manifested itself in the exchange of views between Campagnolo and Lo Bue, the editor responsible for *L'Unità Europea* at that time.

Lo Bue replied to the claims of the Secretary General, affirming that a movement is alive when it "welcomes and involves forces which are not absolutely uniform, but original and variously articulated"⁷⁴. He invited the federalists to monitor themselves "closely in order to resist the illusory appeal of the idea that the greatest efficiency of action can be achieved where the most complete uniformity of attitudes exists"⁷⁵. With these words, Lo Bue reprimanded Campagnolo, warning the federalists of the risks of political radicalism, for his authoritarian attitude. Campagnolo, on the other hand, did not intend to give in on the internal reform of the Movement, going so far as to question the worth of the *Manifesto di Ventotene*, expunging all references to the historical federalist document from the statute. Even Rollier's amendment, which intended to make reference in the statute to the date of the foundation of the MFE and thus the prior experience of Ventotene, was rejected by the maximalist majority⁷⁶. The clash provoked a new schism between the MFE and AFE, after their merger had barely been achieved.

⁷² See Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, op. cit., pp. 194-195, note 14.

⁷³ See "V riunione del Comitato nazionale provvisorio (CNP) del 16 giugno 1946", in fald. 1946-47, cartella MFR 1, doc. 1.4, in AMFE.

⁷⁴ Lo Bue F., "Postille al nostro Congresso di Venezia", op. cit.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ See "Il Congresso a Venezia del MFE. Le sedute del Congresso", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 19-20 (25 ott. 1946).

Another initiative coming from Campagnolo provoked in the Waldensian federalists an even more decisive reaction against the National Secretary. He proposed to bring to life a new newspaper, substituting *L'Unità Europea*. This proposal worsened the controversy between the Lombardian leadership and the Turinese newspaper. Campagnolo's intention was to create a more "docile" newspaper which was more responsive to him, also because *L'Unità Europea* was too compromised with the old federalist management class, still tied to the founders of the MFE. At this point, the Waldensian federalists were torn between political loyalty to the Movement led by Campagnolo, and loyalty to the ideology of the *Manifesto*. They attempted to maintain a compromise position, without surrendering to the authoritarianism of the Secretary and the despondency owing to the apparent resignation of Rossi and Spinelli⁷⁷. Even Monti had to leave the management of *L'Unità Europea* to the Waldensians, who succeeded in keeping it autonomous and independent from the Secretary General and the Lombard group.

The attempt to create a new federalist newspaper evaporated, leaving that under Waldensian direction the only national newspaper of the MFE, at least until the release of the *Bollettino d'informazione federalista*, wanted by Spinelli on his re-entry into the Movement. Therefore, *L'Unità Europea* succeeded in giving continuity to the federalist way of thinking and fight, thanks to the work of the new director and the support of Cabella and Malan. The newspaper was published until October 1947, when the Piedmontese Centre was forced to announce its closure due to severe financial difficulties. *L'Unità Europea* had succeeded in performing "its function of federalist policy education and impartial news"; and, as Cabella remembered, "its policy of independence and unhindered criticism was never betrayed", mainly thanks to Lo Bue, who contributed "to the continuity of the newspaper with his name and his writings"⁷⁸. The federalist newspaper succeeded in acquiring a culturally important position with its modern style and international breadth. The Waldensian federalists made *L'Unità Europea* a versatile instrument of information and propaganda, giving space to international political news and favouring debate and discussions on federalism. Lo Bue, first and foremost, carried out on his pages of the newspaper "a constant and passionate political reflection on the principles of federalism and on international politics"⁷⁹, preventing the diminishment of the positions adopted by the Campagnolo group.

⁷⁷ See Graglia P., *Unità europea e federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 243-277; Id., *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., pp. 281-325. See also Frosio Roncalli M., *Il federalismo come rivoluzione. Organizzazione, azione politica, dibattito interno nei primi anni di vita del Mfe (1943-1950)*, op. cit., pp. 77-81.

⁷⁸ Cabella A., "La relazione politico-organizzativa. A Ivrea il 16 novembre: Congresso piemontese", *L'Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 17-18 (10 dic. 1947).

⁷⁹ Cabella A., "Francesco Lo Bue politico federalista", in la *Beidana*, n. 35 (giu. 1999), p. 53.

In April 1947, the National Secretary, as a result of persistent comparisons with part of the Piedmontese group, was forced to resign. On March 22nd, in fact, the Regional Section of the MFE in Piedmont had drafted a declaration of no confidence in which it deplored the conduct of the Secretary and recognized the Committee as the only executive body of the Movement. The document had been signed by the Secretary of the CRP, Alberto Cabella, and many members of it (Tina Rieser Pizzardo, Terenzio Grandi, Augusto Del Noce, Eugenio Libois, Fausto Penati, Guido Quazza, Bruno Segre), by Lo Bue (in his capacity as director of *L'Unità Europea*) and secretaries of various provincial and regional sections (Walburga von Raffler, Carlo Trombetta, Antonio Repaci, Gustavo Malan)⁸⁰.

In June, the announcement of the Marshall Plan opened a new phase of the federalist fight in favour of European unification, bringing back Spinelli as the leader of the MFE. Spinelli was convinced of the opportunity to begin a federative process of Western Europe under the auspices of American containment policy and under the military umbrella of the United States and its economic assistance⁸¹. In November 1947, at the Regional Congress of the MFE in Ivrea, Cabella himself invited Spinelli to take up the reins of the federalist action, announcing the new strategy of “*cominciare a Occidente*” (beginning in the West)⁸². The invitation was significant because it demonstrated the willingness to reaffirm the original Ventotene outline, which Spinelli now resumed and updated on the basis of the new international circumstances⁸³. The Marshall Plan offered new opportunities to the federalist movement and allowed it to focus on “the hypothesis that the great moderate European ministers, encouraged by the democratic missionary spirit which then animated American foreign policy, and frightened by what was occurring in Eastern Europe”, would listen to the Europeanists and federalists, convincing themselves of the need to proceed with the federal construction of Europe⁸⁴.

⁸⁰ See *Dichiarazione del Centro regionale piemontese del 22 marzo 1947*, in fald. 1947, cart. corrispondenza, in AMFE ee also Frosio Roncalli M., *Il federalismo come rivoluzione. Organizzazione, azione politica, dibattito interno nei primi anni di vita del Mfe (1943-1950)*, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

⁸¹ See Graglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., pp. 307 and ff. On the stance of the Piedmontese and Waldensian federalists on the Marshall Plan and Spinelli's new strategy, see Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, op. cit., pp. 59-63.

⁸² See “Il primo Congresso regionale piemontese del Mfe”, in *L'Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 17-18 (10 dic. 1947).

⁸³ In June 1948, Spinelli's official reappointment as the leader of the MFE caused tensions also within the Piedmontese and Waldensian federalists. See Graglia P., “Il magistero di Augusto Monti”, op. cit., pp. 211-217; *Id.*, *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., pp. 322-325.

⁸⁴ Spinelli A., *Una strategia per gli Stati Uniti d'Europa*, op. cit., p. 9. On Spinelli's role as De Gasperi's advisor and on his influence on the Italian Prime Minister, see Preda D., *Alcide De Gasperi federalista europeo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2004.

The Piedmontese federalists, in agreement with Spinelli, saw in the European Recovery Programme the opportunity to give life to a common European project, aimed not only at the economic reconstruction, but also at the achievement of solid foundations of cooperation to start the process of political unification. Even the director of *L'Unità Europea* joined in the praise and greeted the new strategy favourably, emphasizing the importance of the American initiative. This finally succeeded in overriding European nationalism and promised to "overcome four- and five-year plans, the English, the French, the Yugoslavians, the Czechoslovakians" in the spirit of realizing "a European economic plan which functions in a European federation"⁸⁵. To Lo Bue and other federalists, accepting the American economic assistance without a clear political strategy and an objective which addressed the contingent needs of the economic reconstruction would mean missing an historic opportunity. "Confronting the problem of European reconstruction from an economic point of view", the editor of the federalist newspaper wrote, [...] is something which can be useful and effective". This only provided that, without separating the economic problem from the political one, "we are aware that, embarking upon the road to functionalism, means embarking decidedly and together upon the road to federalism"⁸⁶. A road which, according to Lo Bue, should have been taken not only "from above", with the initiative of the governments urged to do so by the federalist forces, but "from the political awareness and action of the same European people" who were most urgently interested⁸⁷.

The Marshall Plan did not allow for the implementation hoped for by Spinelli and the federalists, thus leading to the progressive prevalence of the functionalistic views. In the same way, European nationalism became reinvigorated, dampening the Europeanists' enthusiasm, and shifting over time the discussion on European questions from the town squares to intergovernmental conferences. Nevertheless, the Waldensians, as the other federalists who had accepted Spinelli's new course of federalist action, believed that a European integration should be accomplished through democratic and constitutional means, intending its realization to be like the battle for the rights of the European people. It was with this spirit that Spinelli launched the Campaign for the European Federal Pact, aimed at transforming the Advisory Assembly of the Council of Europe into a European Constituent⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ Lo Bue F., "Per la Federazione Europea come per la Repubblica", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 11 (5 giu. 1947). See also *Id.*, "Il 'Piano' Marshall e noi", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 12-13 (25 giugno - 10 luglio 1947).

⁸⁶ Lo Bue F., "Per la Federazione Europea come per la Repubblica", *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ See "Risoluzione politica approvata dal MFE al Congresso di Firenze", in *Europa Federata*, a. II, n. 10 (10 mag. 1949). On the European Federal Pact, see Preda D.,

The “constitutional” strategy⁸⁹ consisted in submitting to the Assembly of the European organization a draft of the federal union Pact, previously elaborated by the Italian federalists and approved by the UEF in Paris. Therefore, a popular campaign was launched aimed at the signing of a petition “for the urgent creation of a European government with decision-taking power and for the direct election of European representatives”⁹⁰.

The Piedmontese federalists offered a decisive contribution to the campaign, and “the idea of reinforcing the proposal of the federal Pact with a popular position in its favour”⁹¹ was put forward by the federalists, firstly Cabella. The idea had come to the Waldensian federalist from the success confirmed by the initiative, promoted by the CRP and the Turin section, directed at collecting in an album the signatures in favour of the European federation, an episode which occurred on the occasion of the exhibition *Scambi Occidente* (Trade with the West), held in Turin in 1949. On that occasion, more than 2,000 signatures were collected in two days by the Piedmontese federalists, including those of Christian Democratic ministers Ivan Matteo Lombardo and Giovanni Battista Bertone. From this experience the idea came of launching a petition at the national and European level.

The success of this campaign in Piedmont in 1950 made Cabella, not yet 30 years old, the most important leader of the Piedmontese MFE. He was then appointed Assistant Secretary of the national MFE in 1951. He had already distinguished himself at the international level in 1948, when he had become part of the Central Committee of the UEF in Paris, where he remained until 1956.

Nevertheless, despite the effort made in this battle by the federalists, the campaign for the European Federal Pact was unable to obtain the hoped-for outcome, emphasizing the difficulties in starting a federative process through the Council of Europe. Equally unsuccessful was the attempt, not long after, to transform the European Political Community (EPC), provided for in Article 38 of the Treaty on the European Defence Community (EDC), into a “crowbar” to force the

“Per trasformare l’Assemblea Consultiva del Consiglio d’Europa in Costituente: il promemoria di Spinelli dell’agosto 1949”, in *I Temi*, a. IV, n. 15 (dic. 1998), pp. 35-50; Morelli U., “La campagna per il patto di unione federale europea (1949-1951)”, in Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l’unità europea, 1945-1954*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1992, pp. 343-366; Spinelli A., *Una strategia per gli Stati Uniti d’Europa*, op. cit., pp. 15-19.

⁸⁹ See Spinelli A., *Una strategia per gli Stati Uniti d’Europa*, op. cit., pp. 77-104.

⁹⁰ “Il Consiglio nazionale (Nervi, 9 ottobre 1949)”, in *Europa Federata*, a. II, n. 14 (30 nov. 1949).

⁹¹ Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l’unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, op. cit., p. 65.

reluctant States to initiate a constituent process through the use of an *ad hoc* Assembly⁹².

Reflecting on the reasons for these failures⁹³, Spinelli developed a new strategy and initiated a general Europeanism mobilization process, transforming it into a movement of “protest against the very legitimacy of the nation states”⁹⁴ which, in the case of the EDC, had fatally compromised the start of the process of political unification in Europe. The second half of the 1950s witnessed the rise of the Congress of European People (CEP). Inspired by the Indian National Congress of Gandhi, it was Spinelli’s intention that the CEP would create a body of permanent representation of the European population, whose members would be elected from the various cities of Europe⁹⁵. In the intentions of its promoter, this initiative should have involved millions of Europeans in order to guarantee the democratic legitimacy and political weight sufficient to push the governments of the European countries to convene a European Constituent Assembly.

The Waldensian federalists supported the initiative from the start and participated in the organization of the campaign, despite some disagreements in the Piedmontese MFE⁹⁶. Notwithstanding these, the Piedmontese group was instrumental in the campaign for the Congress of European People⁹⁷. The Piedmontese GFE published a new newspaper *Europa Nuova*⁹⁸, with the aim of organizing and supporting Spinelli’s

⁹² See Preda D., *Storia di una speranza. La battaglia per la CED e la Federazione europea*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1990; Id., *Sulla soglia dell’unione. La vicenda della Comunità politica europea (1952-1954)*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1994.

⁹³ See Spinelli A., *Una strategia per gli Stati Uniti d’Europa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-33.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁵ See Spinelli A., *Il Manifesto dei federalisti europei*, Parma, Guanda, 1957. See also Rognoni Vercelli C., “Il Congresso del popolo europeo”, in Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l’unità europea negli anni 1954-1969*, *op. cit.*, pp. 373-397; Merlini G., “Altiero Spinelli ovvero la concretezza dell’‘utopia’”, in *il Mulino*, a. XXXIX, n. 5 (set.-ott. 1990).

⁹⁶ Pistone recalls that the clash between those who supported Spinelli – including the Waldensians – and those who distrusted this initiative from a political point of view “was so harsh that it led to the dissolution [...], by the national entities led by a majority loyal to Spinelli, of the Turin section, in which Pedussia had a majority”. Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l’unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁹⁷ Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l’unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁹⁸ See *Europa Nuova 1954-1957*, anastatic edition edited by *Consiglio regionale del Piemonte* and by *Consulta europea*, Torino, 2000. See also Giordano F.M., “‘Europa Nuova’ e ‘PiemontEuropa’: due riviste della militanza federalista piemontese”, in Pasquonucci D., Preda D., Tosi L. (eds.), *La stampa e l’integrazione europea*, Padova, Cedam, 2016.

initiative⁹⁹. The new periodical, which was published from 1954 to 1957, meant to rouse the federalist forces and inform public opinion on the opportunities and strategies which opened towards the unification of Europe after the failure of the EDC¹⁰⁰. Despite being a regional newspaper, *Europa Nuova* carried out its action at a national level, preparing “a well-trained group of federalist leaders” who provided “an essential contribution to the preparation and implementation of the experience” of the Congress of European People¹⁰¹. It was Cabella who called the federalists to order and who reminded them that “not in moments of easy unanimity, but in those of crisis and change of heart in their positions one must measure the spiritual consistency and historical adherence of a political Movement”¹⁰². In this sense, *Europa Nuova* “wants to be first and foremost the ready and concrete response to the young federalists at the moment of uncertainty and distrust which has followed the failure of the EDC”¹⁰³. In 1958, the management of the official newspaper of the CEP, *Popolo Europeo*¹⁰⁴, led by Spinelli and published in Turin in Italian, French, German and Dutch, was taken over by this new class of federalist leaders; the campaign was guided by the Turin group, managed by Cabella, after which the organizational Secretariat of the Initiative Committee of the CEP was entrusted to him in April 1956¹⁰⁵.

Meanwhile, in Piedmont certain initiatives in preparation for the Congress of European People emerged. Among these we should remember the Stresa Convention, directed by Cabella, which provided some political training seminars for the militants of the city who had been engaged in the elections of the CEP. At the end of the convention the Stresa Declaration¹⁰⁶ was approved, in which the fundamental political arguments that supported the initiative of the Congress were summarized¹⁰⁷. Firstly, the “illegitimacy

⁹⁹ See Anfossi A., “Presenza della Gfe nella organizzazione internazionale”, in *L'Unità Europea*, a. IX, n. 1 (6-7 marzo 1954).

¹⁰⁰ See Cabella A., “Europa tradita”, in *Europa Nuova*, a. I, n. 1 23 settembre 1954.

¹⁰¹ Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹⁰² Cabella A., “Europa tradita”, *op. cit.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See *Popolo Europeo 1958-1964*, anastatic edition edited by Consiglio regionale del Piemonte and by *Consulta europea*, Torino, 2001.

¹⁰⁵ See *Tesi per la rivoluzione federalista. Sette argomenti proposti da Europa Nuova per l'azione verso il Congresso del Popolo Europeo*, a special insert of *Europa Nuova*, a. IV, n. 20 (15 aprile 1957).

¹⁰⁶ “La dichiarazione di Stresa”, in *Europa Federata*, a. IX, n. 13-14 (30 agosto 1956).

¹⁰⁷ See “Settimana di studio a Stresa”, in *Europa Federata*, a. IX, n. 13-14 (30 agosto 1956). On the contents of the declaration, see Levi L., Pistone S., *Trent'anni di vita del Mfe*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1973.

of the nation states" was declared. Secondly, the principle of the democratic constituent method was reiterated in order to achieve a federation of European people. Finally, the Stresa strategy provided for the preparation and collection of "documents of protest and demands", drafted by appropriate European social groups to be submitted to the elected CEP.

Regarding this initiative, Piedmont offered an example of great participation, above all thanks to Cabella's organisational ability. The subalpine region not only submitted the majority of proposals, but "obtained also remarkable results regarding their content": among these it should be remembered the "intellectuals' document" for its influential signatories¹⁰⁸. The group of Turin intellectuals brought to the fore the fact that the old order, governed by the European system of States, had now come to an end, undermining their own sovereignty. For this, they had considered the idea of European political unity as the most suitable way to reach economic and social wellbeing as well as gradual European and world democratization. They believed that the European federation would improve living conditions for European citizens, helping to overcome the tension between East and West and facilitating the decolonization and development of countries in the process of emancipation. From this document there emerged the will to overcome the classic method of diplomacy in international affairs and intergovernmental agreements¹⁰⁹. In other words, "with this document and with their vote, the Turin intellectuals, [invited] their European colleagues to join the European people" and build the United States of Europe, "a positive result and limited by reason", the best means "of contributing to the challenge posed by the historic process to humanity today"¹¹⁰. Among the signatories were Mario Albertini, Norberto Bobbio, Gustavo Colonnetti, Piero Pieri, Giulio Cesoni, Paolo Greco, Geno Pampaloni and Silvio Romano¹¹¹.

After the primary elections in 1957 for the designation of delegates¹¹², the first session of the CEP opened in Turin in December¹¹³. At the end of the first round of voting in the eight pre-selected cities, representing the European countries adhering to the initiative, Turin had the largest number of votes, second only to Strasbourg¹¹⁴. The inaugural meeting of the first session of the

¹⁰⁸ Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Among the Piedmontese delegates were Cabella, Norberto Bobbio, Aldo Garosci, Gianni Merlini and Umberto Serafini.

¹¹³ See Cabella A., "Perché il Congresso di Torino?", in *Europa Nuova*, a. IV, n. 27-28 (5 novembre 1957).

¹¹⁴ The polling data were as follows: Turin (16959 votes), Milan (8386), Anvers (6415), Düsseldorf (3300), Maastricht (3057), Strasbourg (27001), Lyon (5100) and Geneva

CEP was opened by the Mayor of Turin, Amedeo Peyron¹¹⁵, which was followed by speeches by Cabella, Spinelli, Winfried Krause, head of the CEP in Düsseldorf, and Guy Heraud, professor at the University of Strasbourg, who presented a report on the European Constituent. The Congress concluded with the commitment to continuing the action to convene the Constituent Assembly of the European People and closed with the election of the permanent organizational bodies, among which was the Secretariat General, headed by Cabella, who was then reconfirmed¹¹⁶.

The democratic strategy gave life to a new political subject, the "European people". As Cabella recalled, this idea seemed "the natural outlet of a popular participation in the European construction, the most efficient democratic channel for the forces [...] desiring to contribute to the battle for a federal society"¹¹⁷. The Congress, therefore, represented the legitimate and concrete instrument to oblige the governments of Europe to grant the European election of a Constituent Assembly. According to the federalists, only this would accomplish completely legally "the only revolution that is proportional to the contemporary problems, namely the United States of Europe"¹¹⁸.

At the end of the 1950s, the commitment of the Waldensian federalists gradually lessened. Lo Bue died in 1955, Cabella, once completed the experience with the CEP, still supported the proposal to establish a federalist party, thus coming into conflict with the leaders of the MFE and beginning his gradual detachment from the Movement¹¹⁹. Roland emigrated to the United States shortly after the end of the war, dedicating himself to other causes. Peyronel gradually moved away from the MFE, despite remaining a firm believer in the cause of supranational and infranational federalism. Like Peyronel, Coïsson and Malan continued to

(1522). See Marc A., "Dopo la prima ondata", in *Popolo Europeo*, a. I, n. 1 (10 gennaio 1958).

¹¹⁵ Amedeo Peyron (1903-1965), a lawyer and representative of the *Democrazia Cristiana*-DC (Christian Democratic Party), was Mayor of Turin from 1951 to 1962. He was a supporter of European federalism and in his two terms of office attempted to confer on the Piedmontese capital a European vocation. He was President of the Italian Section of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. See Rosboch M. (ed.), *L'opera del sindaco Amedeo Peyron - La dimensione europea di Torino*, Torino, Editrice artistica piemontese, 2005.

¹¹⁶ See the first issue of *Popolo Europeo*, 10 gennaio 1958.

¹¹⁷ Cabella A., "Elezioni europee", in *Europa Nuova*, a. IV, n. 26 (5 ottobre 1957).

¹¹⁸ "Ai cittadini d'Europa", in *Europa Nuova*, a. III, n. 12 (20 novembre 1956). On the concept of European people, see Malandrino C., (ed.), *Un popolo per l'Europa. Fra dibattito storico e nuove prospettive teoriche e politiche*, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 2004.

¹¹⁹ Cabella's proposal had been endorsed by Andrea Chiti-Batelli, Eugenio Calvi, Aldo Alessandro Mola, Amedeo Mortara, Giuliano Martignetti and Dacirio Ghidorzi Ghizzi. See Raglia P., *Altiero Spinelli*, op. cit., p. 421-423.

cultivate their federalist commitment at the local level, dedicating themselves to the defence of the linguistic minorities and the safeguarding of the Occitane culture, language and tradition. Finally, Rollier, who had been marginalized during the Campagnolo crisis, detached himself too, disagreeing with the new course launched by Spinelli on his re-entry into the MFE. The Milanese federalist, in fact, had remained skeptical about the idea of the CEP:

Of European Constituents and resounding, grand things of this nature – Rollier wrote to Spinelli – no one wants to know about them in Europe: they can be good, when done through the national parliaments and governments, to clear the dust. I fear however that these ideas of mine will not prevail because a federalist maximalism as vain as it is bombastic will probably be more pleasing and will be the sign to me that we have definitively lost the battle.¹²⁰

Nonetheless, Rollier continued “until his death to declare himself a militant in the fight for European unity and for federalism”¹²¹, dissenting against the strategy, but remaining loyal to the idea born in Ventotene.

The federalist commitment of the Waldensians was not limited to the European dimension and the activities promoted by the MFE. The Waldensians contributed also to bringing federalism onto the territory of culture, becoming active and making efforts to disseminate the principles in the context of local and national cultural life.

As to the first aspect, it is worth remembering that the Waldensian federalists originated from the ecumenical experience started by Reformed Protestantism in the 1920s. In many of them, ecumenism had contributed to anticipating, at least conceptually, the federalist project defined by the *Manifesto di Ventotene* and to envisaging its extension from a European to a global level. As Pistone explained, it was not a coincidence “that the natural cosmopolitanism of the Waldensian environment” had “predisposed the federalists coming from this environment to a particular agreement with the internationalist aspect of the ideal heritage of the MFE”¹²². The internationalist sensibility of the Waldensians, therefore, appears to originate as well from the principles of Christian universalism and the historical-confessional and cultural experience of Reformed Protestantism¹²³. The creation of a European federation, then, was seen by the Waldensian fed-

¹²⁰ See Rollier’s letter to Spinelli, dated 3 January 1955, in FMAR, b. 11, fasc. 95, in INSMML.

¹²¹ Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹²² Pistone S., “Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l’unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)”, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹²³ See Subilia V., “Stati Uniti d’Europa”, *Protestantesimo*, n. 1 (1978), pp. 47-56.

eralists as the first stage towards the process of unification of humans in a worldwide federation, understood as a great international reality composed of diverse continental and regional federations.

The internationalist aspirations matured in a federalist setting immediately after the end of the Second World War. The first initiatives gained ground at the international conventions in Switzerland in 1946, when the federalist movements issued joint declarations not only on the unification of Europe, but also on a global union. In particular, the Hertenstein Declaration framed “the problem of the arrangement of the continent in that of the arrangement of the world”, arguing specifically that “the European federal community [must] integrate itself into the United Nations and form a regional organization, in conformity with Article 52 of the United Nations Charter”¹²⁴. In September 1946, 78 delegates from 14 countries (more than half of them being Swiss and Dutch) convened in the Swiss city of Hertenstein for the *Réunion des Peuples européens*, the most important international federalist conference since the end of WWII. The meeting focused on various themes, among which were the German question, the relations with the USSR, the position of the European federation within a worldwide union, infranational federalism, the linguistic question, the economy, the police and European solidarity. At the end of the conference a unanimous declaration was voted on and *Aktion Europa-Union*, an international movement in support of the unification of Europe and the world was established¹²⁵.

This perspective drew the attention and interest of the Waldensian federalists. However, the declarations of the Luxembourg Conference held the same year were those which convinced the Waldensian federalists to support the appeal launched by the final document for the movements to cooperate to construct peace, overcoming differences in perspective¹²⁶. On that occasion, Lo Bue acknowledged that “the internationalists, the Eurocentrics, and the fundamentalists [had] known how to find a common voice, beyond every subtle ideological distinction”¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ Lo Bue F., “Da Hertenstein a Lussemburgo. Considerazioni sulle federazioni europea e mondiale”, in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 23 (5 dicembre 1946). See also Lo Bue F., “Federazione Europea e Federazione Mondiale. Riformismo e rivoluzionarismo federalistici”, in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 3-4 (28 febbraio 1947).

¹²⁵ See Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1945-1954*, *op. cit.*, pp. 187 e ff.

¹²⁶ See Lo Bue F., “Da Hertenstein a Lussemburgo. Considerazioni sulle federazioni europea e mondiale”, *op. cit.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

The Luxembourg Convention had been organised by the Federal Union after the Hertenstein meeting¹²⁸. During those days, a clear distinction between the Europeanist federalists and internationalists emerged, and a rift occurred at a strategic level within the British federalist movement. The federalists, in fact, supported the creation of the European federation as a first step towards a greater global organization, whereas the internationalists considered it more appropriate to focus on the creation of a world government as an alternative to the United Nations. This line of thinking was the majority position among the North American federalists. The clash between the two factions led to the birth of the Movement for World Federal Government and the *Conseil des fédéralistes européens*.

In the wake of these meetings, during the proceedings of the Congress of European federalists in Montreux in 1947¹²⁹, where Gustavo Malan and Alberto Cabella participated as delegates of the Piedmontese group, there emerged two organizations founded on the same ideological premises, but with distinct objectives. The first was the *Union européenne des fédéralistes*, which set as its primary objective the federal unification of the European continent. The other was the *Mouvement Universel pour une Confédération Mondiale*-MUCM (Universal Movement for a World Confederation)¹³⁰, more oriented towards “transforming the United Nations Organization into a world federal government by increasing its authority and resources”. In other words, the aim of the MUCM was to amend its Charter through “the mobilization of the peoples of the world to bring pressure on their governments and legislative assemblies”¹³¹. Nevertheless, the Congress marked “a clear reaffirmation of the validity of regional federalism as a criterion for approaching a world govern-

¹²⁸ See Loth W. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, IV Vol., *Transnational Organizations of Political Parties and Pressure Groups in the Struggle for European Union, 1945-1950*, 4 Vols., p. 15. See also Bareth J., “À Luxembourg: la Conférence internationale des Organisations Fédéralistes”, in *Cahiers du Monde Nouveau*, n. 3 (janvier 1947), pp. 88-90.

¹²⁹ See Cabella A., “Montreux: una delle tappe iniziali verso l’Europa Federata”, in *L’Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 16 (25 ottobre 1947). See also “Che cosa si è fatto a Montreux”, in *Bollettino d’informazione del MFE*, n. 4 (13 settembre 1947). On the global trend, see Malan G., “I congressi federalisti di Montreux”, in *L’Unità Europea*, a. III, n. 16 (25 ottobre 1947).

¹³⁰ See Billion J.-F., “I movimenti mondialisti e l’integrazione europea”, in Pistone S. (ed.), *I movimenti per l’unità europea, 1945-1954*, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-299. On the global movement, see also Billion J.-F., *Mondialisme, fédéralisme européen et démocratie internationale*, Lyon, Fédérop, 1997.

¹³¹ *World Movement for World Federal Government. Montreux Declaration, 23 August 1947*, Switzerland, edited by the Secretariat for World Movement for World Federal Government, 1947.

ment, even if under certain conditions"¹³². The federalists reunited in Montreux, in fact, believed that "the integration of the activities at the functional and regional levels [were] central to a truly federal approach. The formation of regional federations – to the extent that it is not an end in itself – can and must contribute to an efficient functioning of the world federal government"¹³³.

The European federalists, however, focused on the objective that appeared at that moment to be more concrete and attainable soon, requiring a distancing from the MUCM for all of the 1950s. The collaboration between the European federalists and internationalists was therefore difficult, thus compromising in part the aims of collaborating among the federalist movements expressed in the Hertenstein and Luxembourg Declarations¹³⁴. Nevertheless, the Waldensian federalists engaged actively in the MUCM campaigns.

The most convinced Waldensian internationalist was Malan who, together with Cabella, participated in the first conference of the World Student Federalists held in Hastings in 1948. The same year the two Waldensians also took part in the proceedings of the second congress of the MUCM, held in Luxembourg¹³⁵. Malan later became a member of the Worldwide Committee of the MUCM, for which he organized the fourth congress of the worldwide movement, held in Rome in 1951. Even Cabella did not renounce internationalist activism, making himself "bearer on behalf of the Piedmontese federalists, [...] of the rejected proposal to make the MFE join the MUCM"¹³⁶. In Cabella's motion, advanced within the Third National Congress of the MFE, held in Florence in April 1949¹³⁷, he explained the need to "establish an independent internationalist organization" to avoid any possible conflictual overlapping between the two movements in the pursuit of their respective objectives". However, despite the openly confessing support of the MUCM, the Waldensian and Piedmontese federalists never subordinated the aim of a European federation to the strategies of the internationalist movements, deeming the former indispensable to the achievement of the latter. In other words, the internationalist commitment of the Waldensians can be consid-

¹³² Billion J.-F., "I movimenti mondialisti e l'integrazione europea", *op. cit.*, p. 277.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-278.

¹³⁴ See Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", *op. cit.*, p. 47, note 55.

¹³⁵ See the acts of the *Congrès de Luxembourg du Mouvement Universel pour une Confédération Mondiale: Palais municipal, 5-11 septembre 1948*, edited by the MUCM, Luxembourg-Genève.

¹³⁶ Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹³⁷ See documentation on the work of the Third National Congress of the MFE (Firenze 23-23 apr. 1949), in FMAR, busta 8, fascicolo 79, in INSMMLI.

ered the profound and latent reason for their "commitment to the European federation and as an argument particularly suited to raising interest of the young generations in this battle"¹³⁸.

This particular aspect of the federalist activism, i.e. raising awareness in the younger generations of the prospect of a peaceful and united Europe, had positive validation among the Waldensian federalists and was reflected in a vast and rich cultural activity. It is no coincidence that in the past the Waldensian federalists had fought in the confessional associations or had participated in the training activities of the Protestant youth organizations. All of these experiences gave to the Waldensian federalists a cultural and informational vocation, as the example of the Barthians and their ecumenical activities confirm.

Among the most active on this front was undoubtedly Malan, who knew how to combine the political commitment with constant work in favour of the dissemination of the federalist ideals at a deeper and cultural level. He became involved in activities related to print media and the diffusion of federalist ideas in the underground press during the months of the Nazi-Fascist occupation. Firstly, he managed the partisan newspaper *Il Pioniere*, even before working on *L'Unità Europea* at the end of the conflict. *Il Pioniere* was created in June 1944 as an educational and informational newspaper for the fighters of the *V Divisione GL* (Justice and Freedom Brigades). This publication had a widespread circulation, directing the political debate to international issues¹³⁹. Malan and his collaborators (Federico Balmas, Andrea and Renè Pons, Archimede Modonese, Giulio Giordano), gave the newspaper a federalist and Action Party-inspired orientation.

Another considerable contribution of Malan to the spreading of Europeanist culture, was the establishment of the *Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei* of Turin, of which he became its first Secretary General¹⁴⁰. The idea for the Institute arose in July 1952 during a meeting held at the home of Paolo Greco, at that time a professor of commercial law at the University of Turin. Among those present, besides Greco and Malan, were Arrigo Olivetti, the President of the Piedmontese Cultural Commission of the MFE, Domenico Riccardo Peretti-Griva, the first

¹³⁸ Pistone S., "Il contributo del Movimento federalista europeo del Piemonte alla lotta per l'unità europea negli anni (1945-1957)", *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹³⁹ In the clandestine period, the newspapers reached a publication of 15000 copies. See *Il Pioniere, giornale d'azione partigiana e progressista. Reprint della collezione del periodo clandestino (1943-44)*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁰ On the history of the *Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei*, see Porro G., "Il ruolo europeista dell'Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei (1952-1957)", in Pistone S., Malandrino C. (eds.), *Europeismo e federalismo in Piemonte tra le due guerre mondiali*, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-287. See also *Relazione di "Sei mesi di attività" (16 ottobre 1952 - 15 aprile 1953)*, in FMAR, b. 15, fasc. 106, in INSMIL.

Honorary President of the Court of Cassation, Mario Allara, the Dean of the University of Turin, Giuseppe Grosso, the President of the Province of Turin, and the City Mayor, Amedeo Peyron. The objectives of the Institute were mainly research and teaching in order to deepen awareness of European history as well as prepare cadres of future managers on European and international political, economic, social, cultural, cultural, and academic life¹⁴¹. Both of these objectives were based on the awareness of Europe, its history and its developments in the area of integration, taken from diverse disciplinary perspectives. Because of this, French was the official language of the classes, in which training courses were conducted on *Histoire de la formation de l'Europe*, *Organisation internationale*, *Institution de droit public européen*, *Introduction aux problèmes économiques européens*. Moreover, there were specific courses on economics and European law and classes on *Problèmes politiques, juridiques et sociaux de l'organisation fédérale*¹⁴².

The essential aim of the Institute consisted "avant tout en la formation d'experts et de véritables cadres à travers des recherches spécialisées" and continued in educating an "élite de jeunes gens qui devront, par la suite, d'un côté continuer dans leurs recherches et de l'autre divulguer et approfondir chez les étudiants la connaissance et la compréhension de l'Europe dans l'esprit de la meilleure tradition académique"¹⁴³.

The Institute was established in the wake of the initiatives promoted by the Judicial Commission and the Piedmontese Cultural Commission of the MFE, as well as thanks to the contribution of the Conference of European Demographic Studies in Saint Vincent in 1952, and Malan's impetus and suggestions¹⁴⁴. The creation of the *Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei* and of other European university institutes, starting with the *Collège d'Europe* in Bruges¹⁴⁵, were born out of the need to have a clearly

¹⁴¹ Among the professors who taught at the Institute: Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Giorgio Spini, Alexandre Marc, Guy Michaud, Robert Pelloux, Norberto Bobbio, Piero Calamandrei, Giuseppino Treves and Alberto Cabella.

¹⁴² See *Programme provisoire des cours de l'année académique 1954/1955*, Fondo Alexandre Marc (hereinafter FAM), cart. 147.72, in ASUE.

¹⁴³ Extract from a radio interview to Malan, broadcasted by the French radio *Sottens* in May-June 1954, mimeographed doc. In FAM, cart. 147.72, in ASUE.

¹⁴⁴ See Porro G., "Il ruolo europeista dell'Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei (1952-1957)", *op. cit.*, p. 285. See also FMAR, b. 13, fasc. 146, in INSMMLI. The file includes Gustavo Malan's letter to M.A. Rollier and the programme of the Conference. Malan's engagement and activity in the organization of the courses of the Institute is corroborated by a considerable collection of letters among the Secretary and various scholars and Italian and foreign professors. See FAM, cart. 147.72, in ASUE.

¹⁴⁵ The *Collège d'Europe* was created in 1948 after The Hague Conference. It was the first university college of European studies. The *Collège* was founded by Salvador de Madariaga and Henri Brugmans, leader of the European Movement and first President

defined strategy which sought to disseminate Europeanist ideas and create a European management class.

Up to this point we have introduced several aspects of the federalist activism of the Waldensians, and tried to highlight the most salient features of their contribution to the MFE until the end of the 1950s, when the Waldensians notably reduced their input to the European cause. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering the role of the Waldensian group on the hypothesis of a federal internal reform of the nation state, reflections which in the years following the end of the war were often characterized by the political debate on regional autonomy¹⁴⁶. This interest in internal federalism had grown during the conflict and had culminated with the experience of the *Carta di Chivasso* (Chivasso Charter). It was signed by the representatives of the Waldensian and Valle d'Aosta peoples in December 1944. This subject requires a separate discussion as it represents a unique episode in the history of the Italian Resistance and a confirmation of the federal leanings of the Waldensian people.

2. The Declaration of Chivasso: towards the idea of an infranational federalism

The document signed in Chivasso in 1944 constitutes the most original and significant contribution of the Waldensian federalists in the course of their activism in the MFE. If Rossi and Spinelli had mainly devoted themselves to exploring the supranational aspects of federalism, examining the problem of the European states in relation to the international context,

of the UEF. See Vermeulen C., *Le Collège d'Europe à l'ère des pionniers (1950-1960)*, Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M., New York, Wien, Peter Lang, 2000.

¹⁴⁶ Following the debate on the application of Article 116 of the Italian Constitution, which granted some Italian regions a special Statute, the issue of regional independence fostered a heated debate even among the Waldensians at the start of the 1970s. See Malan G., "Autonomia delle Valli Valdesi?", in *Eco-Luce*, 25 settembre 1970; *Id.*, "Sull'arrivo del francese alle Valli e su qualche altro argomento storico e linguistico", *Eco-Luce*, 26 marzo 1971; Cöisson O., "Minoranze linguistiche in Italia", *Eco-Luce*, 11 febbraio 1972; *Id.*, "Il fascismo, le autonomie locali e le minoranze religiose", in *Eco-Luce*, 29 settembre 1972; *Id.*, "L'autonomia delle valli alpine", in *Eco-Luce*, 3 novembre 1972; Malan G., "Autonomia nelle Valli valdesi. Convallium antiquissima insigna", in *Eco-Luce*, 14 settembre 1973; *Id.*, "Forme di 'autonomia' nelle Valli Valdesi ieri e oggi", in *Eco-Luce*, 7 settembre 1973; *Id.*, "A trent'anni dalla 'Carta di Chivasso'. Autonomismo valdese", in *Eco-Luce*, 4 gennaio 1974; *Id.*, "Autonomia non separatismo", *Eco-Luce*, 23 agosto 1974; *Id.*, "Un problema aperto già trent'anni fa. L'autonomia delle Valli Valdesi", in *Eco-Luce*, 29 settembre 1974; *Id.*, "Popolo e chiesa, ieri e oggi", in *Eco-Luce*, 11 ottobre 1974; Cöisson O., "Il fascismo e le autonomie locali. Le condizioni delle minoranze religiose", in *Eco-Luce*, 15 marzo 1974; Nisbet R., "Un problema aperto già trent'anni fa. L'autonomia delle Valli Valdesi", in *Eco-Luce*, 7 ottobre 1974; Trombetta S., "Valdostani, occitani, ebrei e valdesi: minoranze in lotta per sopravvivere", in *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 18 febbraio 1978.

the Waldensian federalists – thanks also to their religious and cultural peculiarities – proved to be more sensitive to the internal aspects of federalism. The idea of an Italian federal state, integrated into a wider-ranging European and global federalism, suited the nature of the Waldensian people and their historical tradition well marked as they were by a strong identifying character and a lively cosmopolitanism.

While this last aspect is identifiable in part in the international Protestant and ecumenical vocation, the socio-cultural principle of identity finds its historical causes in the confessional, cultural, and linguistic autonomy of the Waldensian people¹⁴⁷. This combination of forces generated by opposing tensions found a consistent response in the dialectic between internal and supranational federalism. During the Resistance, and in anticipation of a national and international reorganisation of the political system, the Waldensian federalists pursued a demand for autonomy for their Valleys in the prospect of a federal reorganisation of the future Italian state.

This demand found a reasoned form in the *Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine* (Declaration of the Representatives of the Alpine Populations), more commonly known as the *Carta di Chivasso*, which was published clandestinely for the first time in its entirety in *L'Unità Europea*, with an introduction by Peyronel under the pseudonym of La Rochelle¹⁴⁸. The political reflection on which the document focused placed itself in opposition to the almost secular culture of state centralism,

¹⁴⁷ See "Forme di 'autonomia' nelle Valli Valdesi ieri e oggi", *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁸ See La Rochelle, "Federalismo e autonomie. La dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 5 (lug -ago. 1944). On infranational federalism in connection with the European one during the Resistance, see Rognoni Vercelli C., "Autonomismo e federalismo nella Resistenza", *op. cit.*, pp. 603-646, Vol. I; Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, 113-127. Sulla *Carta di Chivasso*, see Chanoux É., *De la "Déclaration de Chivasso" à "Federalismo e autonomie"*, edited by J.-C. Perrin, Aoste, Imprimerie valdôtaine, 1973; Azzoni V., *L'incontro di Chivasso (19 dicembre 1943). Il federalismo in Valle d'Aosta*, Aosta, Tipografia La Vallée, 1981; Perona G. (ed.), *Popolazioni alpine e diritti fondamentali. 60° anniversario della Dichiarazione di Chivasso*, Aosta, Le Château, 2003; Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943*, Aosta, Le Château, 2003; Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della "Dichiarazione di Chivasso" (1943)*, *op. cit.* See also Pasqui G.A., (ed.), *L'attualità di Émile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista*, Aosta, Le Château, 2004; Buratti G., "La Dichiarazione di Chivasso del 1943: premesse e attualità", in *L'impegno*, a. XVII, n. 1 (apr. 1997). On federalism of some of the drafters of the document, see Peyronel G., "La dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine del convegno di Chivasso del 19 dicembre 1943", in *Il Movimento di Liberazione in Italia*, a. I, n. 2 (set. 1949), pp. 16-26; Chanoux É., *Federalismo ed autonomie*, edited by Partito d'Azione, serie dei *Quaderni dell'Italia Libera*, 1944; Monroe E. (pseudonym of Mario Alberto Rollier), *Stati Uniti d'Europa?*, edited by Partito d'Azione, serie dei *Quaderni dell'Italia Libera*, 1944. Both have been reprinted in Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresent-*

starting with the national unification, then culminating in authoritarianism and fascist totalitarianism. The Charter, therefore, demanded cultural and religious, but also administrative and economic autonomy, anticipating the proposals for regional autonomy advanced in the post-war constitutional sessions. As is well known, the debate which occurred within the Constitutional Assembly on regional autonomy resulted in the insertion of Article 116 into the Italian constitution in 1948, which provided for a special statute based on constitutional law in which certain regions would enjoy a vast political, legislative, administrative and financial autonomy¹⁴⁹.

The Declaration was essentially the compromise between the socio-economic demands advanced by the representatives of the Valle d'Aosta people and those pursued by the Waldensians in defence of their historical and cultural peculiarities. Albeit similar in the sense that they both had difficulties related to living in a mountain territory, the two groups had different historical and socio-cultural backgrounds, as well as ethnic-religious and socio-cultural differences. The elaboration of the text, in fact, mirrored the various approaches and welcomed these differences in and of themselves. Nevertheless, the Chivasso document was able to express a shared concern and mutual sentiment, recognizing in federalism the most suitable means for reorganising the state on the basis of broad autonomies.

During the Fascist period, both populations had suffered not only strong political and economic constraints, but also cultural oppressions which struck at local cultures and traditions; in particular the regime's measures were directed towards the suppression of an important socio-cultural factor such as language. Among these, the most oppressive were the abolition of teaching French in the schools, the reduction of local scholastic institutions, the Italianization of place names, the obligation to publish periodicals and local newspapers in Italian, and the official use of Italian in judicial, notarial and public administration offices. Strong pressure was also exerted on religious authorities to prevent parish priests from using French while preaching and during catechism lessons. Finally, Article 4 of the *Riforma Gentile* had declared "the absolute pre-eminence, in education, of the national language" with respect to minority languages.

In addition, following the reorganisation of numerous provincial districts, in 1927 a regional decree separated the towns of Valle d'Aosta from

anti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943, op. cit., pp. 154-204 and pp. 73-153.

¹⁴⁹ On the Constitutional Assembly, see Pombeni P., *La costituente. Un problema storico-politico*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1995. On the debate on regional autonomies, see Legnani M. (ed.), *Regioni e Stato dalla Resistenza alla Costituente*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1975. On regional autonomies and Europe, see Zucca F., *Autonomie locali e federazione sovranazionale. La battaglia del Conseil des Communes et Région d'Europe per l'unità europea*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2001.

the province of Turin, creating the new province of Aosta to intensify the regime's control over the local administration and life. If the abolition of the French language affected both populations, the 1929 Lateran Pacts discriminated the Waldensians from a confessional point of view¹⁵⁰.

As stated before, the linguistic factor was a strong identifying factor both for Valle d'Aosta and the Waldensian Valleys. French was in current use and, in the case of the Waldensians, was even the language of religious confession and that used when the pastor preached in church. Reports and synodical documents were written in French, as well as the majority of the local newspapers. The Charter affirmed the role and European function of the same considered "as intermediaries between diverse neighbouring cultures"¹⁵¹. The border position of the Alpine Valleys had made their populations more sensitive to the problems and interests of states between which they lived, transforming these regions into not only vital points of connection, but also channels through which to improve international relations¹⁵². In this regard, it is interesting to note that the origin of the drafters of the Charter was not specified but rather a general reference to the "representatives of the Alpine Valleys".

In other words, "the Alpine autonomies were considered not only as a way to overcome the irredentisms which had long poisoned European history but also as a strengthening of the mixed-language cultures, as a vehicle for shared values and inter-regional solidarity, in the context of a broader community than the traditionally national one"¹⁵³. Ultimately, the Chivasso Charter was the expression of the autonomist demands of the Alpine populations, inserted however in a broader political-institutional federal framework. This not only contemplated the reorganization of the Italian state, but also foresaw its insertion in a future European federation. It was on this last point that the Waldensian imprint was most strongly felt in the drafting of the document.

The first attempts at drawing up a document occurred immediately after the events of September 8th, 1943, in which a desire for ethical, civil and political renewal was more strongly felt¹⁵⁴. In this particular context the

¹⁵⁰ See Viallet J.-P., *La Chiesa valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista (1922-1945)*, op. cit., pp. 105-179.

¹⁵¹ Peyronel G., "I valdesi, le autonomie locali e il fascismo", in Fontana S. (ed.), *Il fascismo e le autonomie locali*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1973, p. 400.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* See also Peyronel G., "I valdesi e le autonomie alpine", in Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della "Dichiarazione di Chivasso" (1943)*, op. cit., pp. 154-171.

¹⁵³ Peyronel G., "I valdesi, le autonomie locali e il fascismo", op. cit., p. 400.

¹⁵⁴ On the Resistance in Valle d'Aosta, see Nicco R., *La Resistenza in Valle d'Aosta*, Aosta, Musumeci Editore, 1995; on the Waldensian Resistance, see Gay Rochat D., *La Resistenza nelle Valli valdesi*, op. cit.

idea emerged of drawing up a document which responded specifically to this need, and the joint initiative of the Valle d'Aosta representatives and the Waldensians took place. The mutual objective for both was to rebuild the country on the basis of a principle which contemplated the broadest political, administrative and economic autonomies for those regions which had suffered especially from the intervention of the central government. In addition, it was a response to the new political, social, economic, cultural and moral implorations of which, in some way, even European federalism was the bearer. Thus, at the end of December 1943, the first discussions among the future signatories to the Charter occurred, which led to the drawing up of the preliminary text and the final draft of the document on December 19th of that year. The draft bore the peculiar imprints of each of the various drafters, the ideological orientations and the demands specific to their political sensitivities. While the Waldensians stressed the problems related to religious freedom and the need for European unification, the Valle d'Aosta people focused on the economic- administrative and linguistic questions.

A short time after the preparatory phase, a meeting between the representatives of the two populations was organized. As representatives of the Waldensian Valleys there were Coisson, Malan, Rollier and Peyronel, and of Valle d'Aosta Emile Chanoux¹⁵⁵ and Ernest Page¹⁵⁶. Federico Chabod¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Emile Chanoux (1906-1944) was a notary and a member of the Italian Resistance. He founded in 1925, together with the abbot Joseph-Marie Trèves, the *Jeune Vallée d'Aoste* movement, to protect the local culture and language. The fascist repression forced the movement into clandestinity which became a movement to liberate the Valle d'Aosta. In 1943, Chanoux deserted and fled to France. After September 8, he came back to Italy and joined the PdA. He was one of the leaders of the partisan warfare. In 1944, he was arrested and imprisoned in Aosta, where he died because of the tortures he had been subjected to. See Pasqui G.A. (ed.), *L'attualità di Emile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista*, op. cit.; Louvin R., *Emile Chanoux et le débat sur le fédéralisme*, Nice, Presses d'Europe, 1997. By him, see Chanoux É., *Federalismo ed autonomia*, op. cit.; Id., *De la "Déclaration de Chivasso" à "Federalismo e autonomia"*, op. cit. See also Chanoux É., *Anthologie des écrits*, Aoste, edited by P. Momigliano Levi, Le Château, 2008.

¹⁵⁶ Ernest Page (1888-1969), a lawyer and politician, was a member of the Italian Popular Party and was the Vice-President of the *Ligue Valdôtaine*. Following his adhesion to the *Jeune Vallée d'Aoste*, in 1941 he organized a meeting in his house among the principal members of the local anti-fascist movement, thus creating the first regional liberation Committee. Page firmly supported the annexation of the Valle d'Aosta to France. In 1945, he was among the founders of the *Union valdôtaine* and was elected senator in 1948. See Pasqui G.A. (ed.), *L'attualità di Emile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista*, op. cit., n. 37, pp. 26-27.

¹⁵⁷ Federico Chabod (1901-1960), a scholar and politician, disciple of Gaetano Salvemini and Friedrich Meinecke, was one of the most prominent Italian historians. He started working with the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in 1928 and taught in various Italian universities from 1934. He joined the PdA during the war and collaborated with the Resistance movements. He was later elected President of the first Regional Council of Valle d'Aosta

was unable to participate in the clandestine meeting, but nevertheless assured that his considerations and text of his proposal were received by those present. Augusto Matteoda (1913-2007), spokesperson of the local CLN, attended the meeting. The drafters of the Declaration gathered in Chivasso, at the private residence of a Waldensian, surveyor Edoardo Pons. For security reasons, Pons had not been told the reasons which had led to the meeting in his house, which he had in any case agreed to host¹⁵⁸. The organisation of the meeting was made possible thanks to Giovanna Pagliani, who, displaced in Valle d'Aosta, had made contact with Chanoux and the Valle d'Aosta autonomists¹⁵⁹.

The choice of venue for the appointment was mainly due to two reasons. The first was of a strictly organisational nature and depended on the central location of the Piedmontese town with respect to the Waldensian valleys, Aosta and Milan, from which originated the representatives. The second reason was linked to security concerns, as the Pons residence could have offered valid cover if there were sudden security controls on the part of the fascist authorities. In fact, in addition to Pons, a surveyor, the notary Chanoux and the barrister Page were present, who would have made the contractual nature of the meeting more credible, simulating a real estate transaction, if necessary. The Declaration was then drafted and signed, unimpeded, on the second floor of an apartment situated in Piazza d'Armi, n. 2.

All of the signers of the historic document, except Page, were members of the Action Party or, in any case, close to this part of the Resistance sensitive to the ideas of autonomy and domestic and European federalism. We

and fought for the independence of the region, as foreseen by the Constitution. In 1946, Chabod was appointed Director of the *Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici* founded by Benedetto Croce. He was the director of prestigious magazines, a member of the *Accademia nazionale dei Lincei* and the British Academy, President of the *Società internazionale degli storici di Napoli* and Honorary Doctor of the Universities of Oxford and Granada. Among his works: *Storia della politica estera italiana dal 1870 al 1896* (1951), *L'idea di nazione* (1961), *Storia dell'idea d'Europa* (1961), *L'Italia contemporanea* (1961) e *Lezioni di metodo storico* (1969). On Chabod, see Soave S., *Federico Chabod politico*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1989; Vigezzi B. (ed.), *Federico Chabod e la "nuova storiografia" italiana 1919-1950*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1984; Sasso G., *Il guardiano della storiografia. Profilo di Federico Chabod e altri saggi*, Napoli, Guida, 1985. On the autonomy of the Valle d'Aosta, see also Chabod F., *La questione valdostana* (memoriale del 16 settembre 1944); Id., *La Valle d'Aosta, l'Italia e la Francia* (memoriale del 27 settembre 1944), in Archivio dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza in Val d'Aosta, Aosta (hereinafter AISRVdA).

¹⁵⁸ On Pons's role, see Pons G., "In casa nostra... 'La redazione della 'Carta di Chivasso'", in Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della "Dichiarazione di Chivasso" (1943)*, op. cit., pp. 141-147.

¹⁵⁹ See Pasqui G.A. (ed.), *L'attualità di Émile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista*, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

need to remember that in the PdA there was a lively debate on domestic federalism. In particular, Riccardo Lombardi had touched on the theme in his pamphlet, published for the *Quaderni dell'Italia Libera*, in which he made explicit reference to the problem of political-administrative decentralisation of the future Italian state. Lombardi hoped for the reform, "the reorganisation of the local entities and the creation of the region as an autarchic entity" in the interest of a greater respect for the "principle of representation and democratic control"¹⁶⁰. In addition, in the programme of the PdA, published in the first edition of *L'Italia Libera*, the creation of "a European federation of free democratic countries within the framework of a broader worldwide collaboration", was hoped for, underlining how this would be, on the basis of the negation of "absolute state sovereignty", and the "establishment of a legal community of states", the guarantor of the "international safeguarding of the minorities"¹⁶¹. These principles and assumptions were reiterated by the drafters of the Chivasso Charter. Together with "the demands for broad cultural and administrative autonomies", they highlighted "the significance and European reach" of the project, according to which "the fundamental principle that the local autonomies and above all those of the ethnic-linguistic minorities" would not have been possible "if not within the framework of a federal Europe"¹⁶².

Chanoux, member of the regional activist movement *Jeune Vallée d'Aoste* succeeded in giving voice to the aspirations of political and economic-administrative renewal in his region from an autonomist and federalist point of view. At the same time, however, he was convinced of the need to reconcile these legitimate aspirations of the Valle d'Aosta people with a broader political-institutional organization, one which transcended the borders of the same nation state. Unlike Chanoux, Page sided with the supporters of a more intransigent regional autonomism which at times touched on the idea of independence and broached that of separatism. Absent from the meeting in Chivasso, but an important figure in the drafting of the Charter was Chabod, who in any case had discussed at length with Chanoux the Declaration between December 1943 and February 1944¹⁶³. The historian, also a member of the *Ligue valdôtaine*, offset the excessively radical tones of his movement, professing the pro-European ideal of a republican and democratic Italy from the broad autonomies in a federal Europe. Chabod opposed to the rhetoric of separatism the politi-

¹⁶⁰ Lombardi R., *Il Partito d'Azione (P.d'A.) Cos'è e cosa vuole*, Milano, Edizioni Giustizia e Libertà, 1945 (reprint of the 1943 first edition).

¹⁶¹ See "Le tendenze federaliste", in *L'Unità Europea*, n. 1 (gen. 1943).

¹⁶² See La Rochelle, "Federalismo e autonomie. La dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine", *op. cit.*

¹⁶³ See Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

cal view of Valle d'Aosta as "a European region", one whose autonomy would have enabled it more easily to play a pivotal role between its own country and Europe.

The reasons for his absence at the clandestine meeting remain obscure, although Peyronel maintained that the professor was unable to attend the Chivasso meeting due to academic obligations. This contention was subsequently denied by Malan, who imputed Chabod's absence to ideological differences with Chanoux. In fact, the preparatory drafts of the two representatives differed with respect to the organization of Valle d'Aosta within the political-institutional framework of the future Italian state. As Giorgio Andrea Pasqui explains, in fact, during the preliminary debate on the position of Chabod and Peyronel – a position which evoked in substance the ideas of the Valle d'Aosta historian – countered the position of Chanoux and Rollier. The first were in favour of "a broad administrative and economic decentralization", while the second were more inclined to define a "federal republican regime", to guarantee freedom of language and worship, resolving the problem of small countries and irredentism¹⁶⁴.

Finally, among the protagonists of the Charter we must remember Lino Binel¹⁶⁵, who Chabod considered "the most visible supporter of the Valle d'Aosta movement"¹⁶⁶. Binel too did not attend the meeting, due to his sudden arrest. He had expressed his support for Chanoux's *textes introductifs* in the Declaration, which contained the fundamental political-institutional premises of a state system intended to ensure a broad autonomy to Valle d'Aosta.

¹⁶⁴ See Pasqui G.A. (ed.), *L'attualità di Émile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista*, op. cit.; pp. 69-78. On the drafts and preparatory documents, see "Testi preliminari alla Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine", in Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943*, op. cit., pp. 55-64. See also "Appendice" in Chanoux É., *De la "Déclaration de Chivasso" à "Federalismo e autonomie"*, op. cit., pp. 81-99. On the various interpretations of the Valle d'Aosta people, see Momigliano Levi P., Dallou A., "La mia terra e le mie montagne. Federico Chabod, Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, Émile Chanoux: il ruolo delle autonomie nella ricostruzione dell'Europa del '900", in Noto S. (ed.), *La Valle d'Aosta e l'Europa*, 2 Vols., Firenze, Olschki, 2008, pp. 477-549, Vol. II.

¹⁶⁵ Lino Binel (1904-1985), a young anti-fascist student, in 1927 joined the *Jeune Vallée d'Aoste* and during the war took part in the Valle d'Aosta Resistance from the time of its organization. His sympathies for federalism date from the same period. Arrested multiple times, he was deported to Germany in 1944. After the war, he took part in the first regional Valle d'Aosta Council. See "Profilo biografico di Lino Binel" edited by P. Momigliano Levi, written on the occasion of the documentary exhibit on his life and works, produced by the *Istituto storico della Resistenza della Valle d'Aosta* (www.resvallee.it/public/img/pubblicazioni/ID144A.pdf).

¹⁶⁶ See Chabod's letter to La Malfa, dated October 10, 1944, in Fondo Federico Chabod, FFC, in AISRVdA.

In line with what Chanoux and Chabod were pursuing, Binel recognized the fundamental importance of enabling the full development of the particularism of Valle d'Aosta within the framework of an international federalism. In all likelihood, Binel and Chanoux had already learned of the *Manifesto di Ventotene* thanks to Franco Venturi, whom they met in Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves's castle in October 1943. In fact, as Momigliano Levi noted, Binel's anti-fascism joined "a heightened sensitivity in the defence of the particularism of Valle d'Aosta and the most marginalized members of society" with "the principles of international federalism"¹⁶⁷.

This position had an immediate positive response among the Waldensians, meeting their willingness to draft a document in which, commencing with the postulate of the *Manifesto*, the political-constitutional possibilities through which to redraw the map of the future national institutions were discussed. European federalism, however, was more mature in the Waldensian group, whose representatives had created the MFE a few months prior, bringing with them the experience of Spinelli.

In this regard, it is important to remember that all of the Waldensians involved in Chivasso, were involved in the publications of *L'Unità Europea*, of which Rollier was in charge. The declarations contained in the Chivasso Charter, in fact, had found ample echoes in the pages of the pro-European newspaper, which had even opened the debate on the autonomies and domestic federalism¹⁶⁸. On the other hand, the demands for autonomy were not new to the Waldensians, so much so that in the spring of 1943 discussions about the autonomy of the Valleys had already arisen among Coïsson, Malan and Rollier¹⁶⁹. The first two had expressed their intention to fight for this aim, hence the suggestion of the third to frame this fight within that for the European federation¹⁷⁰. Only in this way, according to Rollier, would have the demands for liberty and autonomy made sense. Rollier's autonomism was "a subordinate aspect of federalism whose perspective was European and cosmopolitan", and he believed that the battle "for the valorization of the 'small homelands', not nestled within

¹⁶⁷ Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-24. On the European perspectives of the Valle d'Aosta people, see Dallou A., *Idea di Europa e federalismo: i contributi di Federico Chabod, Émile Chanoux, Severino Caveri e Joseph Bréan*, Aosta, Le Château, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ See La Rochelle, "Federalismo, autonomie locali, autogoverno", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 4 (mag.-giu. 1944); *Id.*, "Federalismo e autonomie. La dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine", *op. cit.*; Peyronel G., "Annessionismo, separatismo, autonomismo nella Valle d'Aosta", in *L'Unità Europea*, a. II, n. 13 (23 giu. 1945).

¹⁶⁹ See Malan G., "A trent'anni dalla 'Carta di Chivasso'. Autonomismo valdese", *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* See also Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 113 e ss.

a wider-reaching political framework", would run the risk "of degenerating into micro-nationalism and worse"¹⁷¹. In this sense, the Waldensians distinguished themselves for their originality, helping to influence the pro-European orientation of the Chivasso Charter. The Declaration was therefore a comprehensive document which combined the demands for autonomy yearned for by a population repressed by the central state with the project of a federal democratic European state better capable of guaranteeing liberty and respect for regional differences such as linguistic, ethnic and religious variations.

Just as Rollier left his mark on the Declaration with his personal vision of European federalism¹⁷², Peyronel too had an important role in the definition of federalism contemplated by the Charter, on both the infranational and supranational levels¹⁷³. He was persuaded that the "myth" of the national state would disintegrate in the collective consciousness at the end of the war, thus it was necessary to identify new "units of measurement" in order to reorganize local, regional and national political life at the supranational and international level. Peyronel supported a European federalism which welcomed and structured internal forms of federalism tending towards "an effective internal decentralization of national states". A form of federalism that should have ensured "the emergence of a new cultural, political and administrative autonomies of regions and communes (regionalism and communalism) and the defence of ethnic or linguistic minorities or, in any case, those historically differentiated from the nation of which [were] part"¹⁷⁴. The Declaration, in Peyronel's eyes, would have therefore satisfied both needs, both rooted in the community and cosmopolitan sentiment of the Waldensian population.

In conclusion, we now examine the salient features of the document with respect to certain interpretational nuances on both approaches to autonomy and Europeanism (that of Valle d'Aosta and that of the Waldensians).

The Charter is primarily a declaration in which certain fundamental principles are presented and a "constitutional" element can be identified. The supreme ideal orientation which inspired the document was the quest for "a stable and lasting peace" among the peoples of Europe while respect-

¹⁷¹ Rognoni Vercelli C., "Autonomismo e federalismo nella Resistenza", *op. cit.*, pp. 641-642, Vol. II.

¹⁷² See Monroe E., "Stati Uniti d'Europa?", *op. cit.* See also Giordano F.M., "Dalle Valli all'Europa. Mario Alberto Rollier e la prospettiva europea della 'Carta di Chivasso'", in Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della "Dichiarazione di Chivasso" (1943)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-116.

¹⁷³ See Dell'Acqua S., "Diritti delle minoranze, Autonomie locali e prospettiva federalista in Giorgio Peyronel", in Peyronel S., Giordano F.M. (eds.), *Federalismo e Resistenza. Il crocevia della "Dichiarazione di Chivasso" (1943)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-139.

¹⁷⁴ See La Rochelle, "Federalismo, autonomie locali, autogoverno", *op. cit.*

ing mutual liberty and autonomy¹⁷⁵. The essential conditions to reach such objective were the fundamental liberties "of language as [...] of worship", a condition "essential to the safeguarding of the human personality"¹⁷⁶. This type of liberty mirrored perfectly the vital and specific requirements of the two Alpine communities, which indicated in "federalism [...] the framework most suitable to providing the guarantees of this individual and collective right"; both upwards as regards the "future European order", as well as downwards for that which concerned the construction of "a federal republican regime with a regional and cantonal basis"¹⁷⁷. The signers of the Charter turned their attention to the political-institutional model of Swiss federalism, both for reasons of territorial adjacency as well as for cultural, linguistic and religious reasons. The references to the Swiss federation were present above all in Chanoux and Rollier's reflections, especially with regards to the cantonal system¹⁷⁸. However, Pasqui clarified, their idea of a "canton" was "very different from that achieved in the Swiss Confederation, which [had] also presumably inspired them"¹⁷⁹. The two drafters of the Charter, in fact, saw the canton not as a genuine sovereign state, but rather as "a territorial entity instituted by the express will of the population resident therein and equipped with extensive autonomy, both in the Region or as an 'entity' within the Region, while the Regions in turn constituted the federal articulation of the Italian state"¹⁸⁰.

"Europe has in Switzerland – Chanoux wrote – the living example, simple and tangible, of what can be tomorrow"¹⁸¹: a "federal regime of the Swiss type" which would guarantee the respect among all for the historical groupings present within one state, favouring an equivalent unitary process within the European continent¹⁸². The cantonal system provided, therefore, a functional and successful historical example of domestic federalism and suggested forms of autonomies feasible even in post-war Italy. Such articulation would have facilitated the realization of a decentralized democracy, respectful of the local and regional peculiarities of each population.

¹⁷⁵ For the textual citations, see Momigliano Levi P., Perrin J.-C. (eds.), *La Dichiarazione dei rappresentanti delle popolazioni alpine. Chivasso 19 dicembre 1943, op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ See Chanoux É., *Federalismo ed autonomie, op. cit.*, pp. 20-27; Monroe E., *Stati Uniti d'Europa?, op. cit.*, pp. 95-100.

¹⁷⁹ See Pasqui G.A. (ed.), *L'attualità di Émile Chanoux nella prospettiva federalista, op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Chanoux É., *Federalismo ed autonomie, op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Rollier complemented the Swiss model with that of the American model. It was the Waldensians and in particular Rollier who followed the tradition and experience of American federalism which was even the basis of Rossi and Spinelli's reflections for their *Manifesto*. The federalists, in fact, were convinced that the United States of America, even more than tiny Switzerland, offered to Europe, with their political-institutional model, a valid example to overcome nationalism and to build a lasting and stable peace on the Old Continent.

According to Rollier, the time for pacts and alliances was over, as it was that to proceed according to the old logic of "politics founded on the idea of a balance of powers, of collective security and similar [...] to dealing with one crisis to another, one war to another"¹⁸³. The time had also come to "create a European order, to lay the foundations of an international society" capable of liberating Europe from chaos. In Rollier's view, the federal union was an attempt to overcome the politics of expedients and "to point the way to create a better world, in the order and maximum prosperity compatible with the point which we have reached in the development of civilization"¹⁸⁴.

This perspective was the most original and significant contribution of the Waldensians to the drafting of the Charter. Beyond certain nuanced differences in the personal orientations of each of the drafters, Malan emphasized that the Chivasso document confirmed the "federalism which there is in the Waldensian intelligence"¹⁸⁵.

It is nevertheless worth remembering that the Waldensians fight for local liberties was subordinate to that for the European federation; it was **exactly** in this perspective that the difference between the Waldensians and the other autonomists of the time manifested itself¹⁸⁶. The Valle d'Aosta people, except for Chanoux and Chabod, maintained the tendency to retreat to a position of radical autonomism which at times revealed separatist ambitions. On the contrary, in the Waldensians the community element was necessarily bound to the cosmopolitan one in the dimension of the international Protestant society, to which for many centuries the Waldensian population felt bound by tradition and culture. The ecumenical vocation enabled them to balance the community dimension with the international one as well, convinced as they were, both religiously and politically, that the best way to defend their own peculiar identity was to articulate and regulate the different levels through federalism, both downwards and upwards.

¹⁸³ Monroe E., *Stati Uniti d'Europa?*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Rognoni Vercelli C., *Mario Alberto Rollier, un valdese federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

In the Chivasso Charter it is possible to identify all of these elements, typical of Waldensian federalism, which Peyronel recalled during the *Giornate teologiche* of 1945 to explain the profound reasons for the Waldensian demands contained in the Declaration:

Unity through diversity, the inspiring principle of federalism, as in the religious setting of ecumenism, is not achievable through the respect of the personality of individuals as of that of social and ethnic groups, each in the limits of their rights and functions; but this does not exclude, rather it requires a broader and more comprehensive unity which guarantees to individuals as well as societies a common right of liberty and autonomous development. In this perspective there remains for us the value of autonomy, as in it they find their historical justification, as a means towards a broader universality, not as an end. But in this remains, with their justification, their limit as well, since their insertion as an end in and of itself is a failure to their natural function in the environment of unity to which they belong.¹⁸⁷

In the words of Peyronel – as in the reflections of all of the other Waldensian drafters – the profound reasons for Waldensian federalism emerge clearly and unmistakably, which originated not from the mere acceptance of ideas and shared political principles, but from the continual and necessary interaction between those and the confessional component, inseparable from the Waldensian conscience.

¹⁸⁷ From Giorgio Peyronel's report presented at the *Giornate teologiche* of 1945, *op. cit.*

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Index

A

- Abbattista, Guido 54n
Ackermann, Bruno 230n
Acquarone, Alberto 54n, 94n, 109n
Active pessimist (see Rollier, Mario Alberto) 261n, 262n
Adam, Armin 69n, 72n
Adamo, Antonio 172n
Adams, John 111n
Adenauer, Konrad 32, 220n
Agnelli, Giovanni 294, 294n
Agnolotto, Attilio 114n
Agosti, Giorgio 284n, 290n
Agosti, Paola 284n
Aime, Edoardo 269n
Alberoni, Ettore 96n
Albertini, Mario 41n, 42n, 46, 46n, 47, 47n, 48, 48n, 49, 49n, 50, 50n, 66n, 187n, 197n, 314
Aldobrandini, Giovanni 39n
Alexander The Great 114
Allara, Mario 321
Allen, Barbara 109n, 111, 111n
Allen, William 182, 182n
Allen Baker, Joseph 209
Althusius, Johannes 25, 26, 44n, 45, 45n, 53, 53n, 60n, 61, 79, 79n, 80, 80n, 81, 81n, 82, 82n, 84, 86, 92n, 112n
Amendola, Giorgio 288n
Ames, William 90
Amico, Gianluca 198n
Anderson, Gerald H. 250n
Anderson, Paul 257, 257n
Andreis, Mario 301n
Anfossi, Anna 306, 306n, 313n
Angelini-Rota, Virginio 306
Anteghini, Alessandra 170n, 182n, 183n, 184n, 189n, 194n
Antoni, Carlo 213n
Antonicelli, Franco 297, 297n
Aquilante, Sergio 226n, 228n, 285n
Archibugi, Daniele 39n, 122n
Arendt, Hanna 54n
Armand-Hugon, Augusto 125n, 129, 129n, 131n, 133, 133n, 134n, 142n, 146, 146n, 159n, 160n, 176n, 177n, 180n
Arnaud, Aroldo 297
Arnaud, Émile 194, 194n, 200
Arnaud, Henri 159n
Aron, Robert 229n
Asbeck, Frederik Mari, baron van 255, 255n
Asselt, Willem J. van 78n
Azzoni, Valdo 323n

B

- Baccarini, Paride 301, 301n
Bacon, J. C. 169n
Bagnasco, Arnaldo 306n
Bailyn, Bernard 54n
Bainton, Roland H. 52n, 59n, 63, 63n, 68n, 92n
Bajer, Fredrik 198
Baker, J. Wayne 46n, 51n, 72n, 73n, 77n, 81, 81n, 83n, 84, 92n, 97n, 106n, 115n

- Bakunin, Mikail 189
Balducci, Ernesto 39n
Balmas, Enea 16n, 148, 148n, 266n
Balmas, Federico 320
Balthasar, Hans Urs von 223n
Banfi, Antonio 213n, 226n
Banfi, Arialdo 290n, 291
Bardeen, Charles William 40n
Bareth, Jean 318n
Baridon, Silvio 290n
Barnett, Victoria J. 251n
Baroni, Enrico 184n
Barth, Karl 29, 30, 51, 104n, 213n,
214n, 216n, 218, 218n, 219n,
221, 222, 223, 223n, 224, 225,
226n, 228, 229, 232, 267, 283,
284n
Basevi, Giorgio 116n
Bassani, Luigi Marco 54n
Basso, Lelio 213, 226n, 287,
287n, 288
Becchino, Franco 226n, 228n
Becchio, Giandomenica 184n
Beckwith, Carlotta 186n
Beckwith, Charles 160, 160n, 161,
186n
Beckwith, Jonathan R. 296n
Bein, Mirella 296n
Bein Ricco, Elena 50n, 51n, 64n,
70n
Bell, George Kennedy Allen 252,
252n, 253, 253n
Bellers, John 123, 123n
Bellion, Bruno 179n
Benini, Aroldo 202n
Bentley, James 220n
Benso, Camillo Conte di Cavour
177n, 180
Bergamaschi, Camilla 284n
Bertolè, Leopoldo 126n, 269n,
270, 270n, 290n, 291
Bertone, Giovanni Battista 311
Bethge, Eberhard 220n
Bevilacqua Piero 288n
Bèze, Theodore de 78
Bianchi, Gianfranco 284n, 288n
Bianchi, Mirco 227n
Bierma, Lyle D. 78n
Billion, Jean-Francoise 318n, 319n
Binel, Lino 329, 329n, 330
Binetti, Saffo Testoni 46n
Birnstiel, Eckart 107n
Bish, Robert 98n
Bobbio, Norberto 39n, 175n, 196,
196n, 287, 287n, 297n, 298n,
300n, 314, 314n, 321n
Boccalatte, Luciano 284n, 287n
Bodin, Jean 82, 84
Boegner, Marc 249, 249n, 250n
Bogue, Carl W. 91n
Bolis, Luciano 100n
Bologna, Sergio 221n
Bonaiuti, Ernesto 213
Bonanate, Ugo 50n, 88n
Bonazzi, Tiziano 54n
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich 22, 220, 220n,
221, 223, 251, 252, 260
Bonjour, Jean-Jacques 160n
Borio, Ferruccio 298n
Bornand, R. (Pastor) 241, 241n
Bosco, Andrea 42n, 190n, 250n,
257n, 262n
Bosio, Paolo 212n
Bottaro, Giuseppe 208n
Bouchard, Giorgio 52n, 128n,
132n, 133, 133n, 136n, 137n,
164, 164n, 172n, 175n, 177n,
180n, 213n, 218, 218n, 219,
219n, 221n, 223n, 226n, 228n,
231n, 281n
Bouthoul, Gaston 39n
Bowie, Robert R. 42n, 43n
Bracchitta, Massimo 181n
Bradford, William 94n
Braga, Antonella 263n, 264n
Braudel, Fernand 57n

- Bravo, G. Mario 74n
 Bremer, Francis 95n
 Brent, Charles 248n
 Breward, Ian 103n
 Briand, Aristide 256n
 Bridel, Gaston 161n
 Briggs, John 207n, 245n
 Brock, Peter 39n
 Brocker, Mark 253n
 Brown, Heloise 171n
 Bruce, Steve 61n
 Brugmans, Henri 321n
 Brunner, Emil 218n
 Bucer, Martin 88, 104, 134
 Bullinger, Heinrich 72, 77, 77n,
 78, 79, 81, 82, 82n, 83, 84, 86,
 88, 88n, 91, 92, 97, 103
 Bultmann, Rudolf 218n
 Buratti, Gustavo 323n
 Burlamacchi, Gian Giacomo 74,
 74n
- C**
- Cabella, Alberto 266n, 269n, 273,
 273n, 289, 289n, 291, 293, 295,
 295n, 299, 299n, 300, 300n, 304,
 305, 306, 307, 308, 308n, 309,
 311, 313, 313n, 314, 314n, 315,
 315n, 318, 318n, 319, 321n
 Cabiati, Attilio 184n, 294, 294n
 Caffaratti, Enrico 185
 Calamandrei, Piero 301n, 321n
 Calderini, Luca 81n
 Calogero, Guido 284
 Calvi, Eugenio 315n
 Calvin, John 51, 65n, 67, 67n, 76,
 77n, 83, 86, 97, 103, 104, 104n,
 105n, 134, 153, 226
 Camilla, Piero 285n
 Campagnolo, Umberto 292, 299,
 300, 300n, 302, 303, 304, 305,
 307, 308, 315
- Campi, Emidio 73n, 77n, 78n, 82n,
 86n, 89n, 102n, 115n, 141n
 Canaris, Wilhelm 252
 Canavero, Alfredo 30n, 39n, 207n,
 236n
 Canestri, Giorgio 287n
 Cantimori, Delio 17n, 142n, 180n
 Cantor, Milton 94n
 Capitini, Aldo 284
 Caponetto, Salvatore 130, 130n,
 131, 132n, 134n, 135, 135n,
 142n, 146n
 Cappelli, Danilo 285n
 Caraffini, Paolo 263n, 301n, 306n
 Carini, Lisli 287, 287n
 Carletti, Gabriele 46n
 Carocci, Giampiero 89n, 172n
 Carr, Edward H. 189n
 Carrannante, Antonio 287n
 Carter, April 39n
 Cartwright, Thomas 90n
 Casalini, Brunella 73n
 Castaldi, Roberto 42n, 46n
 Castro, Sonia 262n, 263n
 Castronovo, Valerio 305n
 Cavaglione, Alberto 284n
 Cavallaro, Ivano 282n
 Ceadel, Martin 39n, 171n
 Cecil, Robert (Lord Robert Cecil
 of Chelwood) 256n
 Cereti, Giovanni 207n, 236n, 238n,
 280n
 Cesoni, Giulio 314
 Chabert, George 113n
 Chabod, Federico 37, 37n, 38,
 38n, 62n, 63n, 113n, 298n,
 326, 326n, 327n, 328, 329,
 329n, 330, 333
 Chanoux, Émile 323n, 326, 326n,
 327, 328, 329, 329n, 330, 332,
 332n, 333
 Charles Albert, King of Piedmont-
 Sardinia 137, 160n, 179n

- Charles Emmanuel II, Duke of Savoy 167n
Charles II of England 121
Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, House of Habsburg 58
Cherubini, Donatella 170n, 183n, 184n, 189n
Chiantore, Federico 297, 297n
Chiaranello, Domenico 297, 297n
Chiarini, Franco 177n, 179n
Chiti-Batelli, Andrea 295n, 315n
Cignoni, Mario 179n
Citterio, Ferdinando 25n, 34n
Clarke, George 123n
Clerici, Alberto 86n
Clinton, Michael 188n
Cocceius, Johannes 78, 91, 223n
Coffey, John 81n
Coisson, Osvaldo 214n, 290n, 291, 291n, 295, 315, 322n, 326, 330
Colombino, Silvio 296, 297, 297n
Colombo, Arturo 287n
Colonnetti, Gustavo 314
Colomi, Eugenio 175n, 287n, 304n
Comba, Augusto 286n, 295, 295n
Comba, Emilio 131n, 198n
Comba, Ernesto 198, 212
Combi, Maria 197n
Comenius, Johannes Amos 40, 40n, 53, 53n, 84, 118, 118n, 119, 120, 121n
Commager, Henry Steele 94n
Conci, Alberto 220n
Conte Gino 226n
Conti, Vittorio 85n
Contorbias, Franco 287n
Conway, John S. 220n
Cooper, Sandi E. 171n
Cope, Brian E. 21n
Corradini, Giovanni 212n
Costa Bona, Enrica 190n
Costabel, Eliseo 186n
Cotta, Gabriella 69n
Cranmer, Thomas 88
Craveri, Paolo 287n
Cremer, William Randal 198, 198n
Cressati, Claudio 294n
Croce, Benedetto 29n, 217n, 327n
Cromwell, Oliver 82, 148n, 167n, 226, 290
Crookshank, William 91n
Crucé, Eméric 188
Cullmann, Oscar 19, 19n, 20, 168n, 241, 241n
Curcio, Carlo 113n, 188n
Curtis, Lionel 32, 33, 33n, 34, 34n, 256n
Cuttini, Elisa 115n
- D**
- d'Angelo, Lucio 171n, 184n, 197n, 201, 202n, 203n
Daffern, Thomas Clough 42n
Dallou, Antonella 329n, 330n
Dalmas, Davide 214n, 225n
Daniel (prophet), 114
Decot, Rolf 52n, 65n
De Federicis, Nico 49n
De Florentiis, Huen G. 230n
De Gasperi, Alcide 32, 309n
Dehem, Roger 255n
Dehio, Ludwig 58, 58n, 217n
De Lange, Albert 85n
De Luna, Giovanni 270n, 284n, 285, 285n
dell'Acqua, Stefano 30n, 190n, 209n, 217n, 218n, 227n, 228n, 231n, 252n, 262n, 263n, 264n, 270n, 331n
Dellavalle, Claudio 284n
Del Noce, Augusto 309
Delors, Jacques 25, 25n, 26, 26n, 31, 33, 33n, 34n
De Michelis Pintacuda, Fiorella 51n, 53n, 59n, 64n, 72n, 85n, 102n, 104n, 108n

- Demofonti, Laura 214n
 Depretis, Agostino 184
 der Bent, Ans J. van 228n
 De Viti De Marco, Antonio 184n
 Devoto, Giacomo 301n, 302, 304, 307
 Dickinson, Willoughby Hyett (Lord Dickinson) 173, 173n, 208n, 210n, 211n
 Diena, Giorgio 290n
 Di Giovinazzo, Viviana 184n
 Diodati, Giovanni 84
 Dodge, Guy Howard 107n
 Dohnanyi, Hans von 252
 Doroteo of Bursa, Bishop 21, 247
 Dreisbach, Daniel L. 54n, 72n, 109n
 Ducommun, Élie 198, 200
 Dulles, Allen Macy 254n
 Dulles, Allen Welsh 251n, 253n, 254, 254n
 Dulles, John Foster 254, 254n, 255, 255n, 256, 259, 260n
 Dumoulin, Michel 299n
 Durand, Jean-Dominique 30n, 207n, 236n
 Du Réau, Elisabeth 113n
 Düringer, Hermann 220n
 Duroselle, Jean-Baptiste 28, 28n, 38n, 113n, 116n, 117n, 123n, 188n, 321n
 Duso, Giuseppe 60n, 79n
- E**
- Eatwell, John 255n
 Eden, sir, Anthony 253n
 Edmundson, George 85n
 Edwards, Jonathan 91n
 Edward VI of England 88
 Egidi Bouchard, Piera 284n, 289n
 Ehrenström, Nils 174n
 Einaudi, Giulio 297n
 Einaudi, Luigi 184n, 191, 191n, 192n, 203n, 279, 294, 294n
 Eisenhower, Dwight David 254n
 Elazar, Daniel J. 41n, 42n, 46, 46n, 47, 47n, 50, 50n, 60, 60n, 64n, 70n, 71, 72n, 73n, 75, 75n, 76, 76n, 78n, 79n, 80, 80n, 81n, 86, 86n, 94n, 99n, 112, 112n
 Elizabeth I of England 88
 Emerson, Everett H. 76n
 Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy 17, 146
 Emmons, Nathanael 109n
 Empirico (v. Rossi, Ernesto) 264
 Enriques Agnoletti, Enzo 301
 Erasmus of Rotterdam 85, 134
 Eynard, Emilio 185, 185n, 187, 191, 191n, 192, 192n, 197n, 199n, 200n, 201, 201n, 202, 213
- F**
- Falchi, Franco 192n
 Falchi, Mario 141n, 143, 143n, 145n, 186, 186n, 197, 197n, 201, 202, 203, 203n, 204, 204n, 205, 205n, 212, 224n, 280n, 290n
 Farel, Guillaume 129, 134, 141
 Fauci, Riccardo 294n
 Faucett Lavine, Rachel 54n
 Febvre, Lucien 38n, 113n
 Feliciani, Giorgio 129, 129n, 240n
 Fenner, Dudley 90n
 Ferm, Virgilius 91n
 Ferreri, Carlo Maria 210, 210n, 211n
 Ferreri, Giovanni 280n
 Ferrone, Vincenzo 225n
 Fey, Harold E. 52n, 207n, 248n
 Filippi, Alfio 280n
 Filoramo, Giovanni 207n, 236n, 238n

- Firpo, Luigi 17n, 64n, 75n, 142n,
180n, 294n
Fisher, Galen M. 250n
Fiume, Emanuele 52n, 148n
Fleury, Antoine 173n
Foa, Israel Angelo 202n
Foa, Vittorio 290n, 297n, 298n
Fontana, Paolo G. 252n, 263n,
304n
Formigoni, Guido 39n
Fox, George 121n, 343
Fraenkel, Dan 296n
Fragnière, Gabriel 95n, 103n
Francioni, Gianni 51n, 53n, 64n,
72n, 85n, 102n, 104n, 108n
Francis I, King of France 58, 143n
Freitas, Shaun A. de 87n, 88n,
115n
Friedrich, Carl Joachin 41n, 42n,
43n, 45, 45n, 60n, 80n, 81n,
86n, 100n, 112n
Frosio Roncalli, Moris 305n,
308n, 309n
- G**
- Gablentz, Otto Heinrich von der
255, 255n
Gabriel, Audisio 125n
Galante Garrone, Alessandro 231n,
298n
Galasso, Giuseppe 29n
Gallas, Alberto 218n, 219n, 220n,
221n, 222n
Ganci Siracusa, Massimo 96n
Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand
312
Gangale, Giuseppe 63n, 136n,
173n, 209, 209n, 213, 213n,
214n, 224n, 225, 225n, 226,
226n
Gardiol, Giorgio 276n
Garibaldi, Giuseppe 177n, 189
Garnett, George 42n
Garosci, Aldo 42n, 74n, 298n,
301, 301n, 302, 303, 314n
Garrisson-Estèbe, Janine 46n,
106n, 116n
Gastaldi, Ugo 67n
Gay, Cesare 212, 212n
Gay Rochat, Donatella 277n, 284n,
325n
Genre, Ermanno 52n, 216n, 228n,
269n
Gentile, Emilio 225n
Geremia, Ferdinando 211n, 215n
Gerstenmaier, Eugen 253, 253n
Ghidorzi Ghizzi, Dacirio 315n
Ghisleri, Arcangelo 202, 202n,
203n
Giampiccoli, Ernesto 201n
Giampiccoli, Franco 26, 26n, 128n,
153n, 156n, 160n, 201n, 219n,
221n, 227n, 228n
Giampiccoli, Neri 226, 226n
Gide, Charles 255n
Gilles, Pierre 138, 140n, 147n,
148, 158n
Gilly, William Stephen 160n
Ginzburg, Leone 288n, 297n
Giolitti, Giovanni 172, 186n
Giordano, Filippo Maria 30n, 74n,
179n, 190n, 209n, 217n, 218n,
226n, 227n, 228n, 231n, 262n,
263n, 264n, 286n, 312n, 323n,
325n, 327n, 331n
Giordano Giulio 320
Giorgi, Lorenza 177n
Giovana, Mario 284n
Giretti, Edoardo 171n, 184, 184n,
185, 185n, 186, 186n, 187, 191,
191n, 192n, 197, 200, 201n,
202, 202n, 203, 203n, 204,
204n, 279
Giretti, Luciano 192n
Gisevius, Hans Bernd 252
Giua, Michele 290n

- Giussani, Enrico 304
 Gniss, Daniela 253n
 Gobat, Charles Albert 198
 Gobetti, Piero 184n, 213n, 214,
 298n
 Goebel, Julius 74n
 Goegg, Armand 189
 Gogarten, Friedrich 218n
 Gonnet, Giovanni 125n
 Gordon, Bruce 77n, 78n, 115n
 Gorini, Luigi 296, 296n
 Graglia, Piero 262n, 285n, 286n,
 297n, 300n, 301n, 304, 304n,
 308n, 309n, 315n
 Graham, Matt Patrick 113n
 Gramsci, Antonio 301
 Grandi, Terenzio 297, 297n, 309
 Grassi, Ludovico 39n
 Greco, Paolo 298, 298n, 314, 320
 Green, Frederick 171n
 Gremmels, Christian 221n
 Greshat, Martin 30n
 Grimaldi, Ugoberto A. 287n
 Groeben, Wolfgang von der 253n
 Grosse, Heinrich W. 221n
 Grossi, Verdiana 39n, 188n
 Grosso, Giuseppe 298, 298n, 321
 Grotius, Hugo 73, 73n, 74n, 86
 Guderzo, Guido 305n
 Guerriero, Elio 68n, 71n
 Guicciardini, Piero 177
 Guieu, Jean-Michel 183n, 189n
 Guglielmetti, Carlo 124n
 Guizot, François 62, 62n
 Gustaf Adolf of Sweden 226,
 226n
- H**
- Hagen, Kenneth 76n
 Hall, David W. 54n
 Hall, Mark David 54n, 72n, 109n
 Hamilton, Alexander 42n, 43n,
 46n, 54, 54n, 60n, 74n
- Hammer, Karl 218n
 Harnack, Adolf von 218n, 219n
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich
 219
 Henry II of France 145
 Henry IV of France 116
 Henry VIII of England 87
 Heraud, Guy 315
 Herz, Ulrich 190n
 Hinsey, Francis Harry 170n, 183n
 Hitler, Adolph 214n, 252, 255n,
 283
 Hobbes, Thomas 82, 97
 Hockenos, Matthew D. 221n, 223n
 Holl, Karl 188n
 Hopkins, Charles Howard 250n
 Howard, Michael 39n
 Huber, Max 254, 254n, 255, 255n
 Hueglin, Thomas O. 61n, 79n, 81n
 Hugo, Victor 170, 183, 189
- I**
- Immerman, Richard H. 254n
 Inghirami, Silvia 184n
 Ingravalle, Francesco 45n, 52n,
 80n, 81n
 Insonne Pietro (pseudonym for
 Giuseppe Gangale) 225n
 Israel, Jonathan I. 85n
- J**
- Jackson, Eleanor M. 250n
 Jahier, Piero 173n, 179n, 182n
 Jallà, Attilio 278n, 284n
 Jallà, Giovanni 125n, 126n, 134n,
 141n
 James I of England 94
 Janni, Ugo 198n, 280, 280n
 Jaspers, Karl 225n
 Jay, John 42n, 54, 54n
 Jefferson, Thomas 74n
 Jervis, Giovanni 69n

Jervis, Guglielmo (Willy) 23,
214n, 287n
Jilek, Lubor 173n
John VI, Count of Nassau-Dillen-
burg 83
Johnson, Thomas H. 94n
Jones, R. Matthew 121n, 343

K

Kant, Immanuel 34, 40, 46n, 49,
49n, 84, 112, 120, 120n, 175,
189
Karmis, Dimitrios 42n
Keene, Edward 73n
Kelly, Thomas Raymond 121n,
343
Kelsen, Hans 300n
Kennedy, Paul 57n
Kent, John 249n
Kerr, Philip-Henry (Lord Lothian)
190, 195, 255n
Kimber, Charles 257, 257n
Kincaid, John 46n, 64n, 72n, 76n,
78n, 79n
Kinnamon, Michael 21n
Kinzer, Stephen 254n
Kjelling, Anne C. 188n
Knox, John 86
Köhler, Franz 218n
Krause, Winfried 315
Küng, Hans 30n, 59n, 64n, 68n,
239, 239n, 245, 245n, 246

L

La Fontaine, Henri 198
La Malfa, Ugo 298n, 329n
Laity, Paul 170
Landi Aldo 227n
Lapeyre, Henri 59n
Lapradelle, Albert de 74n
Laurie, Simon Somerville 40n
Lefevre, Louis-Raymond 116n

Legnani, Massimo 324n
Leiper, Henry Smith 250, 251,
251n
Lemonnier, Charles 183, 183n,
188, 189, 194, 195
Lentolo, Scipione 16, 17, 147n
Letham, Robert 78n
Leustean, Lucien N. 30n, 207n,
217n
Levi, Carlo 301n
Levi, Lucio 42n, 43n, 47n, 154n,
170n, 187n, 313n
Libois, Eugenio 298, 298n, 309
Lippens, Walter 217, 250n, 251n,
252n, 253n, 260, 260n, 264n
Liverani, Mario 75n
Livio Bianco, Dante 284n
Livorsi, Franco 287n
Lo Bue, Erberto 284n
Lo Bue, Francesco Singleton 214n,
226, 226n, 242, 243, 243n, 269n,
270, 289, 290n, 291, 293, 293n,
296, 296n, 298, 299n, 301, 302,
302n, 303, 304, 305, 307, 307n,
308, 309, 310, 310n, 315, 317,
317n
Locatelli, Silvio 230n
Locke, John 73, 73n, 97
Lombardi, Riccardo 328, 328n
Lombardini, Jacopo 290n
Lombardo, Ivan Matteo 311
Long, Gianni 68n, 89n, 102n, 227n
Lorrain, Sophie 188n
Lossky, Nicholas 280n
Loth, Wilfried 30, 251n, 318n
Lothian, lord (v. Kerr, Philip-
Henry) 190, 190n, 195, 195n,
255n, 257
Louis Philippe I 188n
Louis XIII of France 116
Louis XIV of France 107
Louvin, Roberto 326n
Löwith, Karl 101n

- Luna, Salvatore 297n
 Luther, Martin 58, 58n, 63n, 64, 83, 84, 102, 114, 115, 131, 134, 219, 226
 Lutz, Donald 74n, 94n, 99n
 Luzzatto, Lucio 287n
- M**
- Maag, Karin 115n, 116n
 MacCullogh, Diarmaid 52n
 Madariaga, Salvador de 321n
 Madison, James 42n, 54, 54n, 74n
 Magagnotti, Paolo 26n
 Maghenzani, Simone 178n
 Malan, Frida 290n, 321
 Malan, Giovanni Pietro 186n
 Malan, Gustavo 285n, 289, 289n, 290n, 291, 293, 295, 304, 305, 308, 309, 315, 318, 318n, 319, 320, 321, 321n, 322n, 326, 329, 330, 330n
 Malan, Roberto 281, 284n, 289, 289n
 Malandrino, Corrado 37n, 41, 41n, 42, 42n, 43n, 44n, 45, 45n, 46n, 48, 48n, 52n, 60n, 65n, 67n, 72n, 73n, 77n, 79n, 80n, 81n, 82n, 84n, 105n, 187n, 291n, 293n, 294n, 295n, 297n, 315n, 320n
 Malone, Henri O. 253n
 Maloy, Jason S. 111n
 Malvezzi, Piero 287n
 Manganaro Favaretto, Gilda 44n
 Mangini, Giorgio 202n
 Mann, Thomas 219
 Marc, Alexandre 44n, 229n, 243, 315n, 321n
 Marchionatti, Roberto 184n
 Marks, Frederick 254n
 Marini, Giuliano 49n
 Marino, Silvia 25
- Marsh, Charles 220n
 Martignetti, Giuliano 315n
 Martini, Matthias 84
 Marullo, Anna 296, 296n
 Mary I of England 86, 88
 Maselli, Domenico 177n
 Mastrogiovanni, Salvatore 284n, 290n
 Mather, Cotton 73n
 Mathew, Basil J. 250n
 Matteoda, Augusto Luciano 327
 Matteotti, Giacomo 281
 Matteucci, Nicola 54n
 Mayne, Richard 190n
 Maza, Herbert 198n
 Mazzei, Rita 227n
 Mazzoleni, Oscar 297n
 McCoy, Charles S. 46n, 51, 51n, 72n, 73n, 76, 76n, 77n, 78n, 83n, 84, 115n
 McDonald, Forrest 74n
 McGrath, Alister Edgar 52n, 64n, 67n, 104n, 105n, 107n
 McIlwain, Charles H. 54n
 Mehl, Roger 250n
 Meille, Jean-Pierre 161n
 Meille, William 138n
 Meinecke, Friedrich 38n, 326n
 Melanchthon, Philipp 113, 114, 114n, 115, 115n, 116, 131
 Melchionni, Maria Grazia 32n, 38n, 39, 39n, 40n, 113n, 123n, 188n, 209n, 211n, 286n
 Menozzi, Daniele 207n, 225n, 236n, 238n
 Mercuri, Lamberto 285n
 Merlini, Gianni 306n, 312n, 314n
 Merlo, Grado Giovanni 57n, 125n
 Mesnard, Pierre 64n
 Michalon, Pierre 236n, 240n
 Michaud, Guy 321n
 Miegge, Giovanni 23, 59n, 63n,

- 213, 213n, 214n, 216, 216n,
224, 224n, 225, 226, 226n,
231, 231n, 243, 243n, 269,
269n, 277, 277n, 281, 282,
283, 283n, 284, 287n
- Miegge, Mario 51, 51n, 53n, 72n,
79n, 80n, 81n, 82, 82n, 89, 90n,
103n, 112n, 114n, 115, 115n,
116, 116n, 218n, 221n, 223n
- Migliorini, Bruno 301n
- Mikkeli, Heikki 113n, 116n, 118n,
122n, 123n
- Mila, Massimo 297n
- Milaneschi, Cesare 236n, 280n
- Milgate, Murray 255n
- Miller, Perry 94n
- Moch, Gaston 200
- Modonese, Archimede 320
- Mola, Aldo Alessandro 315n
- Molnar, Amedeo 125n, 130n,
131n, 133n, 139n, 180n
- Moltke, Helmuth James von 220n,
252, 253, 255n
- Momigliano Levi, Paolo 323n,
328n, 329n, 330, 330n, 332n
- Monda, Davide 118n
- Moneta, Ernesto Teodoro 171n,
184n, 192n, 197, 197n, 201, 202
- Monnet, Jean 28n, 113n, 269n
- Montesquieu, Jean-Baptiste de 73,
73n
- Monti, Augusto 70n, 297, 297n,
303
- Morandi, Rodolfo 287n, 298n
- More, G. A. 259, 259n
- Morelli, Umberto 191n, 209n,
294n, 311n
- Morgan, Edmund S. 112n
- Morland, Samuel 167n
- Mornay, Philippe de 42n, 92, 97
- Mornese, Michele 295n
- Moro, Renato 39n, 225n
- Morrison, Jeffrey H. 54n, 72n,
109n
- Mortara, Amedeo 315n
- Morton, Nathaniel 75n, 94n, 95n,
96n, 98n
- Mosca, Gaetano 184n
- Moscheles, Félix 171n
- Mosconi, Nicoletta 46n, 49n
- Mott, John 250
- Mounier, Emmanuel 229n, 263n,
276
- Mudrov, Sergei A. 207n
- Muller, Joseph 252
- Murri, Romolo 213
- Muston, Arturo 199n, 201n
- N**
- Nabucodonosor 114
- Naphy, William G. 52n
- Napoleon III 188n
- Negri, Guglielmo 54n, 94n,
109n
- Neill, Stephen Charles 52n, 66n,
168, 168n, 174n, 207n, 208n,
248n, 254n, 255n, 273n
- Nenni, Pietro 297
- Newman, Peter 255n
- Nicco, Roberto 325n
- Nicholls, David 183n
- Niebuhr, Reinold 33, 33n
- Niemöller, Martin 220, 220n, 221,
223
- Nisbet, Roberto 281, 322n
- Nitti, Francesco Fausto 213, 213n,
298n
- Nitti, Francesco Saverio 213n
- Nitti, Vincenzo 213n
- Noël, Etienne 147n
- Norman, Wayne 42n
- Novicow, Jacow 200, 200n
- Nuttall, Geoffrey 39n

O

Ochetto, Valerio 295n
 Oduyoye, Mercy Amba 207n, 245n
 Oecolampadius, Johannes 134
 Olevianus, Caspar 78, 83, 91
 Olivétan, Pierre 134
 Olivetti, (family) 306n
 Olivetti, Adriano 23, 44n, 287n,
 294, 294n, 295n
 Olivetti, Arrigo 320
 Ory, Pascal 171n
 Oster, Hans 252
 Ostrom, Elinor 98n
 Ostrom, Vincent 98n
 Owen, John 91n

P

Page, Ernest 326, 326n
 Pagliani, Giovanna 327
 Pajetta, Giancarlo 297n
 Palayret, Jean-Marie 306n
 Pampaloni, Geno 314
 Pandolfi Guttadauro, Beniamino
 193, 193n, 194, 194n
 Pannunzio, Mario 301n
 Pantaleoni, Maffeo 184n
 Papa, Antonio 184n
 Papa, Emilio Raffaele 37n
 Papini, Carlo 125n, 226n, 228n
 Pareto, Vilfredo 184n
 Parri, Ferruccio 298n
 Pasquet, A. 278n
 Pasqui, Giorgio Andrea 323n,
 326n, 327n, 329, 329n, 332,
 332n
 Pasquinucci, Daniele 312n
 Passerin d'Entrèves, Ettore 330
 Passy, Frédéric 188, 188n, 189,
 194, 198, 198n, 199, 200
 Paton, William 250, 250n, 251,
 256, 257, 257n, 258, 258n,
 259n, 260
 Paul of Tarsus, Saint 103, 104,
 104n, 111n, 224
 Pavese, Cesare 297n
 Pedussia, Aldo 312
 Pelloux, Robert 321n
 Penati, Fausto 296, 296n, 309
 Penn, William 14, 39, 39n, 73,
 121, 121n, 122, 122n, 123,
 124, 124n, 188
 Peretti-Griva, Domenico Riccardo
 320
 Perkins, Mary Anne 39n, 40, 40n
 Perkins, William 90, 103n
 Perona, Gianni 323n
 Perrin, Joseph-César 323n, 328n,
 329n, 330n, 332n
 Pertini, Sandro 287n
 Peter (Saint) 111n
 Petersen, Neal H. 251n, 253n,
 254, 254n
 Peterson, Erik 101n
 Petricioli, Marta 170n, 183n, 184n,
 189n
 Peyron, Amedeo 315, 315n, 321
 Peyronel, Giorgio 214n, 227,
 227n, 269n, 270, 270n, 271,
 271n, 281n, 284, 290n, 291,
 295, 304, 305, 315, 323, 323n,
 325n, 326, 329, 330n, 331,
 334, 334n
 Peyronel Rambaldi, Susanna 65n,
 227n, 286n, 323n, 325n, 327n,
 331n
 Peyrot, Bruna 278, 278n
 Peyrot, Giorgio 16n, 17n, 18n,
 132n, 138n, 140, 140n, 141n,
 142n, 143n, 144, 144n, 145n,
 146n, 148n, 149, 149n, 150,
 151n, 153, 154n, 155n, 156n,
 157, 157n, 158n, 159n, 160n,
 161n, 162, 162n, 163n, 179n,
 227, 227n

- Pfister, Christian 116n
Pieri, Piero 314
Pierre (v. Soutou, Jean-Marie) 264
Pietrocola-Rossetti, Teodorico 177
Pievatolo, Maria Chiara 49n
Pinder, John 190n, 250n
Pinelli, Tullio 297n
Pirelli, Giovanni 287n
Pistone, Sergio 196n, 287n, 291, 291n, 293, 293n, 294n, 295n, 297n, 299n, 303n, 306n, 309n, 311n, 312n, 313n, 314n, 316, 316n, 317n, 318n, 319n, 320n
Pitassi, Maria Cristina 108n
Pitts, Vincent J. 116n
Pius XI (Pope) 178n
Pizzardo, Tina Rieser 269n, 270, 270n, 298, 309
Platone, Giuseppe 178n
Poirson, Auguste M. 116n, 117n
Pombeni, Paolo 324n
Pomeau, René 38n
Pons, Andrea 320
Pons, Edoardo 327
Pons, Giovanna 327n
Pons, Giovanni Pietro 186n, 198, 200
Pons, Italo 227n
Pons, Renè 320
Pons, Silvia 290n
Porret, Jacqueline 290n, 291
Porro, Giuseppe 320n, 321n
Possevino, Antonio 146
Povero, Mauro 77n
Pratt, Hodgson 171n, 194n
Prearo, Antonio 284n
Preda, Daniela 190n, 250n, 252n, 263n, 293n, 299n, 300n, 306n, 309n, 310n, 312n
Preston, John 90
Prodi, Paolo 101n
Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph 44
Pufendorf, Samuel von 73, 74n
Puharré, André 116n
- Q**
Quazza, Guido 309
- R**
Raath, Andries W. G. 87n, 88n, 115n
Rade, Martin 217
Raffler, Walburga von 309
Ragionieri, Ernesto 284n, 288n
Ramella, Pietro 213n
Ramsey, Patrick D. 87n
Randall, Willard Sterne 54n
Ransome, Patrick 257n
Rawnsley, Derek 257n
Reale, Egidio 263, 263n
Regalia, Ida 306n
Reinhard, Wolfgang 101n
Repaci, Antonio 309
Revel, Bruno 199n, 214n, 226n, 227, 227n, 290n, 291
Revel, Onesimo 185, 185n
Reves, Emery 49n
Ribaute, Emile 157n
Ribet, Alberto 154, 154n
Ribet, Gustavo 133n
Ricca, Paolo 113n, 207n, 217n, 226n, 238n, 246, 246n, 266n, 267n, 280n
Ricci, Umberto 184n
Rieben, Henri 44n
Rieser, Vittorio 270
Rietbergen, Peter J.A.N. 85n
Rist, M. Charles 255, 255n
Ritter, Gerard 253n
Rizzardi, Vittorio 301, 301n
Rizzi, Marco 222n
Robbins, Lionel 191n

- Rochat, Giorgio 277n
 Rognoni Vercelli, Cinzia 190n,
 215n, 224n, 227n, 231n, 244,
 244n, 250n, 252n, 261n, 262n,
 263n, 264n, 267n, 269n, 279n,
 284n, 285n, 286n, 288n, 289n,
 290, 290n, 291n, 293n, 295n,
 304n, 305n, 307n, 312n, 316n,
 323n, 330n, 331n, 333n
 Rohtmets, Priit 169n, 217n
 Roland, Alberto 291, 291n, 315
 Rolland, Patrice 113n
 Rollier, Eric 128n, 291, 291n
 Rollier, Guido 288, 290, 290n,
 291, 291n
 Rollier, Mario Alberto 23, 214n,
 227, 227n, 229n, 230n, 242,
 242n, 244, 261, 261n, 262, 264n,
 265, 267, 269n, 270, 271, 271n,
 275, 283, 283n, 284, 286, 286n,
 288, 289, 290, 290n, 291, 291n,
 293n, 295, 299n, 303, 303n, 304,
 305, 305n, 307, 316, 316n, 321n,
 323n, 326, 329, 330, 331, 332,
 333
 Rollier, Rita 287n
 Rollier, Roberto 290n
 Romagnani, Gian Paolo 179n
 Romano, Silvio 314
 Roon, Ger van 253n
 Rosboch, Michele 315n
 Rosselli, Carlo 213n, 284, 298n,
 301n
 Rosselli, Sabatino (Nello) 213n,
 284, 298n
 Rossi Doria, Manlio 288, 288n
 Rossi, Ernesto 22, 23, 30, 30n, 175,
 175n, 176, 203, 228n, 232, 244,
 262, 262n, 263n, 263, 264n, 265,
 265n, 276, 285, 286n, 291, 294n,
 299, 303, 304n, 305, 308, 322,
 333
 Rossi, Manlio Mario 226n
 Rossi, Pietro 38n, 101n, 113n
 Rossiter, Clinton 54n
 Rostagno, Sergio 52n, 71, 100n,
 114n, 214n, 216n, 228n, 269n,
 281n
 Rota, Giovanni 214n
 Rota Ghibaudi, Silvia 74n
 Rothfels, Hans 253n
 Rougemont, Denis de 44n, 71,
 173n, 175n, 176, 229, 229n,
 230, 230n, 243, 276, 276n,
 294
 Rouse, Ruth 52n, 66n, 168n, 174n,
 207n, 208n, 248n, 254n, 255n,
 273n
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 97
 Rovati, Lucio 287n
 Rubboli, Massimo 52n, 176n,
 238n
- S**
- Sabetti, Filippo 96
 Saccomanni, Sara 216n
 Saint-Pierre, Abbot of 188
 Saint-Simon, Henri de 188, 189
 Saint Thomas Aquinas, 25
 Saitta, Armando 38n, 116n
 Salvadori, Massimo Luigi 54n
 Salvemini, Gaetano 184n, 298n,
 326n
 Sambin, Paolo 282n
 Samson, Steven Slan 72
 Sanguin André-Louis 256n
 Santini, Luigi 281n
 Saragat, Giuseppe 301n
 Sartori, Luigi 280n
 Sasso, Gennaro 327n
 Saulnier, Antoine 141
 Savarino, Luca 65n, 67n, 77n,
 81n, 82n, 105n
 Savino, Elena 290n

- Scelba, Cipriano 54n, 94n, 109n
Scheible, Heinz 113n
Schilling, Heinz 101n
Schmidt, Dietmar 220n
Schmidt, Jurgen 220n
Schmitt, Carl 72n, 101n
Schofield, John 115n
Schonfeld, Hans 252, 253
Schorn-Schütte, Luise 52n
Schumann, Robert 32
Schwarz, Guri 284n
Scornaienchi, Lorenzo 113n
Scucimarra, Luca 38n
Sears, Kenneth A. E. 253n
Segre, Bruno 309
Segré, Gino 298
Selge, Kurt Victor 125n
Serafini, Umberto 314, 314n
Sereni, Emilio 288n
Servetus, Michael 67
Sherman, Isabel 87n
Sibille, Alberto 281
Sibille, Luciano 306, 306n
Siegel, Mona L. 188n
Siegfried, André 256, 256n
Sigler, Sebastian 253n
Silvestri, Paolo 294n
Smart, Ian Micheal 87n
Soave Sergio 327n
Soderblom, Nathan 248n
Sodini, Carla 227n
Sommani, Virgilio 266n, 269n
Soulie, Enrico 186n
Soutou, George-Henri 263n
Soutou, Jean-Marie (see Pierre)
263, 263n, 264n
Sparks, Randy J. 107n
Spiazzi, Raimondo 26n
Spinelli, Altiero 22, 23, 30, 30n,
175, 175n, 176, 203, 228n, 232,
244, 261, 261n, 262, 262n, 263,
263n, 264, 264n, 265n, 270n,
276, 285, 286, 286n, 290, 290n,
291, 292, 294, 294n, 299, 300,
301, 302, 302n, 303, 303n, 304,
304n, 305, 308, 309, 309n, 310,
311n, 312, 312n, 313, 315, 316,
322, 330, 333
Spinelli, Veniero 301n
Spini, Debora 106n
Spini, Giorgio 17n, 57n, 75n, 91,
92, 92n, 93n, 95n, 108n, 121n,
132, 132n, 136n, 142n, 154,
155n, 173n, 177n, 178, 178n,
179n, 180n, 181, 181n, 202n,
204n, 208n, 209n, 212n, 213,
213n, 214n, 216n, 227, 227n,
228n, 269n, 275, 275n, 279n,
280n, 281, 281n, 282, 282n,
284, 284n, 285, 285n, 288n,
290n, 321n
Spini, Valdo 227n
Spoltore, Franco 170n, 171n,
183n, 189n, 190n, 195n
Stella, Tiziana 259n
Stephanus Junius Brutus, (see
Mornay, Philippe, de) 42n, 92n
Stöhr, Martin 220n
Strauch, Max 223n
Strehle, Stephen 73n
Streit, Clarence Kirschmann 259,
259n
Strumia, Anna 214n, 225n
Stuart Mill, John 189
Subilia, Vittorio 141n, 214n,
221n, 224n, 226, 226n, 236n,
237, 237n, 238, 238n, 239,
239n, 241n, 244, 244n, 245,
248n, 266, 266n, 269n, 270,
281, 291, 316n
Sully, Maximilien de Béthune,
Duke of 116, 116n, 117n, 118,
188
Suttner, Bertha von Baronessa 198

- Sykes, Christopher 253n
- T**
- Tabacco, Giovanni 57n
 Talucchi, Franca 312
 Tarasco, Elisabetta 25
 Tartaglia, Giancarlo 285n
 Temple, William 124n, 249, 249n
 Tenenti, Alberto 57n
 Tesio, Giovanni 297n
 Testoni Binetti, Saffo 106n
 Theiler, Carlo Alberto 148n
 Thesia 298
 Thierry, Augustin 188
 Thüerer, Daniel 254n
 Thurneysen, Eduard 218n
 Tibaldo, Lorenzo 287n
 Tilgher, Adriano 213n
 Tillich, Paul 219n, 255n
 Timothy, John Wengert 113n
 Tocqueville, Charles Alexis de 93n
 Todescan, Franco 73n
 Toja, Rosa 296n
 Tosi, Luciano 312n
 Tourn, Giorgio 52n, 65n, 125n, 129n, 130n, 131n, 133n, 134n, 135n, 136n, 139n, 141n, 145n, 147n, 148n, 149n, 155n, 156n, 159n, 160n, 164, 164n, 176n, 177, 177n, 179n, 180, 180n, 182n, 204n, 216n, 236n, 237n, 238, 238n, 240n
 Tourn, Naïff 171n, 183n, 186, 186n, 190, 190n, 198, 198n, 199n
 Toynbee, Arnold Joseph 256
 Traniello, Francesco 123n
 Treves, Giuseppino 321n
 Trèves, Joseph-Marie 326n
 Trinterud, Leonard J. 88n, 91n
 Troeltsch, Ernst 13, 14, 14n, 25n, 26n, 27, 27n, 50n, 65n, 68, 68n, 69
- Trombetta, Carlo 309
 Trombetta, Sergio 322n
 Tron, Claudio 216n
 Tron, Daniele 132n, 167n, 179n
 Trott zu Solz, Adam von 253, 253n
 Tryon, James L. 189n
 Tsar Nicholas II 194
 Tsetis, George 207n, 245n
 Tumminello, Enzo 226n
 Turchetti, Mario 104n
 Turretini, Francesco 78, 91
- U**
- Ursinus, Zacharias 78, 83, 91
 Usellini, Guglielmo 293n, 301n, 304, 304n
- V**
- Vaccarino, Giorgio 296n
 Vaccaro, Luciano 25n, 34n
 Vaisse, Maurice 189n
 Valiani, Leo 284n, 288, 288n, 290n
 Van Ruymbeke, Bertrand 107n
 Vannicelli, Primo Luigi 242, 242n, 243n
 Varnier, Giovanni Battista 227n
 Vattel, Emerich de 73, 74n
 Vecchio, Giorgio 39n
 Venturi, Franco 180n, 298, 298n, 301n, 330
 Verga, Marcello 38n
 Vermeulen, Caroline 322n
 Vermigli, Pietro Martire 88
 Viallet, Jean-Pierre 172n, 212n, 231n, 277, 277n, 279n, 280n, 281, 282n, 285, 285n, 325n
 Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy 178n

- Villa, Margherita 298
Vinay, Tullio 288n
Vinay, Valdo 52n, 59n, 66n, 104n,
125n, 135n, 136n, 141n, 142n,
177n, 180n, 213n, 214n, 216n,
223n, 224n, 225, 225n, 226,
226n, 267n, 278n, 279n, 281n,
283, 283n, 284
Visceglia, Maria Antonietta 101n
Visco Gilardi, Aldo 213n
Visco Gilardi, Ferdinando 213
Visser, Derk 78n, 90n
Visser't Hooft, Willem Adolf
22, 30, 207n, 228, 228n, 229,
229n, 236, 237n, 238n, 241,
241n, 245, 247, 247n, 248n,
251, 251n, 252, 253, 253n, 254,
255n, 256, 256n, 257, 257n,
258, 259, 260, 260n, 262, 263,
263n, 264, 264n, 265, 265n,
266, 267, 283n
Viti, Luciano 313
Vivanti, Corrado 59n
Vogan, Matthew 87n
Voigt, Klaus 264n
Voltaggio, Franco 39n, 122n
Voltaire, Jean-Marie Arouet
(known as) 38, 38n
- W**
- Waldo, Peter 130
Walker, Williston 109n
Walzer, Michel 50n, 64n, 69n,
75n, 88n, 89, 90, 90n, 102n
Ward, Ann 87
Ward, Lee 87
Warren, Heather A. 251n, 259n
Weber, Max 50n
Weddle, Meredith Baldwin 121n
Weir, David A. 72n, 78n, 108n
Welzel, Hans 74n
Wheare, Kenneth C. 37n, 42n,
43n, 85n, 157n
Whittinghill, Dexter Gooch 214
Wilde, Adolf 188n
Wilentz, Sean 54n
Willaime, Jean-Paul 207n, 236n
William I of Orange 83
Williams, Roger 14
Wills, Garry 54n
Wilson, Thomas Woodrow 21,
173n, 208, 209, 247
Winock, Michel 263n
Winterhager, Wilhelm Ernst 252n
Winthrop, John 73, 95n
Witsius, Hermann 91n
Wood, Gordon S. 54n
Woolman, John 121, 343
Woolrich, Austin 89n
Wylie, James Aitken 168n
- Y**
- Young, Nigel 39n
- Z**
- Zanchi, Girolamo 83
Zanetti, Armando 263n
Zanotti Bianco, Umberto 288n
Zanzi, Luigi 34n
Zarjevski, Yefime 198n
Zecchini, Giuseppe 42n
Zeilstra, Jurjen A. 30n, 207n
Zevi, Bruno 301n
Ziegler, Henri De 263n
Zucca, Fabio 286n, 324n
Zwingli, Huldrych 51, 72, 76,
76n, 77, 77n, 83, 102, 114, 131

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Series Editor: Umberto Morelli, University of Turin

Centro Studi sul Federalismo
via Real Collegio, 30
10024 Moncalieri (To) – Italy
Tel. + 39 011.6705024
Fax + 39 011.6705081
E-mail: info@csfederalismo.it
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