

The Ventotene Manifesto by Altiero Spinelli

TOWARDS A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE

A draft manifesto

I - The crisis of modern civilization

Modern civilization has taken the principle of freedom as its basis, a principle which holds that man must not be a mere instrument to be used by others but an autonomous centre of life. With this code at hand, all those aspects of society that have not respected this principle have been placed on trial, a great historical trial. 1. The equal right of all nations to organize themselves into independent States has been established. Every people, defined by its ethnic, geographical, linguistic and historical characteristics, was expected to find the instrument best suited to its needs within a State organization created according to its own specific concept of political life, and with no outside intervention. The ideology of national independence was a powerful stimulus to progress. It helped overcome narrow-minded parochialism and created a much wider feeling of solidarity against foreign oppression. It eliminated many obstacles hindering the free movement of people and goods. Within the territory of each new State, it brought the institutions and systems of the more advanced societies to more backward ones. But with this ideology came the seeds of capitalist imperialism which our own generation has seen mushroom to the point where totalitarian States have grown up and world wars have been unleashed.

Thus the nation is no longer viewed as the historical product of co-existence between men who, as the result of a lengthy historical process, have acquired greater unity in their customs and aspirations and who see their State as being the most effective means of organizing collective life within the context of all human society. Rather the nation has become a divine entity, an organism which must only consider its own existence, its own development, without the least regard for the damage that others may suffer from this. The absolute sovereignty of national States has led to the desire of each of them to dominate, since each feels threatened by the strength of the others, and considers that its "living space" should include increasingly vast territories that give it the right to free movement and provide self-sustenance without needing to rely on others. This desire to dominate cannot be placated except by the hegemony of the strongest State over all the others.

As a consequence of this, from being the guardian of citizens' freedom, the State has been turned into a master of vassals bound into servitude, and has all the powers it needs to achieve the maximum war-efficiency. Even during peacetime, considered to be pauses during which to prepare for subsequent, inevitable wars, the will of the military class now holds sway over the will of the civilian class in many countries, making it increasingly difficult to operate free political systems. Schools, science, production, administrative bodies are mainly directed towards increasing military strength. Women are considered merely as producers of soldiers and are rewarded with the same criteria as prolific cattle. From the very earliest age, children are taught to handle weapons and hate foreigners. Individual freedom is reduced to nothing since everyone is part of the military establishment and constantly called on to serve in the armed forces. Repeated wars force men to abandon families, jobs, property, and even lay down their lives for goals, the value of which no one really understands. It takes just a few days to destroy the results of decades of common effort to increase the general well-being.

Totalitarian States are precisely those which have unified all their forces in the most coherent way, by implementing the greatest possible degree of centralization and autarky. They have thus shown themselves to be the bodies most suited to the current international environment. It only needs one nation to take one step towards more accentuated totalitarianism for the others to follow suit, dragged down the same groove by their will to survive.

2. The equal right of all citizens to participate in the process of determining the State's will is well-established. This process should have been the synthesis of the freely expressed and changing economic and ideological needs of all social classes. A political organization of this kind made it possible to correct or at least to minimize many of the most strident injustices inherited from previous regimes. But freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the steady extension of suffrage, made it increasingly difficult to defend old privileges, while maintaining a representative system of government. Bit by bit the penniless learned to use these instruments to fight for the rights acquired by the privileged classes. Taxes on unearned income and inheritances, higher taxes levied on larger incomes, tax exemptions for low incomes and essential goods, free public schooling, greater social security spending, land reforms, inspection of factories and manufacturing plants were all achievements that threatened the privileged classes in their well-fortified citadels.

Even the privileged classes who agreed with equality in political rights, could not accept the fact that the underprivileged could use it to achieve a de facto equality that would have created a very real freedom with a very concrete content. When the threat became all too serious at the end of the First World War, it was only natural that these privileged classes should have warmly welcomed and supported the rise of dictatorships that removed their adversaries legislative weapons.

Moreover, the creation of huge industrial, banking conglomerates and trades unions representing whole armies of workers gave rise to forces (unions, employers and financiers) lobbying the government to give them the policies which most clearly favoured their particular interests. This threatened to dissolve the State into countless economic fiefdoms, each bitterly opposed to the others. Liberal and democratic systems increasingly lost their prestige by becoming the tools that these groups will always resort to in order to exploit all of society even more. In this way, the conviction grew up that only a totalitarian State, in which individual liberties were abolished, could somehow resolve the conflicts of interest that existing political institutions were unable to control.

Subsequently, in fact, totalitarian regimes consolidated the position of the various social categories at the levels they had gradually achieved. By using the police to control every aspect of each citizen's life, and by violently silencing all dissenting voices, these regimes barred all legal possibility of further correction in the state of affairs. This consolidated the existence of a thoroughly parasitic class of absentee landowners and rentiers who contribute to social productivity only by cutting the coupons off their bonds. It consolidated the position of monopoly holders and the chain stores who exploit the consumers and cause small savers money to vanish. It consolidated the plutocrats hidden behind the scenes who pull the politicians' strings and run the State machine for their own, exclusive advantage, under the guise of higher national interests. The colossal fortunes of a very few people have been preserved, as has the poverty of the masses, excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of modern culture. In other words an economic regime has substantially been preserved in which material resources and labour, which ought to be directed to the satisfaction of fundamental needs for the development of essential human energies, are instead channelled towards the satisfaction of the most futile wishes of those capable of paying the highest prices. It is an economic regime in which, through the right of inheritance, the power of money is perpetuated in the same class, and is transformed into a privilege that in no way corresponds to the social value of the services actually rendered. The field of proletarian possibilities is so restricted that workers are often forced to accept exploitation by anyone who offers a job in order to make a living.

In order to keep the working classes immobilized and subjugated, the trade unions, once free organizations of struggle, run by individuals who enjoyed the trust of their members, have been turned into institutions for police surveillance run by employees chosen by the ruling class and responsible only to them. Where improvements are made in this economic regime, they are always solely dictated by military needs which have merged with the reactionary aspirations of the privileged classes in giving rise to and consolidating totalitarian States.

3. The permanent value of the spirit of criticism has been asserted against authoritarian dogmatism. Everything that is affirmed must prove its worth or disappear. The greatest achievements of human society in every field are due to the scientific method that lies behind this unfettered approach. But this spiritual freedom has not survived the crisis created by totalitarian States. New dogmas to be accepted as articles of faith or simply hypocritically are advancing in all fields of knowledge.

Although nobody knows what a race is, and the most elementary understanding of history brings home the absurdity of the statement, physiologists are asked to believe, demonstrate and even persuade us that people belong to a chosen race, merely because imperialism needs this myth to stir the masses to hate and pride. The most self-evident concepts of economic science have to be treated as anathema so as to enable autarchic policy, trade balance and other old chestnuts of mercantilism to be presented as extraordinary discoveries of our times. Because of the economic interdependence of the entire world, the living space required by any people which wants to maintain a living standard consistent with modern civilization can only be the entire world. But the pseudo-science of geopolitics has been created in an attempt to prove the soundness of theories about living space and to provide a theoretical cloak to the imperialist desire to dominate.

Essential historical facts are falsified, in the interests of the ruling classes. Libraries and bookshops are purged of all works not considered to be orthodox. The shadows of obscurantism once more threaten to suffocate the human spirit. The social ethic of freedom and equality has itself been undermined. Men are no longer considered free citizens who can use the State to achieve collective goals. They are, instead, servants of the State, which decides what their goals must be, and the will of those who hold power becomes the will of the State. Men are no longer subjects with civil rights, but are instead arranged hierarchically and are expected to obey their superiors without argument, the hierarchy culminating in a suitably deified leader. The regime based on castes is reborn from its own ashes, as bullying as it was before.

After triumphing in a series of countries, this reactionary, totalitarian civilization, has finally found in Nazi Germany the power considered strong enough to take the last step. After meticulous preparation, boldly and

unscrupulously exploiting the rivalries, egoism and stupidity of others, dragging in its path other European vassal States, primarily Italy, and allying itself with Japan, which follows the very same goals in Asia, Nazi Germany has launched itself on the task of crushing other countries. Its victory would mean the definitive consolidation of totalitarianism in the world. All its characteristics would be exasperated to the utmost degree, and progressive forces would be condemned for many years to the role of simple negative opposition.

The traditional arrogance and intransigence of the German military classes can give us an idea of the nature of their dominance after victory in war. The victorious Germans might even concede a façade of generosity towards other European peoples, formally respecting their territories and their political institutions, and thus be able to command while at the same time satisfying the false patriotic sentiments of those who count the colour of the flag flying at the country's borders and the nationality of prominent politicians as being the major considerations and who fail to appreciate the significance of power relationships and the real content of the State's institutions. However camouflaged, the reality is always the same: a new division of humanity into Spartans and Helots.

Even a compromise solution between the two warring sides would be one more step forward for totalitarianism. All those countries which managed to escape Germany's grasp would be forced to adopt the very same forms of political organization to be adequately prepared for the continuation of hostilities.

But while Hitler's Germany has managed to chop down the smaller States one by one, this has forced increasingly powerful forces to join battle. The courageous fighting spirit of Great Britain, even at that most critical moment when it was left to face the enemy alone, had the effect that the Germans came up against the brave resistance of the Russian Army, and gave America the time it needed to mobilize its endless productive resources. This struggle against German imperialism is closely linked to the Chinese people's struggles against Japanese imperialism.

Huge masses of men and wealth are already drawn up against totalitarian powers whose strength has already reached its peak and can now only gradually consume itself. The forces that oppose them have, on the other hand, already survived the worst and their strength is increasing.

With every day that passes, the war the allies are fighting rekindles the yearning for freedom, even in those countries which were subjected to violence and who lost their way as result of the blow they received. It has even rekindled this yearning among the peoples in the Axis countries who realize they have been dragged down into a desperate situation, simply to satisfy their rulers' lust for power.

The slow process which led huge masses of men to be meekly shaped by the new regime, who adjusted to it and even contributed to its consolidation, has been halted and the reverse process has started. All the progressive forces, can be found in this huge wave, which is slowly gathering momentum: the most enlightened groups of the working classes who have not let themselves be swayed, either by terror or by flattery, from their ambition to achieve a better standard of living, the sharpest members of the intellectual classes, offended by the degradation to which intelligence is subjected, entrepreneurs who, wanting to undertake new initiatives, want to free themselves of the trappings of bureaucracy and national autarky, that bog down all their efforts, and, finally, all those who, with an innate sense of dignity, will not bend one inch when faced with the humiliation of servitude.

Today, the salvation of our civilization is entrusted to these forces.

II - Post-war tasks. European unity

Germany's defeat would not automatically lead to the reorganization of Europe in accordance with our ideal of civilization. In the brief, intense period of general crisis (when the States will lie broken, when the masses will be anxiously waiting for a new message, like molten matter, burning, and easily shaped into new moulds capable of accommodating the guidance of serious internationalist minded men), the most privileged classes in the old national systems will attempt, by underhand or violent methods, to dampen the wave of internationalist feelings and passions and will ostentatiously begin to reconstruct the old State institutions. Most probably, the British leaders, perhaps in agreement with the Americans, will try to push things in this direction, in order to restore balance-of-power politics, in the apparent immediate interests of their empires.

All the reactionary forces can feel the house is creaking around them and are now trying to save their skins: the conservative forces, the administrators of the major institutions of the nation States, the top-ranking officers in the armed forces including, where they still exist, the monarchies, the monopoly capitalist groups whose profits are linked to the fortunes of States, the big landowners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, whose parasitical income is only guaranteed in a stable, conservative society and, in their wake, the countless band of people who depend on them or who are simply blinded by their traditional power. If the house were to collapse, they would suddenly be deprived of all the privileges they have enjoyed up to now, and would be exposed to the assault of the progressive forces.

The Revolutionary Situation: old and new trends.

The fall of the totalitarian regimes will, in the feelings of entire populations, mean the coming of "freedom"; all restrictions will disappear and, automatically, very wide freedom of speech and assembly will reign supreme. It will be the triumph of democratic beliefs. These tendencies have countless shades and nuances, stretching from very conservative liberalism to socialism and anarchy. These beliefs place their trust in the "spontaneous generation" of events and institutions and the absolute goodness of drives originating among the grass roots. They do not want to force the hand of "history", or "the people", or "the proletariat", or whatever other name they give their God. They hope for the end of dictatorships, conceiving this as restoring the people's unsuppressible right to self-determination. Their crowning dream is a constituent assembly, elected by the broadest suffrage, which scrupulously respects the rights of the electors, who must decide upon the constitution they want. If the population is immature, the constitution will not be a good one, but to amend it will be possible only through constant efforts of persuasion. Democrats do not refrain from violence on principle but wish to use it only when the majority is convinced it is indispensable, little more, that is, than an almost superfluous "dot" over an "i". They are suitable leaders only in times of ordinary administration, when the overall population is convinced of the validity of the basic institutions and believe that any amendment should be restricted to relatively secondary matters. During revolutionary times, when institutions are not simply to be administered but created, democratic procedures fail miserably. The pitiful impotence of democrats in the Russian, German, Spanish revolutions are the three most recent examples. In these situations, once the old State apparatus had fallen away, along with its laws and its administration, popular assemblies and delegations immediately spring up in which all the progressive socialist forces converge and agitate, either hiding behind the ancient régime, or scorning it. The population does have some fundamental needs to satisfy, but it does not know precisely what it wants and what must be done. A thousand bells ring in its ears. With its millions of minds, it cannot orientate itself, and breaks up into a number of tendencies, currents and factions, all struggling with one another.

At the very moment when the greatest decisiveness and boldness is needed, democrats lose their way, not having the backing of spontaneous popular approval, but rather a gloomy tumult of passions. They think it their duty to form a consensus and they represent themselves as exhortatory preachers, where instead there is a need for leaders who know just what they want. They miss chances favorable to the consolidation of a new regime by attempting to make bodies, which need longer preparation and which are more suited to periods of relative tranquillity, work immediately. They give their adversaries the weapons they need to overthrow them. In their thousand tendencies, they do not represent a will for renewal, but vain and very confused ambitions found in minds that, by becoming paralyzed, actually prepare the terrain for the growth of the reaction. Democratic political methods are a dead weight during revolutionary crises.

As the democrats wear down their initial popularity as assertors of freedom by their endless polemic, and in the absence of any serious political and social revolution, the pre-totalitarian political institutions would inevitably be reconstituted, and the struggle would again develop along the lines of the old class opposition.

The principle whereby the class struggle is the condition to which all political problems are reduced, has become the fundamental guideline of factory workers in particular, and gave consistency to their politics for as long as the fundamental institutions were not questioned. But this approach becomes an instrument which isolates the proletariat, when the need to transform the entire social organization becomes paramount. The workers, educated in the class system, cannot see beyond the demands of their particular class or even their professional category and fail to concern themselves with how their interests link up with those of other social classes. Or they aspire to a unilateral dictatorship of the proletariat in order to achieve the utopistic collectivization of all the material means of production, indicated by centuries of propaganda as the panacea for all evils. This policy attracts no class other than the workers, who thus deprive the other progressive forces of their support, or alternatively leaves them at the mercy of the reaction which skilfully organizes them so as to break up the proletarian movement. Among the various proletarian tendencies, followers of class politics and collectivist ideals, the Communists have recognized the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient following to assure victory so that, unlike the other popular parties, they have turned themselves into a rigidly disciplined movement, exploiting the Russian myth in order to organize the workers, but which does not accept orders from them and uses them in all kinds of political manoeuvrings.

This attitude makes the Communists, during revolutionary crises, more efficient than the democrats. But their ability to maintain the workers as far removed from the other revolutionary forces as they can, by preaching that their "real" revolution is yet to come, turns them into a sectarian element that weakens the sum of the progressive forces at the decisive moment. Beside this, their absolute dependence upon the Russian State, which has repeatedly used them in pursuing its national policies, prevents this Party from undertaking political activity with any continuity. They always need to hide behind a Karoly, a Blum, a Negrin, only to fall headlong into ruin with the democratic puppets they used, since power is achieved and maintained, not simply through cunning but with the ability to respond fully and viably to the needs of modern society.

If tomorrow the struggle were to remain restricted within the traditional national boundaries, it would be very difficult to avoid the old contradictions. The nation States, in fact, have so deeply planned their respective

economies, that the main question would soon be which group of economic interests, i.e., which class, should be in control of the plan. The progressive front would be quickly shattered in the brawl between economic classes and categories. The most probable result would be that the reactionaries would benefit more than anyone else.

A real revolutionary movement must arise from among those who have been bold enough to criticize the old political approaches and it must be able to collaborate with democratic and with communist forces; and generally with all those who work for the break-up of totalitarianism, without, however, becoming ensnared by the political practices of any of these. The reactionary forces have capable men and officers who have been trained to command and who will fight tenaciously to preserve their supremacy. In moments of dire need, they know just how to disguise their true nature, saying they stand by freedom, peace, general well-being and the poorer classes. Already in the past we have seen how they wormed their way into popular movements, paralyzing, deflecting and altering them into precisely the opposite of what they are. They will certainly be the most dangerous force to be faced.

The point they will seek to exploit is the restoration of the nation State. Thus they will be able to latch on to what is, by far the most widespread of popular feelings, so deeply offended by recent events and so easily manipulated to reactionary ends: to patriotic feeling. In this way they can also hope to confound their adversaries' ideas more easily, since for the popular masses, the only political experience acquired to date has been within the national context. It is, therefore, fairly easy to channel them and their more shortsighted leaders towards the reconstruction of the States destroyed in the storm.

If this end is achieved, the forces of reaction will have won. In appearance, these States might well be democratic and socialist on a large scale. It would only be a question of time before power fell into the hands of the reactionaries. National jealousies would be revived, and State would again seek to fulfil its requirements in its armed strength. In a more or less brief space of time the most important duty would be to convert populations into armies. Generals would again command, the monopoly holders would again draw profits from autarchies, the bureaucracy would continue to swell, the priests would keep the masses docile. All the initial achievements would shrivel into nothing, faced with the need to prepare for war once more.

The question which must be resolved first, failing which progress is no more than mere appearance, is the definitive abolition of the division of Europe into national, sovereign States. The collapse of the majority of the States on the continent under the German steam-roller has already given the people of Europe a common destiny: either they will all submit to Hitler's dominion, or, after his fall, they will all enter a revolutionary crisis and will not find themselves separated by, and entrenched in, solid State structures. Feelings today are already far more disposed than they were in the past to accept a federal reorganization of Europe. The harsh experience of recent decades has opened the eyes even of those who refused to see, and has matured many circumstances favourable to our ideal.

All reasonable men recognize that it is impossible to maintain a balance of power among European States with militarist Germany enjoying equal conditions with other countries, nor can Germany be broken up into pieces or held on a chain once it is conquered. We have seen a demonstration that no country within Europe can stay on the sidelines while the others battle: declarations of neutrality and non-aggression pacts come to nought. The uselessness, even harmfulness, of organizations like the League of Nations has been demonstrated: they claimed to guarantee international law without a military force capable of imposing its decisions and respecting the absolute sovereignty of the member States. The principle of non intervention turned out to be absurd: every population was supposed to be left free to choose the despotic government it thought best, in other words virtually assuming that the constitution of each individual States was not a question of vital interest for all the other European nations. The multiple problems which poison international life on the continent have proved to be insoluble: tracing boundaries through areas inhabited by mixed populations, defence of alien minorities, seaports for landlocked countries, the Balkan Question, the Irish problem, and so on. All matters which would find easy solutions in the European Federation, just as corresponding problems, suffered by the small States which became part of a vaster national unity, lost their harshness as they were turned into problems of relationships between various provinces.

Moreover, the end of the sense of security inspired and created by an unassailable Great Britain, which led Britain to Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata., the dissolution of the French army and the disintegration of the French Republic itself at the first serious collision with the German forces (which, it is to be hoped, will have lessened the chauvinistic attitude of absolute Gallic superiority), and in particular the awareness of the risk of total enslavement are all circumstances that will favour the constitution of a federal regime, which will bring an end to the current anarchy. Furthermore, it is easier to find a basis of agreement for a European arrangement of colonial possessions since England has accepted the principle of India's independence and since France has potentially lost its entire empire in recognizing its defeat.

To all of this must be added the disappearance of some of the most important dynasties, and the fragility of the basis which sustains the ones that survive. It must be taken into account that these dynasties, by considering the various countries as their own traditional appanage, together with the powerful interests backing them, represented a serious obstacle to the rational organization of the United States of Europe, which can only be

based on the republican constitution of federated countries. And, once the horizon of the old Continent is superseded, and all the peoples who make up humanity are included in a single design, it will have to be recognized that the European Federation is the only conceivable guarantee ensuring that relationships with American and Asiatic peoples will work on the basis of peaceful co-operation, writing for a more distant future when the political unity of the entire world will become possible.

Therefore, the dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer coincides with the formal lines of more or less democracy, or the pursuit of more or less socialism, but the division falls along a very new and substantial line: those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as being the ancient one, the conquest of national political power, and who, although involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again, and those who see the main purpose as the creation of a solid international State, who will direct popular forces towards this goal, and who, even if they were to win national power, would use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity.

With propaganda and action, seeking to establish in every possible way the agreements and links among the individual movements which are certainly in the process of being formed in the various countries, the foundation must be built now for a movement that knows how to mobilize all forces for the birth of the new organism which will be the grandest creation, and the newest, that has occurred in Europe for centuries; in order to constitute a steady federal State, that will have at its disposal a European armed service instead of national armies; that will break decisively economic autarkies, the backbone of totalitarian regimes; that will have sufficient means to see that its deliberations for the maintenance of common order are executed in the individual federal states, while each State will retain the autonomy it needs for a plastic articulation and development of political life according to the particular characteristics of the various peoples.

If a sufficient number of men in the main European countries understand this, then victory will soon fall into their hands, since both circumstances and opinion will be favourable to their efforts. They will have before them parties and factions that have already been disqualified by the disastrous experience of the last twenty years. Since it will be the moment for new action, it will also be the moment for new men: the MOVEMENT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE.

III - Postwar duties. Reform of society

A free and united Europe is the necessary premise to the strengthening of modern civilization as regards which the totalitarian era is only a temporary setback. As soon as this era ends the historical process of struggle against social inequalities and privileges will be restored in full. All the old conservative institutions that have hindered this process will either have collapsed or will be teetering on the verge of collapse. The crisis in these institutions must be boldly and decisively exploited.

In order to respond to our needs, the European revolution must be socialist, i.e. its goal must be the emancipation of the working classes and the creation of more humane conditions for them. The guiding light in determining what steps need to be taken, however, cannot simply be the utterly doctrinaire principle whereby private ownership of the material means of production must in principle be abolished and only temporarily tolerated when dispensing with it entirely. Wholesale nationalization of the economy under State control was the first, utopian form taken by the working classes' concept of their freedom from the yoke of capitalism. But when this State control is achieved, it does not produce the desired results but leads to a regime where the entire population is subservient to a restricted class of bureaucrats who run the economy.

The truly fundamental principle of socialism, vis-à-vis which general collectivization was no more than a hurried and erroneous inference, is the principle which states that, far from dominating man, economic forces, like the forces of nature, should be subject to man, guided and controlled by him in the most rational way, so that the broadest strata of the population will not become their victims. The huge forces of progress that spring from individual interests, must not be extinguished by the grey dullness of routine. Otherwise, the same insoluble problem will arise: how to stimulate the spirit of initiative using salary differentials and other provisions of the same kind. The forces of progress must be extolled and extended, by giving them increasing opportunities for development and employment. At the same time, the tracks guiding these forces towards objectives of greatest benefit for all society must be strengthened and perfected.

Private property must be abolished, limited, corrected, or extended according to the circumstances and not according to any dogmatic principle. This guiding principle is a natural feature in the process of forming a European economic life freed from the nightmares of militarism or national bureaucratism. Rational solutions must replace irrational ones, even in the working class consciousness. With a view to indicating the content of this principle in greater detail, we emphasize the following points while stressing the need to assess the appropriateness of every point in the programme and means of achieving them in relationship to the indispensable premise of European unity:

a) Enterprises with a necessarily monopolistic activity, and in a position to exploit consumers, cannot be left in the hands of private ownership: for example, electricity companies or industries of vital interest to the community which require protective duties, subsidies, preferential orders etc. if they are to survive (the most visible example of this kind of industry so far in Italy is the steel industry); and enterprises which, owing to the amount of capital invested, the number of workers employed, and the significance of the sector involved can blackmail various State bodies, forcing them to adopt the policies most beneficial to themselves (for example, the mining industries, large banks, large weapons manufacturers). In this field, nationalization must certainly be introduced on a vast scale, without regard for acquired rights.

b) Private property and inheritance legislation in the past was so drawn up as to permit the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, privileged members of society. In a revolutionary crisis this wealth must be distributed in an egalitarian way thereby eliminating the parasitic classes and giving the workers the means of production they need to improve their economic standing and achieve greater independence. We are thus proposing an agrarian reform which will increase the number of owners enormously by giving land to those who actually farm it and an industrial reform which will extend workers' ownership in non-nationalized sectors, through co-operative adventures, employee profit-sharing, and so on.

c) The young need to be assisted with all the measures needed to reduce the gap between the starting positions in the struggle to survive to a minimum. In particular, State schools ought to provide a real chance for those who deserve it to continue their studies to the highest level, instead of restricting these opportunities to wealthy students. In each branch of study leading to training in different crafts and the various liberal and scientific professions, State schools should train the number of students which corresponds to the market requirements, so that average salaries will be roughly equal for all the professional categories, regardless of the differing rates of remuneration within each category according to individual skills.

d) The almost unlimited potential of modern technology to mass produce essential goods guarantees, with relatively low social costs, that everyone can have food, lodging, clothing and the minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity. Human solidarity towards those who fall in the economic struggle ought not, therefore, to be manifested with humiliating forms of charity that produce the very same evils they seek to remedy but ought to consist in a series of measures which unconditionally, and regardless of whether a person is able to work or not, guarantee a decent standard of living for all without lessening the stimulus to work and save. In this way, no-one will be forced any longer to accept enslaving work contracts because of their poverty.

e) Working class freedom can only be achieved when the conditions described have been fulfilled. The working classes must not be left to the mercy of the economic policies of monopolistic trade unions who simply apply the overpowering methods characteristic, above all, of great capital to the shopfloor. The workers must once again be free to choose their own trusted representatives when collectively establishing the conditions under which they will agree to work, and the State must give them the legal means to guarantee the proper implementation of the terms agreed to. But all monopolistic tendencies can be fought effectively once these social changes have been fulfilled.

These are the changes needed both to create very broad-based support around the new institutional system from a large number of citizens willing to defend its survival and to stamp freedom and a strong sense of social solidarity onto political life in a very marked way. Political freedom with these foundations will not just have a formal meaning but a real meaning for all since citizens will be independent, and will be sufficiently informed as to be able to exert continuous and effective control over the ruling class.

It would be superfluous to dwell at length on constitutional institutions, not knowing at this stage, or being able to foresee, the circumstances under which they will be drawn up and will have to operate. We can do no more than repeat what everyone knows regarding the need for representative bodies, the process of developing legislation, the independence of the courts (which will replace the present system) safeguarding impartial application of legislation and the freedom of the press and right of assembly guaranteeing informed public opinion and the possibility for all citizens to participate effectively in the State's life. Only two issues require further and deeper definition because of their particular significance for our country at this moment: the relationship between Church and State and the nature of political representation.

a) The Treaty which concluded the Vatican's alliance with Fascism in Italy must be abolished so that the purely lay character of the State can be asserted and so that the supremacy of the State in civil matters can be

unequivocally established. All religious faiths are to be equally respected, but the State must no longer have earmark funds for religion.

b) The house of cards that Fascism built with its corporativism will collapse together with the other aspects of the totalitarian State. There are those who believe that material for the new constitutional order can be salvaged from this wreck. We disagree. In totalitarian States, the corporative chambers are the crowning hoax of police control over the workers. Even if the corporative chambers were a sincere expression of the will of the various categories of producers, the representative bodies of the various professional categories could never be qualified to handle questions of general policy. In more specifically economic matters, they would become bodies for the accumulation of power and privilege among the categories with the strongest trade union representation. The unions will have broad collaborative functions with State bodies which are appointed to resolve problems directly involving these unions, but they should have absolutely no legislative power, since this would create a kind of feudal anarchy in the economic life of the country, leading to renewed political despotism. Many of those who were ingenuously attracted by the myth of corporativism, can and should be attracted by the job of renewing structures. But they must realize the absurdity of the solution they vaguely desire. Corporativism can only be concretely expressed in the form it was given by totalitarian States regimenting the workers beneath officials who monitored everything they did in the interests of the ruling class. The revolutionary party cannot be amateurishly improvised at the decisive moment, but must begin to be formed at least as regards its central political attitude, its upper echelons, the basic directives for action. It must not be a heterogeneous mass of tendencies, united merely negatively and temporarily, i.e. united by their anti-Fascist past and the mere expectation of the fall of the totalitarian regime, in which all and sundry are ready to go their own separate ways once this goal has been reached. The revolutionary party, on the contrary, knows that only at this stage will its real work begin. It must therefore be made up of men who agree on the main issues for the future.

Its methodical propaganda must penetrate everywhere there are people oppressed by the present regime. Taking as its starting point the problem which is the source of greatest suffering to individuals and classes, it must show how this problem is linked to other problems, and what the real solution will be. But from this gradually increasing circle of sympathizers, it must pick out and recruit into the organisation only those who have identified and accepted the European revolution as the main goal in their lives, who carry out the necessary work with strict discipline day in day out, carefully checking up on its continuous and effective safety, even in the most dangerously illegal situations. These recruits will be the solid network that will give consistency to the more ephemeral sphere of the sympathizers.

While overlooking no occasion or sector in which to spread its cause, it must be active first and foremost in those environments which are most significant as centres for the circulation of ideas and recruiting of combative men. It must be particularly active vis-à-vis the working class and intellectuals, the two social groups most sensitive, in the present situation, and most decisive for tomorrow's world. The first group is the one which least gave in to the totalitarian rod and which will be the quickest to reorganize its ranks. The intellectuals, particularly the younger intellectuals, are the group which feels most spiritually suffocated and disgusted with the current despotism. Bit by bit other social groups will gradually be drawn into the general movement.

Any movement which fails in its duty to ally these forces, is condemned to sterility. Because if the movement is made up of intellectuals alone, it will lack the strength to crush reactionary resistance, and it will distrust and be distrusted by the working class and even though inspired by democratic sentiment, when faced with difficulties it will be liable to shift its position, as regard the mobilisation of other classes, against the workers, and thus restoring Fascism. If, instead, the movement is backed only by the proletariat, it will be deprived of the clarity of thought which only intellectuals can give and which is so vital in identifying new paths and new duties: the movement would be a prisoner of the old class structure, looking on everyone as a potential enemy, and will slither towards the doctrinaire Communist solution.

During the revolutionary crisis, this movement will have the task of organizing and guiding progressive forces, using all the popular bodies which form spontaneously, incandescent melting pots in which the revolutionary masses are mixed, not for the creation of plebiscites, but rather waiting to be guided. It derives its vision and certainty of what must be done from the knowledge that it represents the deepest needs of modern society and not from any previous recognition by popular will, as yet inexistant. In this way it issues the basic guidelines of the new order, the first social discipline directed to the unformed masses. By this dictatorship of the revolutionary party a new State will be formed, and around this State new, genuine democracy will grow.

There are no grounds for fearing that such a revolutionary regime will develop into renewed despotism. This arises only when the tendency has been to shape a servile society. But if the revolutionary party continues resolutely from the very outset to create the conditions required for individual freedom whereby every citizen can really participate in the State's life, which will evolve, despite secondary political crises, towards increasing understanding and acceptance of the new order by all - hence towards an increasing possibility of working effectively and creating free political institutions.

The time has now come to get rid of these old cumbersome burdens and to be ready for whatever turns up, usually so different from what was expected, to get rid of the inept among the old and create new energies among the young. Today, in an effort to begin shaping the outlines of the future, those who have understood the reasons for the current crisis in European civilization, and who have therefore inherited the ideals of movements dedicated to raising the dignity humanity, which were shipwrecked either on their inability to understand the goal to be pursued or on the means by which to achieve it have begun to meet and seek each other.

The road to pursue is neither easy nor certain. But it must be followed and it will be!