

The European Union is at a crossroads: An Europe of different speeds? A study of the history of European unity

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“The United States of Europe does not
constitute a dream: they already exist within our
mentality, within our soul”.

Ortega y Gasset (21. 11. 1930)

Abstract

This study presents the history of European unity in the contemporary period and how the European federation project was being presented for the constitution of the United States of Europe. Then the way to a European Union with one voice, in the history of European integration, in a sovereignty shared by the States, not always uniting all the members, in the same integration, posing the question of a Europe at different speeds. At European crossroads, it is not always possible to reach an understanding among all nations, on how to achieve this European Union. It is here that the question arises of a Europe at various speeds, in which some states agree to further deepen, and others, or due to the lack of possibility of convergence, for economic reasons, as in the case of the Euro, are left out of certain integration policies. However, what we want to reflect on is that the process of European construction maintains its unity around its fundamental values, although policies can adjust to concrete situations, which do not invalidate their essential nature, ends and objectives, or that is, despite these different “speeds”, depending on the situation and the will of the states, the project itself always maintains the European Union as a whole.

Keywords: Europe, Union, Integration, History

Resumo

Este estudo apresenta a história da unidade europeia no período contemporâneo e como o projeto de federação europeia foi sendo apresentado para a constituição

dos Estados Unidos da Europa. Depois o caminho para uma União Europeia a uma só voz, na história da integração europeia, numa soberania partilhada pelos Estados, nem sempre unindo todos os membros, na mesma integração, pondo a questão de uma Europa a várias velocidades. Nas encruzilhadas europeias, nem sempre é possível chegar a um entendimento entre todas as nações, sobre a forma de concretizar essa União Europeia. É aqui que surge a questão de uma Europa a várias velocidades, em que alguns Estados acordam para um maior aprofundamento, e, outros, ou por falta de possibilidade de convergência, por razões económicas, como no caso do Euro, ficam de fora de certas políticas de integração. No entanto, o que queremos refletir, é que o processo de construção europeia mantém a sua unidade em torno dos seus valores fundamentais, embora as políticas possam ajustar-se a situações concretas, que não invalidam a sua natureza, fins e objetivos essenciais, ou seja, apesar dessas “velocidades” diferentes, consoante a situação e vontade dos estados, o projeto em si mesmo, mantém sempre a União Europeia como um todo.

Palavras-Chave: Europa, União, Integração, História

Europe has faced many crossroads throughout its history. In Contemporary History, even before the process of European construction, peace between nations was under many threats and it was difficult to find a European balance, often only achieved after the first war. Peace has always been the great objective for establishing European Unity and guaranteeing European hegemony vis-à-vis the rest of the world. It was always in times of war that nations became aware of their mortality, in the famous expression of Paul Valéry, “We civilizations now know that we are mortal”, uttered in 1919, in the tumult of the ashes of the First World War¹.

Before, in the previous century many figures were reflecting too, on the European situation, namely Andrade Corvo, in the work *Perigos*, where he analyzes the European conflicts and the need for understanding between nations. At these crossroads, as at present, whenever there is a European crisis, Europe rethinks its identity and the need to preserve peace through a union between states, to survive and also to rise as a whole in the face of threats external. For this reason, crises have been an opportunity for growth in European projects and a moment for deepening them.

It is evident that at European crossroads, it is not always possible to reach an understanding among all nations, on how to achieve this European Union. It is here that the question arises of a Europe at various speeds, in which some states agree to further deepen, and others, or due to the lack of possibility of convergence, for economic reasons, as in the case of the Euro, are left out of certain integration policies. However, what we want to reflect on is that the process of European construction maintains its unity around its fundamental values, although policies can adjust to concrete situations, which do not invalidate their essential nature, ends and objec-

1 VALÉRY, Paul, (1871-1945), *La Crise de l'esprit* (1919)

tives, that is, despite these different “speeds”, depending on the situation and the will of the states, the project itself always maintains the European Union as a whole.

The Rome Declaration signed by the 27 states in March 2017 (the United Kingdom no longer participated), aimed at a “united” Europe, but at “different rates and intensities”. But what does this mean? Is it possible to have a united Europe with countries that can decide whether or not they want to adopt certain policies? Are we moving to a different Europe, at two or several speeds? But, on the other hand, the declaration focuses very much on one word: “unity” and that “European unity started out as the dream of a few and became the hope of many. Then, Europe became one again”. The solution in question is to act together, at different rates and intensities when necessary, advancing all in the same direction, in line with the Treaties and keeping the door open to those who want to join later to ensure an indivisible and indivisible Union. How to reconcile this “union” with a Europe at two or more speeds is the question under analysis and reflection. A question that is always present in the history of Europe, even before any process of European integration in terms of integration.

Europe has always been an object of reflection for politicians, historians and intellectuals, motivated by political, economic or social issues. The issue of exacerbated European nationalisms has always endangered European peace and hegemony. Europe was in danger that needed to be taken care of. For this reason, Europeans sought to point out ways and find solutions to conflicts that seemed to have no end. And, in one way or another, they all found a solution to the need to unite Europe. It will be in this context that, in several voices, we hear the apology of the *United States of Europe*.

However, despite the recognition of the need for unity in Europe, the solution found was never that of European federalism, but only of sharing sovereignty in terms of the Union’s political issues, which always raise the problem of lack of consensus and a Europe with one voice. It is here that we are faced with a European crossroads, where the path often seems to point to a Europe at various speeds and at different rates. However, this solution would have nothing to do with the essential objectives that governed the creation of the European project, nor with the thinking of its founders. The future of the European Union depends on the return to the principles and values that were at its origin: this is the solution for the moments of crossroads that it had, and will have, ahead, and which demand a “de facto solidarity” in crises and that these be the moment of reflection on its past and future, and the opportunity for growth with one voice in the European Union.

European Dangers

João Andrade Corvo is a good example of reflection about the response to “European dangers”. In his work *Perigos* he makes a profound analysis of the European

situation, realizing that Europe is changing, foreseeing continued conflicts between the nations that want to dominate it. The will to power of the European potencies is so strong that there are imminent dangers for the smaller nations: “In the midst of universal danger, the danger for the small nations is immense. Where strength alone dominates, the weak are sacrificed to the brutal greed of the strong”.² What to do? He replies: “It is time for the truth to be heard, so that social dissolution does not quickly bring Europe to a dark time of fierce violence and barbarism.

Let all of us run to support law, social morals and truth. When the dangers are so many and so great, let us, the Portuguese, also look at our interests. Let us also proclaim our rights and show that we are aware of our duties and the strength to fulfill them”.³ At the time, it was necessary to resolve the war between France and Prussia, a conflict that shook the civilized world.

Europe will have to recover its past and to wish to retain its roots as a civilization. For this reason, it is necessary to avoid the creation of empires that absorb the small nations, without which this Europe will lose its identity. The European spirit cannot be mutilated. For this, it needs to move away from a policy of domination and to preserve the small states, all united to preserve the European greatness: “All the great nations, appreciating their interests with the moral elevation, that it is the duty of the strong to keep in their resolutions and in their acts, they must work effectively and efficiently for peace, and for giving Europe a political constitution based on law and justice, which ensures, as far as possible, the peace, prosperity and freedom of the peoples ”.⁴

No European state can remain indifferent to the war of others, all losing with the dangers that threaten the civilization of freedom and law. For this reason, the task of an England is great, and it will not be able to watch, indifferently, the ruin of France, which would lead to the ruin of Europe itself. The United States of America are not themselves indifferent: they embrace Europe from East to West, allying themselves with Russia and democracy. But the war continues. One empire threatens to succeed another empire. The glorious France of the past is crushed by powerful Germany. Threatened Turkey; Austria in danger, the whole of Europe seems to be falling apart. But there was still a way out: by freedom and democracy. João Andrade Corvo ends with a warning:

“Looking anxiously at the fall of empires, the disasters and anxieties of the peoples, the violence of passions, the blind fury of ambitions and the omnipotence of force, the world disbelieves the power of reason and the authority of law. The world frightened

2 CORVO, João Andrade - *Perigos*, p. 3.

3 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 4.

4 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 146-147.

measures the greatness of the dangers that surround it and threaten it. The moral foundations of society are deeply lost; and if human conscience does not wake up and does not oppose, eternally and freely, the eternal laws of justice to the abuses of force, civilization will have to go through a long and painful trial, before entering a new era of progress and freedom”.⁵

To solve all the “dangers”, would it be necessary to reach the United States of Europe? Or to the peace between nations, in a Europe at various speeds?

The United States of Europe

Sebastião de Magalhães Lima would be, among us, a singular figure. Firstly for defending European peace, for which the United States of Europe would greatly facilitate. And, above all, for spreading the work of Charles Lemonnier⁶, precisely entitled United States of Europe, in a Portuguese version of his authorship⁷. Writing in 1872, and presented in Portugal two years later, that work synthesizes well the central axis of the European problematic. The introductory pages start from finding evidence: no one wants war, but war exists. Everyone is guilty. Governments and the governed try to avoid it, on the one hand, but they contribute to maintaining it. Everyone writes about it. Politicians, philosophers, poets, economists and moralists try to find reasons for the war and solutions for peace. However, the war remains:

5 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 162.

6 Charles Lemmonier has been a great supporter of sansimonism since 1829, and for this reason he abandoned teaching philosophy at the College of Loreze, in order to preserve, according to himself, all freedom of thought. After obtaining a Doctor of Law degree in 1834, he stayed in Bordeaux for twelve years, continuing to write. He returns to Paris and participates in the founding of the *Revista Religiosa e Científica*, which shortly afterwards would be suspended, also continuing to spread Saint-Simon’s ideas. He was present at the Congress of peace and freedom, held in Geneva (1867) under the presidency of Garibaldi, becoming one of the main founders of the League of Peace and Freedom and editor of the *United States of Europe*, organ of the League. In addition to numerous political, legal, economic and philosophical writings, we must highlight the works *Determining the foundations of a federal organization in Europe* (1869) and *The Social Question* (1871), both important in the context of the Lausanne Congresses. The work *United States of Europe* (1874), appears after occupying the vice-presidency of the League.

7 LIMA, Sebastião de Magalhães - *Os Estados Unidos da Europa. A morte de dois inimigos: episódio da guerra franco-alemã*.

We were unable, as we wished, to compare the version of Magalhães Lima with the original, although we tried it at the National Library, in Lisbon and Paris. We only know that there was a periodical with the name of *Estados Unidos da Europa* (1867) precisely under the direction of Charles Lemonnier. However, we were able to ascertain that Sebastião Magalhães Lima’s “work” is not, in itself, a version of the *Estados Unidos da Europa* de Charles Lemonnier, but a translation. The original is entitled: *Les États-Unis d’Europe*, Paris, Place des Victoires, 1872. Despite the lack of originality, its disclosure in Portuguese is still interesting, as well as the possible contacts between both, as it seems to be evident that both authors knew each other well, a fact demonstrated even by the inclusion of unpublished pages of the second edition in another work, *O Livro da Paz*.

“At the time we write; the world still retreats in horror, due to the struggle between France and Germany. The two nations, whose agreement was to found peace and freedom in Europe, ignominiously revolved themselves in the blood of their children: one swollen of having achieved a shameful victory, the other not breathing anything but revenge”.⁸

The work begins with an analysis of the great plan of Henry IV, so called by Sully, for being the first attempt to create a European federation, of peoples and governments. It would be a Christian Republic, under the tutelage of the Pope, and there would be freedom of religion, commerce and inner independence. However, Lemonnier considers that Henry IV has forgotten the essential: universal peace would have to be based on the inviolability of the human person and not on interest. The abbot of Saint-Pierre’s project also did not serve Europe. It seemed even more fragile than the previous one because it was less favorable to freedom and justice. It proposes a confederation of all sovereign states, but disconnected from the idea of social evolution, and that geographic and political Europe does not change. If a simple treaty can unite European powers, it cannot, however, merge those nations. States are neither homogeneous nor supportive to the point of losing their historical, political and cultural identity. As such, they can come together for a common purpose, but not be merged. This is evident and this has been overlooked by the Abbot de Saint-Pierre. Lemonnier notes:

“The different powers are allied, it is true, they hire, they come together under a simple treaty, but they do not really merge into the same body, they do not form a new organization. We can see here a just position and not a real union. None of the powers are disarmed; none explicitly renounces the right to peace and war; above each and every one there is no stronger, independent power that can exercise effective and coercive action”.⁹

In conclusion, and according to Lemonnier, the project lacked homogeneity of interest and organization, the effective disarmament of each member of the confederation and the formation of a higher government that integrated finance and armies. However, the project recognizes the potential of establishing the foundations of the United States of Europe. It would be Kant’s turn. Living in a time of modernity, your ideas for Europe will also be new. According to Lemonnier, while the abbot of Saint-Pierre lived in an old world regulated by an old policy, Kant was the son of

8 *Idem*, p. 1.

9 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 7.

the revolution and, for this reason, he did not submit, like the previous author, to the weight of the theological and feudal tradition; he managed to combine the strength of his genius with modernity and make sense of the revolution. He understood well what the Enlightenment was like, how this exit from the minority, and would make this majority fertile:

“Kant alone had the strength of genius, as well as the living light of a right conscience: better than others, he understood and fertilized the idea of revolution. Kant witnessed the end of the century in which the abbot of Saint-Pierre had known only a weak and tenuous beginning. From the back of his Koenigsberg office, he saw the long phalanx of philosophers walk, whose path presented the surprising spectacle of a new world that was then rising”.¹⁰

Facing the new times, he knew how to find new solutions to the conflicts that insisted on continuing; the concern was to end the war, which would only be effective if it was based on something superior to the treaties themselves, which could be revoked at any moment. Thus, to international law, other reasons would have to be added that go beyond the coercive domain. Hence the relevance of the *Foundations of Metaphysics of Customs*: to show that in addition to the legislative reason there was a moral reason, more profound and, therefore, the foundation of that. For that philosopher, political ideas should be subordinated to moral ideas and that only in this way would peace, a *Perpetual Peace* be possible. In this way, universal and unwavering peace between peoples would be founded on justice. Preparing this theory, the pamphlet entitled *Philosophical attempt on a project of perpetual peace* appeared earlier. Perpetual, or even temporary, peace seemed to be late.

War seemed to be part of human nature. Peace treaties were precarious, as precarious justice was achieved. In order to unite peoples, it would be necessary to go beyond pure legality or the mere desire to imitate united nascent peoples, such as the United States of America or the Swiss Confederation. It was necessary to go further, that is, to descend to the deepest level, which consisted of finding moral foundations for peace. It was in human consciousness and not in history that the way would be found. The European federation could only be reached by morality. A universal moral translated into republican practice by the motto - Freedom, Equality, Fraternity. Living according to the principles of morals a federation of peoples would be possible, united by the same fundamentals, living for the same purpose. Thus, without abandoning the feelings of homeland and patriotism, they would feel, at the same time, united to all peoples in a cosmopolitan experience that, much, could

10 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 19.

contribute to true peace. A federation of peoples united by the same principles: this is the solution found by the moral philosopher.

To find a way out for the European crisis, let us remember Saint-Simon. The politician who also sought, in 1796, a Project of Perpetual Peace; the reorganization of European society; need and means of bringing together the different peoples of Europe in a single political body, guaranteeing their national independence. According to that author, the united Europe of medieval Christianity had been lost since Westphalia. From then on, wars continued and peace was precarious. For this reason,

“the only way to establish lasting peace in Europe is to bring peoples together into a single organization. (...) All European nations should be governed, each by a National Parliament, thus contributing to the formation of a general parliament, whose mission would be to decide on the common interests of all European society. In a word, Europe would have the best possible organization, if all the nations it contains, being governed, each by a parliament, recognized the supremacy of a general parliament, placed above all national governments, and invested with the power to judge their strife. Observing this formula, which is moreover very clear and precise, there would be nothing left for us to outline the constitution of a European Parliament”¹¹

Criticizing the hereditary principle of European royalty and defending the autonomy of different peoples, Lemonnier also had doubts about the feasibility of a European parliament. So I was looking for another solution for the establishment of a European federation.

A notable experience was the establishment of the *Peace Society* in England, similar to what happened in America. A peace founded on religious principles that could not, therefore, admit war. However, this organization proved not to work in times of war, as it did in 1855, between France, England and Russia. He continued his efforts, calling for a *Congress for Peace* during the Paris exhibition and for the publication of his communication agency *The Messenger of Peace*, in addition to other writings seeking to demonstrate the need for Peace in Europe. Other European congresses would all take place with the same purpose. The year 1867 would be decisive in terms of Projects for Peace. In Havre the *Union of Peace* would appear at the initiative of M. Santallier; In Paris, the international and permanent Peace League was formed and in Genoa, during one of these Congresses for Peace, the International League of Peace and Freedom was born. The first was largely due to one of the founders, Frederico Passy, who, at the same time, broadcast it in the newspaper *O Tempo*. Established on May 3 of that year, it continued the objectives of the

11 Saint-Simon, *Projecto de Paz Perpétua*, p. 24.

London Society, but, removing all social issues, it focused exclusively on defending peace. For that, names such as Miguel Chevalier, Arlés Dufour, Padre Jacinto, Martin Paschoud and Izidoro contributed a lot. Providing great services to Europe, however, it failed to realize that without constituting an international legal status and based on the freedom of peoples, it would make little progress in its objectives. Characterized by political neutrality, the League would attract many supporters, especially from the bourgeoisie, propagating the great principles of independence, justice and mutual respect of nations, advocating the arbitration of conflicts instead of violent measures of war. This movement would grow and become the *Society of Friends of Peace*.

To continue the idea of the United States of Europe, they would come out right after the first Peace Congress, two issues of what would become a regular periodical in favor of European unity¹². Its title could not be more explicit - *United States of Europe* - and was, in practice, the organ of the international League of peace and freedom, with the main objective of preparing the creation of the future United States of Europe.

Other league congresses were, however, taking place¹³. Proclaiming the dangers of standing armies, the need for social reforms based on freedom, the need for separation between Church and State, the desire to form a European republican federation and the recognition of women's human, economic, civil, social and political rights. Within the scope of the United States of Europe project, the third congress, in Lausanne (1869), under the presidency of Victor Hugo, should be highlighted, whose main purpose was to establish the foundations of a European federal organization.

The objective of the league would be peace, a peace that should go from the individual to the universal, a peace linked to the values of freedom, equality and fraternity; shared values in that European federation that the league dreamed of creating. These did not absorb the individual homelands, but would unite those homelands in a universal republic¹⁴.

12 The newspaper *United States of Europe* first in November and December 1867, in Berne, and later, from January 6, 1869, it would have a regular periodicity, leaving in that Swiss city every Sunday, written in two languages, French and German, under the direction of mr. Vogt. After a subsequent interruption of nine months, it would become a monthly bulletin, this time having the city of Genoa as its publication place, directed by Barni and written in French. It would have another interruption in October 1870, being resumed in 1872, this time with departure on Thursday. This newspaper could be subscribed to Rue Des Savoises, n. 35, in Genoa, for the annual amount of eight francs. Interestingly, in Portugal it could also be found or signed at Livraria Internacional, em Lisboa, Rua do Arsenal n.º 96.

13 The following should be mentioned: after the first, in Genoa from 9 to 12 September, followed by Berne from 22 to 26 September 1868; in Lausanne from 14 to 18 September; In Bale on 18 July 1870 and again in Lausanne from 25 to 29 September 1871. It should be noted that the fourth congress was scheduled for Zurich in September of that year, but because of the war it was not only anticipated, but also moved to Bale.

14 Within this spirit of universal brotherhood, Arnaud Goegg, one of the founders of the league, acted, going to ask the United States of America for help in building the United States of Europe ... (1872).

Finally, the last chapter of the work applauded by Magalhães Lima is about the “United States of Europe”. Idealized by Mazzini, proclaimed on the political scene by Victor Hugo, they were then explained and justified by Charles Lemonnier. Using the American example, it showed how all of its thirty-six states maintained their individuality even though brought together in one body - the federation. All were united by the federal bond that gave them identity. But they all lived according to their particular interests, although they had common interests defended by a general government. Transporting this federal model to Europe what would happen?

Here is the paradigmatic example of how it would be possible to form the *United States of Europe*. Like the Americans, each state would retain its identity, being only united by the federal bond that would unite them internally and externally. But each one, in addition to preserving their individuality, would also maintain their specific interests, putting only what was in the general interest in common. This was, moreover, the meaning of the recommended federalism, which, uniting, did not eliminate the sovereignty of its states. Charles Lemonnier explains well how the United States of Europe could follow the American model:

“Let us now transport thought, in view, as you can see, of the numerous changes required by the differences in places, customs and traditions, let us transport the political constitution from America to Europe, the outline of which we have just outlined. Instead of the particular States, whose union forms the United States of America, let us think of the main nations of Europe - France, Germany, Italy, England, Spain, Austria, Greece, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Portugal; - suppose that these nations or some of them, such as Italy, France, Switzerland, Belgium, England and Portugal establish a federation similar to the American federation. Suppose further that each of these nations, graduating its full autonomy, its independence, its government, its interior administration, consents to form a general European government, which would be entrusted with the administration of the general and common interests of the federation, of such that, instead of the United States of America, we have the United States of Europe. We will talk about the difficulty of execution later. For now, we should all understand the morality and greatness of such enterprise”.¹⁵

The United States of Europe was presented as a difficult project to carry out. However, his model was taken to its ultimate consequences: a single army, freedom of trade, a true economic, social and political union. Everyone would win. Financial resources would be saved and nations would be united by common interests. Naturally,

15 *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 37-38.

peace would be a result of that union, and thus the federated nations would gain in the happiness and wealth of their people. However, many obstacles still remain. The European federation would encounter obstacles linked to dynastic, clerical interests, popular ignorance and national pride. The former, subjecting the people to divine law, made them dependent on a power that did not serve the interests of the peoples; contrary to modern law in which only conscience should be sovereign and expressed its will through universal suffrage, in the old right - divine right - sovereignty was real or imperial. Thus, he considered the heredity of power contrary to the interests of the peoples that could only be served by a republican government. But this historical-political path would take a long time and, consequently, the United States of Europe would also be distant.¹⁶

However, there was another obstacle to the achievement of the *United States of Europe*: national pride. The establishment of the European federation encountered this problem, which was confused with an illusory patriotism. This patriotic fanaticism would end up preventing the European federation in the name of a love for the country, not realizing that the federation sought to unite the interests of its people, preventing the greatest danger - war. A European government would make its people much more united in causes and cautious in disunity, aware that they would cause damage to all those involved in the European federation. An economy of scale, a single court, common social purposes with reduced costs, would be some of the immediate benefits of the United States of Europe. Finally, in conclusion, such a political undertaking was a utopia but, for that very reason, capable of becoming a reality:

“And at what distance, the reader will say, are we in this sublime utopia?”

We can boldly assert that we are as far away as we want. It is up to each of us to transform utopia into reality. Let us not leave the neighbor to care. We understand your need at least. If we have explained ourselves well, the reader must see that the principle on which the foundation of the United States of Europe is based is the same principle as the republic, which is nothing more than the application of morals.

Without the teaching of the United States of Europe, there can be no education. without making this principle germinate in all hearts, justice is impossible, not only for our workers, but for our teachers, as well as for our servants. The United States of Europe is the continuation of the revolution, not the French revolution but the Euro-

16 Charles Lemonnier is, like Magalhães Lima, a staunch Republican. Therefore, it is not surprising that the idealization that he makes of the United States of Europe can only be associated with the combination of republican states. For this reason, and referring, for example, to the English case, he hopes that the still European monarchies will become republics so that they can later be constituted into a European federation. For this reason, he is aware of the delay of this project in becoming a reality although he eventually admits that a European union between republican and monarchic nations will be possible, but always in the hope of change ...

pean one from 1789 to 1791. Nothing will be done in the future that is not first preceded by the United States of Europe. The freedom, the fraternity, the emancipation of women, etc. depend on them. etc. Working for ignorance, tyranny, dynasties, servitude, error, we work against them. They shine in the future, beside the light. Depart from darkness and walk uprightly”.¹⁷

Enlightening words that were enough by themselves and make us realize that, after all, the *United States of Europe* might not be a utopia. Only from the rhetorical point of view did the author consider them so. In practice, I already saw them started in European revolutions and, little by little, built on small, but important, concrete achievements. Without canceling nationalities or patriotisms, the European federation is building its foundations. At the base was universal suffrage. The European federation could start when only two republican nations came together. That would be the principle of the United States of Europe. It seemed that the project by Charles Lemonnier, defended and presented by Sebastião de Magalhães Lima was concluded. However, other pages would also follow, brought first by Portugal to Portugal. Interestingly, we went to find them in one of his works *The Book of Peace*¹⁸ precisely at its end. A hasty reading would not even notice this last chapter entitled “The United States of Europe”, as it appears somewhat disconnected from the rest of the work. But its pages are there and say they are unpublished in the second edition of that French author’s work. This gives us the conviction of the importance attributed by Magalhães Lima to that “utopia” on the one hand, and, on the other, how he communicated with its author, to the point of being able to present the latest “news” of the project.

Instead of the previous follow-up, there was some originality in Portuguese. Two quotes appear at the beginning, the first by Magalhães Lima: “*E pluribus in unum* (many in one). This was the noble currency of the United States of America and this will be the formula of the future States of Europe”.¹⁹ Pierre Leroux’s second: “Humanity existed virtually before the nations and will exist after them; that is why the purpose of nations is to constitute it”.²⁰

Lemonnier’s pages present the essential conditions for the constitution of a federation, referring to and appreciating the projects of Lorimer and Bluntschli. The first condition for forming a federation would be the will of the governments of nations and their citizens. Only free membership can make it solid and long-lasting. Then harmonize the constitutions that would provide the appropriate federal bond between nations, always in the perspective that it was possible to improve them to

17 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 47.

18 LIMA, Sebastião de Magalhães - *O Livro da Paz*.

19 *Idem ibidem*, p. 219.

20 *Ibidem*.

better adapt to their peoples. Lorimer seemed to follow, without knowing, the ideas of Saint-Simon and the International League of Peace and Freedom. *It presents a treaty in which all states will be invited to take part.* By reducing the national forces of each state, an international government would be established. For his part, Bluntschli admitted a European constitution that integrated the rights of peoples and that states could develop freely. He did not agree with Lorimer on the idea that there is a European people, similar to the American or the Swiss. True political union would not be possible in peoples who wished, above all, to assert their nationality. Criticizing this position, Charles Lemonnier considered that it was in the republic and for the republic that the peoples came together and could form a European federation. The federated republics are the first step in the constitution of the United States of Europe and a united European people.

But it was not only for the work *United States of Europe* that Sebastião Magalhães Lima would divulge that idea. European unity running through all of his work, almost always explicitly, but sometimes in a hidden way, which only the connection between ideas allows to unveil. This absent presence was also a doctrinal way of “preaching” a political gospel that often uses other expressions to mean the same, as is the case of the aforementioned work *O Livro da Paz*.

That book, not at all peaceful in the political debate, came to disclose a basic republican ideology, whose doctrinal principles were based on the ideas of Peace and Freedom, which ultimately led to these *United States of Europe*. The title itself is illuminating, as is the preface signed by Émile Arnaud, president of the League of Peace and Freedom, which reveals the close relations between these intellectuals. Sebastião de Magalhães Lima was aware of the problem in question and participated in it. Proof of this are also the letters received from writers and publicists of the time, which he presents in the referred work. This was, moreover, dedicated “to the most sacrificial memory of Charles Lemonnier, the great and devoted friend of peace and justice, intemperate apostle of the federation and glorious evangelist of the *United States of Europe*”.²¹

The book of Peace, offered, dedicated and consecrated to Charles Lemonnier, is, in our view, the result of that author’s reading and translation of the United States of Europe. It would be, now, the Portuguese version of the French work, which is to be disseminated, but also to adapt to the national case. Its preface proves this thesis; signed by Émile Arnaud who seems to act as a bridge between the two nations, uniting them for the ideal and for men who wish to see it real. He recognized that Sebastião de Magalhães Lima had used the work of Charles Lemonnier as a political catechism, disseminating it not only in Portugal but in Spain, still as a university

21 *Idem, ibidem*, dedicatória, p. 5.

student. Thus, he wished to put into practice the ideal of the United States of Europe by Carlo Cattaneo and the United Peoples of Europe by Victor Hugo, a first stadium of the United Peoples of Humanity. A policy of peace:

“this is the policy of Emanuel Kant, Victor Hugo, Charles Lemonnier, Aurélio Saffi, Luís Ruchonten, and this is also the policy of Pi y Margall, Salmeron, Zorrilla, Teófilo Braga and Magalhães Lima. We would like it to be the same for our readers, and for that very reason and thanks to them - that of the whole of Europe!”²²

In the *Episodes of My Life*, this politician went further and even aspired to a kind of United States of the World, a world that needed to come together to serve humanity, in a universal fraternity: “The continents fraternize. Europe is America, and America is Europe. The Pan-Lusitanism! Confederation between like-minded peoples will be a logical result of evolution that is already on the horizon as the only rational solution that events will impose.”²³ According to the motto “Peace for freedom and for the love of justice”, the United States of Europe would be built, that is, the federative principle would be put into practice.

The Post-World War I European Crossroads

It was during the period between the two world wars that the old dream of European unity gained meaning and opportunity. The whole history of Europe was borne in mind the idea of the unity of Europe, contrasting with its geographical irregularity. The common historical foundations, convert the old continent into that already advocated in Homer, as «Europé» - the one who sees in the distance - and, therefore, visualizes a community of culture and civilization. In the absence of geographical unity, there is thus a spiritual unity that characterizes it, despite the diversity of its peoples. The war of 1914-1918 would be so tragic for Europe, that thinkers like Dante or Victor Hugo would once again be remembered, who in their genius dreamed and transmitted the idea of European unity, at the limit of this «Extraordinary Nation» that I would even call it the United States of Europe.

The European crisis was a fact. To this evident material crisis there was another one, no less relevant, as Paul Valéry recalled: «La Crise de l’esprit»: “Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles”.²⁴ Coudenhove-Kalergi, calling for the union of the peoples of Europe, and, interestingly, received

22 ARNAUD, Emile - *Preface to the work of Sebastião de Magalhães Lima*, p. 9-10.

23 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 29.

24 VALÉRY, Paul - *Variété I*. Paris: Gallimard, 2002, p. 13.

with much more enthusiasm than today his “Message”, in which he conveyed the need for real European unity, through the institution of a “Union Paneuropeia ‘, develops this idea in a work published in the following year (1923), entitled PANEUROPA, dedicated to the youth of Europe, showing, once again, the perception that European unity could only result if it was the will of its citizens. He said that “The great historical movements were first utopias only later realities”. Are utopias the engine of History?

A book that would inspire Men of State and would be highly praised by figures such as Aristides Briand, French Minister for Foreign Affairs and Honorary President of the Pan-European Union. In this regard, we can read in the preface his words: “I am deeply sympathetic to the efforts of a union that aims to awaken in the different nations of Europe, the awareness of their historical, intellectual and economic solidarity, and to orient it towards a path of closer approximation, guarantee of peaceful development²⁵”. Amery in the same sense declared that the solution of the political and economic problems of the world could only be obtained through the positive integration of historical and geographical boundaries. Always the conviction that a new crisis could only be avoided «by creating a United Empire», the result of a common history and culture.

The Post-World War II European Crossroads

After the Second World War, a new crisis, even bigger than the first, happened, to the point of being described by María Zambrano as “La Agonia de Europa”.²⁶ Europe’s decline has come to show all the hidden resentments in victorious history. In order for Europe to rebuild itself, it was necessary to recover its identity. Jean Monnet’s *Memories* also remain a current work, to view crises as an opportunity to advance the European project. Monnet was aware that he was not just bringing states together and the need to unite men from common interests. As he claimed, nothing was possible without men, nothing was lasting without institutions. The economy appeared as the great engine and today the weight of this economy in the European project has to be rethought, otherwise it will become a super market of national interests and collapse.

It is astonishing how Winston Churchill in his famous speech at the University of Zurich, delivered on 19 September 1946, was a milestone in relaunching the idea of European unity, and maintaining its relevance:

“I am going to say something that will surprise you. The first step towards the recreation of the European family has to go through a partnership between France

25 KALERGI, Coudenhove, PANEUROPA, Madrid : M. Aguilar, 1928, p.3.

26 ZAMBRANO, María - *Agonia de Europa*.

and Germany. Only in this way will France be able to regain its customary leadership in Europe. Europe cannot be reborn without a spiritually large France and a spiritually large Germany. The structure of the United States of Europe, to materialize, will make the material strength of a single state less important. The first step is to create a Council of Europe”.²⁷

Words that sound like a prophecy for our day. To be successful, Jean Monnet chose to write, in April 1950, a document in which he prepared the essentials of the May Declaration. It was clear to Jean Monnet that governments did not want any sovereignty surrenders and that it was illusory to pretend to create complete European integration. Thus, the only solution would be to create an institutional building in a slow but concerted manner, only in specific areas, which would not jeopardize major transfers of sovereignty. An outdated crisis?

Europe would not be built all at once, it would be done through “concrete achievements”, creating, first of all, “de facto solidarity”. Europe was on its way with Schuman’s revolutionary proposals, based on the fundamental principle of delegation of sovereignty in a limited but decisive domain. Cooperation between nations, however important, did not solve anything. It was necessary to merge the interests of the European peoples and not merely to maintain the balance between these interests. It was the beginning of a long and agglutinating process of uniting European men, creating institutions that served their common interests. The “United States of Europe” had already started. The principle would always be the same, whether between two, six or twenty-seven nations.

From Nice to Lisbon

It is in moments of European stalemate that the expression of an Unidentified Political Object (OPNI) takes on meaning, to designate the political nature of the European Union. In this regard, mention is made of one of these moments, at a meeting of the European Council, to discuss the Treaty of Lisbon, on 11 and 12 December 2008, when a roadmap is emerging to come out of the impasse. But is it possible to invent unity in diversity?

For Eduardo Lourenço “no Treaty solves Europe’s problems, it can help, but it does not. And now, with this crisis, we are in a waiting state”. This thinker defends that, “the problem is not rooted in the Treaty of Lisbon, but when the first leads, from France and Holland. With that, other European countries began to meditate

27 Churchill’s speech on September 19, Zurich, 1946.

and found that they could not be so enthusiastic either. The bad time was the Treaty of Nice, things did not go well. But people forget that national traditions are very strong”.²⁸ European political weaknesses are as strong as are their geographical vagueness, which makes their history difficult to write in a sense of unity. Eduardo Lourenço considers that “If *Europe* ever existed, it was during the Roman Empire. Afterwards, there was a so-called political and theological entity, called Christianity and with the first distances two sides emerged.²⁹ The Orthodox East and the Roman West. And these are the two visions to which the North and the South of Europe were added later”.³⁰ However, in addition to the genuine lack of European unity, political pragmatism has worked, especially in times of crisis: “paradoxically, this economic crisis was the first positive sign at this stage in which we are marking a step. Europe, in response to a crisis coming from outside, from America, has surprisingly reacted with a certain coherence and a certain organicity. And this is a sign that seems to me to be one of the best in recent years.³¹ Despite these reactions caused by the events, the history of the European Union has shown that “in political terms there is no head for Europe because there is no European Union in that sense”.³²

But, after all, “What is Europe? Nothing”.³³ The perplexity of Eduardo Lourenço’s response reveals the essence of the European problem: his lack of identity. Interestingly, this lack of identity is resolved when we find ourselves outside Europe. The essayist says:

“I am very European, like all of us. We all are, more than we know, but only when we find ourselves facing, or in the middle, of a culture that is not European. This non - identity, this virtual identity, made up only of denials, is a privilege, an extraordinary one, a promise of the future. It means that other peoples will be able to share our non - identity: all those who do not believe in the selfish claim of themselves, which is the virus of history.

Non - identity is fantastic. It is an opening place. That is why I do not envy people so much that they do not know they are. We do not know what we are and that is the true identity of man, said Socrates. The essence of Christianity does not contradict this: the supreme being is neither physical nor tangible. But if God is neither physical nor tangible, but an area of infinite freedom, it cannot be used as an excuse to exercise violence against others”.³⁴

28 LOURENÇO, Eduardo, LOURENÇO, Eduardo - “O que é a Europa? Nada”. *Courrier International*. N° 75. p. 14,.

29 *Idem, Ibidem.*

30 *Idem, Ibidem,*

31 *Idem, Ibidem.*

32 *Idem, Ibidem.*

33 *Idem, Ibidem*

34 *Idem, ibidem.*

In view of the evidence that we are European, especially if we are outside Europe, or when our “common European home” is threatened, the History of Europe is taking place between idealized projects and achievements, mainly due to the need to respond to events that they demand, above all, to safeguard peace, and to find a “European spirit” in past history, capable of supporting the European present and future. Just as the European continent can be easily seen from Asia or America, so the history of Europe has shown an internal unity whenever threatened from the outside. Eduardo Lourenço remembers this, albeit with limitations, which show the absence of a single voice that represents Europe before the world:

“Europe cannot give an effective answer to the immediate problems of the world, because, even if it believes it to be such, it is not the recreation of the Roman Empire. Europe is always revisiting Rome. This was the paradigm that no nation has succeeded in imitating. And it is the matrix of the European Union, however, the best Roman films continue to be made in Hollywood, which shows that Europe does not believe in the threat of Islam. We were Christ’s militia in the Counter-Reformation, we dreamed we were the Quixotes of the world when we went to the East and America, we invented the nation. We are now nothing more than a set of dissatisfied and contradictory nations, heirs to a wild and violent past, forged in a permanent civil war. What is Europe? Nothing”.³⁵

Despite the difficulties of writing a History of Europe, which shows an intrinsic unity in the European project, the ideal that has driven European construction continues to make sense. The seventy years of European construction have shown that the small steps method has worked, despite the stalemate caused, precisely, by trying to overcome the economic dimension that has served as the engine for the history of this European integration community. The greatest difficulties have arisen whenever thinking about the political deepening of the union, which is particularly sensitive when the Constitution is pronounced. The European Constitution would have a happier ending in Lisbon, as it appears that a Treaty continued the normal course of its history.

However, many European initiatives continue to show that the Europeanist ideals of the twenties of the twentieth century are still waiting for their realization. The “United States of Europe” is not yet visible, but the recent history of the European Union shows the awareness of deepening the European project.

We continue to question European fate. Old Europe continues to look to its enigmatic future. Not content with his past, it continues to dream of his return to

35 *Idem, Ibidem.*

the hegemonic role in the world, or, of being a kind of super-Europe that feeds the European imagination. Often on the brink, Europe continues its march, finding “in-extremis” the possible solution for the life of an integration project. Many moments show the disintegration of a more ambitious project. The Europe of civilization and culture is far from the calculations of European politicians. The European dream is yet to come true. Far from its realization, it seems that Europe has gone in the opposite direction of that cultural Europe. Economic Europe is easier to achieve and has shown its success story, fleeing the madness of Europe - an idea that, it seems, a past without a future: an Europe without the strength to dream or (re) remember that Roman Empire that is far away to achieve.

Europe needs to re-exist, to be born from the utopia yet to be realized. Europe’s view of itself is the moment to exist and assume its destiny. An Europe that is a leading actor in world history and politics. Finally, an Europe that returns to its universalizing and civilizing vocation.

The Rome Declaration and the relaunch of the European project

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the treaties of Rome, on March 25, 2017, the heads of state and government of the European Union met in Rome, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. It was a moment to reflect on the state of the Union and to rethink the future of the European integration process and the question of a Europe at various speeds was considered. President Donald Tusk in this regard reminded the founders of this project and that it would not be in his mind, a Europe at various speeds. At the Campidoglio ceremony, he said: “At that time, our predecessors did not speak at various speeds or imagine any way out - despite all the tragic circumstances of recent history, they put all their faith in the unity of Europe”.³⁶

This unity in Europe, as we will see below, has always been a goal of the whole process of European integration, which includes a unity of states and a unity of their peoples that, at crucial moments like this, millions of people do not cease to manifest themselves in support from the European Union. This is the meaning we have to consider when we speak of “Union”: in order to exist a true union, there must be a common supranational interest, far beyond a super economic market. And it is this “Union” that has sustained Europe’s past and fuels its future. This is the meaning of Tusk’s words when he says that “The European Union is not syn-

³⁶ *A Declaração de Roma. Declaração dos 27 Estados-Membros e do Conselho Europeu, do Parlamento Europeu e da Comissão Europeia.* In www.consilium.europa.eu/pt/meetings/european-council/2017/03/25.

onymous with slogans, nor with procedures, nor with regulations. Our Union is a guarantee that freedom, dignity, democracy and independence are no longer just dreams, but our daily reality ”.³⁷ In fact, European unity started out as the dream of the few and became the hope of many. And here we have come to this union that is the strength of hundreds of millions who, across Europe, reap the benefits of living in an enlarged Union that can overcome all disagreements and focus on the common interest of all. In the Rome Agenda, there was a commitment to work for a safe and secure Europe; a prosperous and sustainable Europe; a social Europe and a stronger Europe at world level. The motto of Donald Tusk remained in memory: “Europe as a political entity will be united, or it will not be. Only a united Europe can be sovereign over the rest of the world ”.³⁸ For him, World War II is not an abstraction, because his hometown of Gdansk, built for hundreds of years by Poles and Germans, Dutch, Jews, Scots and French, in March 1945, was reduced to ashes, destroyed by Hitler and Stalin, he was 8 years old. The Fusion Treaty lived, when the Community established a Single Council and a Commission and also the first elections to the European Parliament. The West was the bulwark of a free and unifying Europe, a Europe of dignity, democracy, fundamental values, unity and not Europe at two speeds, lived behind the iron curtain; the founders never spoke of this Europe at different rates, but of a united and cohesive Europe, sailing through waters never sailed before. So he asks now:

“Tell me then, why should we lose confidence in the goal of the unit? Just because this is already our reality? Or because we are fed up and tired? Europe as a political entity will be united, or it will not be. Only a united Europe can be a sovereign Europe in relation to the rest of the world. And only a sovereign Europe guarantees the independence of its nations, guarantees freedom for its citizens. Europe’s unity is not a bureaucratic model. It is a set of common values and democratic norms. It is not enough today to appeal to unity and to protest against the various speeds. It is much more important that we all respect our common rules, such as human rights and civil liberties, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, balance of powers and the rule of law. This is the true basis of our unity ”.³⁹

The Union after Rome must be, more than ever, a Union that shares the same principles, a Union of External Sovereignty, a Union of Political Unity. This is the legacy of the founders of European integration 60 years ago. This Declaration went

37 *Idem, Ibidem.*

38 *Idem, Ibidem.*

39 Speech by President Donald Tusk at the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. In www.consilium.europa.eu/pt/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/tusk-ceremony-rome-speech.

in the right direction, pointing to “different rhythms and intensities”, but a common European construction. At this crossroads, it became clear that the European priority cannot be “more Europe” or greater integration, in the sense of “ever-closer union”, with areas of integration and others of cooperation, in concentric circles, of different integration, where in a at the central level are the current 19 members of the euro, at a second level, the remaining members who have not joined the euro, allowing intermediate levels for those who do not want to adopt greater integration or the move to the central level, who meet the requirements that serve as the basis for the common currency. Another level would be openness to countries that, not wanting to be part of the European Union, want to participate in the Single Market, accepting its rules and the jurisdiction of the European Court: Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. And at a fourth level, they would be those countries with a simple free trade agreement with the European Union, in forms of collaboration in the areas of defense and security, which could include the United Kingdom, Turkey, the western Balkan countries and in the near future, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia.

What European project for today?

At present, many continue to think about Europe and reflect on the European project, always as an unfinished work, and, for some, it is no longer a project. It is suffering from a crisis, because the leaders are not believed, an ideal and an ideology are lacking to drive and guide action. As for achievements, we have lived in a patchwork and resigned ourselves to speeches of vain rhetoric, to bewildered initiatives, to measures that only serve the interests of some. There is a lot of talk about refounding Europe, but without the effective participation of citizens. Europe has not been carrying out its real project, either internally or internationally. On the other hand, their own errors of institutionalization and refoundation, make many sing a Requiem for Europe.

What have we done and what are we going to do after this Pandemic? The answer can only be to return to the original project for Europe of its founders:

“Europe must conceive a soul. Europe must become a Guide for Humanity again. Europe is not against anyone. United Europe is a symbol of the universal solidarity of the future. Before Europe becomes a military alliance or an economic unity, it will have to be a cultural unity in the fullest sense of the word. The unity of Europe will not be achieved, neither solely nor mainly, through European institutions; its creation will follow the evolution of spirits”.⁴⁰

40 SCHUMAN, Robert - *Pour L'Europe*, p.53.

It is urgent to return to this Europe. Europe's current challenges in responding to the Pandemic are the European Union's great ordeal. First, it looked like an out of tune concert, with controversial statements by the Dutch Finance Minister. Wopke Hoekstra ruler who imposed more blockages on the claims of Italy and other countries of the South (such as Portugal and Spain), proving that the mutualisation of debt between EU countries through the "Coronabonds", presented as the solution to the economic crisis derived from the Coronavirus, it was not possible. On 9 April, the Eurogroup was finally able to reach agreement on a loan package of more than € 500 billion to face the Covid-19 pandemic.

Then, it is worth mentioning the German Federal Constitutional Court's Agreement of 5 May, violating European Union law and its relations with the EU Court of Justice in various ways, which brought to the debate issues of the greatest importance on integration European Union and its relations with the Constitutions of the Member States. The participation of a State in the European Union implies limitations on its sovereignty. Since the Schuman Plan in 1950, it has become clear that there would be supranational power for states that limits their sovereignty. Much has been discussed about the so-called Unidentified Political Object, an expression of Jacques Delors for the EU. This remains a problem for the Union that is far from the prophetic United States of Europe. However, it was an opportunity to reveal the exemplary attitudes of the President of the Commission and the German Chancellor, and to move forward in taking favorable positions for the European project.

And we come to the speech by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, at the European Parliament's 27th May plenary session on the European Union Recovery Package, the point of arrival for a path of months of negotiations. It is a historic landmark and a sign of life for the European Union. It is the return of the Franco-German engine and reflects above all a profound change in the German political sphere. Macron and Merkel's proposal on Europe's economic recovery from the pandemic takes up the Franco-German axis, first with De Gaulle and Adenauer, then between Kohl and Mitterrand and now with Merkel and Macron. The Franco-German axis is still alive and Europe owes it a lot. The Corona aid plan (€ 500 billion) proposed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French Head of State Emmanuel Macron is a joint effort for European cohesion.

The European debate has lived through many fallacies that have become true and have forgotten the essentials of the European project. We have always heard of the European crisis and it was from these critical moments that Europe was rebuilding itself, either economically, from the Marshall Plan, or politically from the Winston Churchill Discourse. Europe's current challenges, in order to react to the Pandemic, are challenges of a health and economic crisis, never before experienced and for which quick and firm solutions are needed that show the real virtuality of the European

project. It is now proof that the Union exists and that it has learned the lessons of the past. It took a joint action of the 27 states, for a common problem. There could be no better barometer to measure the vitality of the European project and how to reconcile the will of the 27 States for the common good of the Union. The watchword is “Solidarity”. European Values are once again at the center of European construction and the future is one of hope. It has been proven that the European Union cannot continue to live on economic interests, underpinned by legal treaties. Is very little. We need to return to the roots of European construction, to its foundations. We are facing the greatest test of the European Union, to carry out Jean Monnet’s preview: “The roots of the Community are now strong and extend on European soil. They survived the bad seasons and can withstand seasons of the same kind”.⁴¹

In the 21st century, we continue to talk about a world crisis, and we feel the “foggy night” that Edgar Morin speaks of: “The world is in the night and in the fog, which also cover Europe. We have already said: we do not know if the subjugated half Europe will be freed, if the free half Europe will be subjugated, if Europe will finally be marginalized, vassalized, helvetized, hellenized, atomized”.⁴² Everything is uncertain, and all plans can fail. The crisis is, after all, a sign of life. Always in the uncertainty of the future, but in the conviction that “a new metamorphosis of Europe has begun”. This metamorphosis of Europe is caused by the crisis that generates a new Europe. We never know that Europe is going to be born, but we know that a change is underway. Europe has lived and survived several crises. Is not the crisis the engine for European construction? “No one is able to say today what form Europe will take in the future, as the change that will result from the change is unpredictable. Tomorrow is another day ... The difficulties of each day are enough”.⁴³

Finally, it is worth mentioning the European Council from 17 to 21 July 2020, which turned out to be a success, in the words of the President of the European Commission, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, in a joint communication with Charles Michel, President of the European Council, after the extraordinary meeting of the European Council. It is worth highlighting Angela Merkel’s fundamental role in the four-day negotiations and how she managed to revitalize Europe and show her ability to act and the validity of her project:

“A common criticism of Europe is that our reactions are too weak, too slow. This proves the opposite. At the end of April, the European Council instructed us to draw up a recovery package. Today, just two months later, we have the NextGenerationEU instrument, which has the approval of the European Council.

41 MONNET, Jean - *Memórias*, p. 615

42 MORIN, Edgar - *Pensar a Europa*. Lisboa: Publicações Europa-América, 1988, p.168.

43 MONNET, Jean, p. 616.

In EU history, this is an absolute record for a new budgetary instrument. And NextGenerationEU is impressive in its size, with more than 1.8 billion euros. This is more than 5% of EU-27 GDP. Europe still has the courage and imagination to think big!”⁴⁴

We have reached a historic moment for Europe that, once again, showed that European unity was at its origin, that whenever necessary, reacts and shows the foundations of its founding project, whenever it experiences a crisis, this time, one of the most serious economic and public health crises. Although the negotiations were difficult, once again, Europe knew how to face the difficulties, reconciling solidarity with responsibility. Solidarity because the 27 countries are united by Next Generation EU, and responsibility because they want to take the crisis as another growth opportunity, laying the foundations for a modern and more sustainable Europe and Europe’s recovery will be green because the budget will boost the European Ecological Pact and accelerate the digitization of the European economy. Finally, it should be noted that, unlike other crises, Member States have not opted for an intergovernmental solution, entrusting the European Commission to Europe’s recovery. As Ursula von der Leyen said, “Europe as a whole now has a great opportunity to emerge stronger from the crisis. Today, we have taken another historic step that we can all be proud of. (...) Today we are taking a big step towards recovery”⁴⁵

Final considerations

Europe’s current challenges are an opportunity to rethink the European project, and they show how crises are the engine for European construction, because they demand concrete and effective responses to problems that cannot be postponed and compromise the lives of citizens and the union States. The EU has voted resolutions to combat the economic destruction created by the necessary post-virus containment measures. These measures will lead to a strengthened Europe after this great crisis, as, incidentally, has always happened in the history of the unity of Europe and the process of European construction. Jean Monnet, a businessman with pragmatic action, always said that “People only accept change when they are faced with the need, and only recognize the need when there is a crisis”⁴⁶ This moment is that need to solve a health and economic problem that caused a crisis.

This essay intended to reflect on Europe as a project, presented after the first great world conflict and continued after the Second World War. If, at first, Euro-

44 Opening address by President Ursula von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Charles Michel after the extraordinary European Council meeting of 17-21 July 2020”.

45 *Idem, Ibidem.*

46 MONNET, Jean - *Memórias*, p. 614.

pean unity was nothing but a solution for a Europe in Crisis, made concrete by the presentation of a European Federal Project within the Society of Nations, without an effective realization, after the second great conflict, the European project was effectively initiated, also under the circumstances. And now, we are experiencing another great moment in the history of the European Union, another “war”, but one that demanded, like the other two moments, that Europe show the strength or fragility of its Union, and, how it organized to respond to this test of fire.

The look that was intended to be seen was a look of continuity in the European project throughout the 20th and 21st century, despite the historical circumstances being different, and the solutions found to resolve European crises are conditioned by the political circumstances and political decisions of the different actors. But, far beyond the concrete time, there remains a timelessness of that old Europe that (over) lives from the Crises. It is necessary to know the history of the European project, in order to visualize a guiding thread that is repeated, and that is why it is essential to revisit the great figures of European construction, the visionaries of Europe who (still) wait for the time to accomplish their European dream.

The *Berlin Conference*, entitled *Giving a soul to Europe*, was the recognition of that European spirit, following the signers of the *Florence Appeal*, convinced that after the economic and monetary unity, the time for European thought to speak out had arrived. To build a politically united Europe, first of all, it was necessary to spread a strong thought about Europe.

Europe needs a soul and, for some, a face that represents Europe and that responds to Henri Kissinger when he asked: “If you call Europe, who answers?”. But also, very curiously, Europe has two images: the image of itself, an image of crisis, perhaps, of growth, and an image that others have of itself: seen from the outside, Europe almost looks like the Promised Land, or at least as a place of peace, culture, civilization and prosperity. Europeans are tired of Europe and non-Europeans want Europe and look at it as a long history, of all humanity, a paradigm of culture and the cradle of civilization. The solution seems to be to transfer the image of non-Europeans to Europeans. Create European awareness among Europeans. History, as recalled by Jacques Le Goff, shows that throughout Europe, from Scandinavia to Greece and Portugal, there are fundamental traits of the same culture and political Europe, which “Eurosceptics” prefer to ignore in the name of an economic Europe. Undoubtedly, this common European economy is important for creating a weight comparable to the United States and China. However, United Europe cannot be supported only for materialistic reasons, otherwise the end result will be little more than a large economic zone, which can be as quick to build as its destruction.

Europe is at a crossroads. Which way to go? Some think there is more Europe. Others believe that there is less Europe. Everyone is looking for a future for Europe.

European construction can only continue if it is based on an idea, in addition to all economic or legal achievements, that guarantees it a future. You have to have confidence in the future. Big things come little by little. As Jean Monnet recognized, the roots of the community were already strong in his time, and he believed that one day the *United States of Europe* would come true. I did not want to anticipate the future considering the unpredictable change. He lived in the present: “tomorrow is another day ... The difficulties of each day are enough”. That tomorrow has already arrived and politicians have finally realized that it is necessary to “give Europe a soul”. Robert Schuman was already aware of this need for Europe to conceive a soul and to return to being a symbol of universal solidarity. Political Europe continues to be this “interesting utopia”, as acknowledged by Eduardo Lourenço, although it is also the “house of impotence”, but isn’t utopia the anticipation of the future?

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