

## THE EUROPEAN IDEA - BETWEEN SYNCHRONY AND DIACHRONY

(Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Sub zodia Statelor Unite ale Europei. De la ideea europeană la Comunitățile Economice Europene*, Cluj-Napoca, CA Publishing, 2009, ISBN 978-973-88878-1-7, 407 pages)

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This scientific endeavor of Adrian Liviu Ivan, under the “sign” of Victor Hugo’s words (“I would like to give my life meaning through a great act, and die. Thus, the United States of Europe ... Even more so the frontiers! The Rhine for all! We are the same Republic, we are the United States of Europe, the continental federation, we are the European liberty, the universal country!”<sup>1</sup>) constitutes itself, as is evident from the argument the author seems fit to offer his readers, into a concrete answer to the contemporary questions regarding the European idea; it is simultaneously a guide to deciphering the meaning of the current European unity as well as, in equal measure, a complex support, necessary to the university research in fields such as international relations and European studies, security studies, economics, history, juridical sciences or, more loosely, to the knowledgeable public interested in the tectonic shifts that shape the socioeconomic, political and cultural map of today’s Europe.

Adrian Liviu Ivan is a professor of Babeș-Bolyai’s University from Cluj-Napoca, with the College of History and Philosophy, as well as president of the Political, Communicational and Social Sciences Committee within the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. He is also the leader of the Altiero Spinelli Center, dedicated to the European organizational study; the professor divides his energy between administrative activities in the educational area and the *de profundis* research concerns regarding the European construction.

In this current edition, Adrian Liviu Ivan suggests we take a journey into the archeology of the European idea – which is not a new product of contemporary thinking, but is rather one with the development of our continent – therefore naturally continuing the research which his volumes or the ones he previously coordinated are based on.

The reader is familiarized with a few fundamental theoretical landmarks of the European integration, concentrated in a few pages, being outlined based on two

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Hugo, *Preamble, Speech at the International Congress of the Country, Paris, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1849*, in *The Great Speech of Europe 1918-2008*, edited by Mehdi Ouraoui, Paris, Editions Complexe, 2008, p. 28: «Je voudrais signer ma vie par un grand acte, et mourir. Ainsi, la foundation des Etats-Unis d’Europe... Plus de frontières! Le Rhin à tous! Soyons la meme République, soyons les Etats-Unis d’Europe, soyons la federation continentale, soyons la liberté européenne, soyons la paix universelle!»

key concepts: intergovernmentalism and supranationalism. If the first is based on the cooperation between states, seen as the search for common ground and freely consented agreements, the second concept promotes the organization's independence in relation to the national states.

The first part of the volume, entitled *Europe's Origins*, begins methodically by establishing the etymological landmarks and by discussing Europe's borders, after which it proposes a diachronic analysis of the European idea, in Antiquity, then in the Middle Ages (when it was identified with Christianity – Respublica Christiana), going through the Renaissance, Humanism and Reformation times, only to cross through the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, into the age of Enlightenment and its spiritual and intellectual revolution. It is now when the *Europe of scientists* arises, who were “present, as in the Renaissance period, throughout the great, dominating courts across XVII<sup>th</sup> century's Europe”. (p. 102)

A separate section is destined to modern Judaism, to converted Jews who have played a special part in shaping the modern European identity. We should mention here Spinoza's name, “the post-Marinite that revolutionized the European idea. This genius Jew ... put into discussion Christianity, Judaism and Messianism, from this point of view being the philosopher that will have linked Marinism to modernism, which will put a mark on the European identity and conscience in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> to XX<sup>th</sup> centuries.” (p. 105).

The French Revolution, as a key moment of the transition to the modern world, did not bring about a positive attitude regarding the idea of a European federation or confederation, but rather an adherence to the concept of nation-state. This ideological opposition will be identifiable all throughout the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, up till its end, when authors such as Ernest Renan, Carlo Cattano or Friedrich Nietzsche wrote with interest and effervescence about the *United States of Europe* (pp. 160-161)

Other chapters address the crisis of the European conscience in the XX<sup>th</sup> century or the “European federal union” idea as described by Aristide Briand. (“I think that there must be a federal connection between nations that are geographically grouped, like the nations of Europe are.”<sup>2</sup>)

Other sections of the book present Hitlerite Europe and the ideas in Mein Kampf on territorial organization and the idea of European unity from the perspective of the resistance movements.

The second part addresses the European landscape between 1945 and 1950, the plans on which the idea of unity evolved in the context of the traditional rivalries and those arisen from the Second World War. The author notes that “We believe that the Second World War marked the end and the beginning of European history. The end because Europe, impoverished and warn-torn, forever lost its role as leading actor in international relations ...” (p. 207)

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<sup>2</sup> Speech of Aristide Briand, 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1929, extracts, in *The Great Speech of Europe 1918-2008*, edited by Mehdi Ouraoui, Paris, Editions Complexe, 2008, p. 54.

In 1946, at the University of Zurich, Winston Churchill read the speech which laid the basis of a regional unity, under the name of the United States of Europe. Using this speech as a starting point, the idea of European construction, after the Second World War, evolved into two opposing concepts: on the one hand, the sovereignty of the states and the intergovernmental cooperation within certain permanent institutions, and on the other hand the idea of a federal and supranational Europe, based on the principle of sovereignty transfer to a superior decision-making authority. The first European organizations arose in this context: OEEC – the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, WEU – the Western Europe Union, which aimed at strengthening the security of the European Council and Europe’s nations, a first step towards “the establishment of a political Europe” (p. 226)

The last section of the volume is entitled *Supranational Europe: the European Communities towards the United States of Europe*, reviews the times and institutions which decisively marked the evolution of the European Union: the creation of the ECSC and the 1951 Paris treaty, through the efforts of the team guided by Jean Monnet, followed by the creation of the European Defense Community and the European Political Community.

The author also brings to our attention the Treaty of Rome, which establishes the Common Market and the European Atomic Energy Community – Euratom, after which he pauses and focuses on the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice and on the Economic and Social Committee.

Analyzing the progress of the common market, Adrian Ivan also pertinently notes the weak spots of the political union plans, their failure as well as the relaunch of the debate on political Europe.

One cannot overlook the impressive critical apparatus used by the author by which he supports and reinforces his analysis and synthesis endeavor. The large number of references to the specialty literature, and especially to documents on which the European construct is based, turn the volume into a research platform for those who focus on this area.

We also note the objective perspective, which is imperative for this type of scientific discourse, which is also nicely completed with various personal considerations of a seasoned researcher, recognized as an authority in the field, both nationally and internationally.

The book signed by Adrian Liviu Ivan is written responsibly, but also has the courage to call a spade a spade. It represents a major contribution to the knowledge of the premises on which the European structures are based on. The thorough research, the detailed and patient presentation of the collected data, the synthesis and analysis efforts are just a few of the aspects that catch the eye of the specialist and due to which the volume is, without a doubt, among the fundamental bibliographic references of the area in question.