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Such a situation has already come to pass with the issue of the European army; and it will reappear between 1967 and 1969. The end of the Common Market's transition period will pose the issues of the currency, customs and European economic policy. Likewise, the expiry of the North Atlantic Treaty will pose the issue of a new defence system for Europe. This concerns problems which specifically can not be solved without a European government. In theory, they can perhaps be postponed, though this is uncertain, through an enlargement and a temporary dilution of European integration, yet they can not be laid aside for ever, since they are inherent in the nature of integration itself. Therefore the crisis is inevitable, even though its evolution is also partly dependent on human will; in this specific case, on the governments' proposal to maintain a structure of six countries and on the capacity of the federalist vanguard to keep up the fight.

It needs also to be pointed out that, in the event of a severe crisis on account of a lack of responsibility by the governments, the crisis will not necessarily emerge at the same time in all countries. Nevertheless if, as is likely, the crisis strikes France or Germany first, and if the federalist vanguard immediately and everywhere channels the crisis toward the European constituent assembly, it will be enough for the French or German government to ask for the constituent to be summoned in order to avoid a disaster in their own country, for the crisis of power to be set

off also in all the other countries and for them to line up in favour of the European alternative.

The *federalist vanguard* represents the theoretical and practical consciousness of the European nature of the fundamental political alternative. As a specifically theoretical awareness, it is founded on the theory of federalism and on the demystification of the nation. Nationalists, both genuine ones and opportunists (such as the communists) claim that no popular entity can be created beyond national ones, and hence not even a democratic European power. In order to expose the nationalists, it is necessary: (a) to demonstrate that the real characteristic of nations is no more than a spontaneous phenomenon of a territorial (one's own birthplace) or cultural (a common language) nature, and absolutely not the non-existent racial unity of the French, Italians, Germans and so on (the ideological fiction for justifying the closed, exclusive and tendentially monolithic nature of the national state); (b) to identify clearly the popular organism which is being created through European integration: the European people, which represents the meeting of the spontaneous European nationalities (a pluralist, federal people).

As a specifically practical awareness, the federalist vanguard signifies opposition to the community, which is different from the typical opposition to governments or regimes since, instead of refuting a particular government or regime, the federalist vanguard rejects the national community as an exclusive political community. Only at this point does the decision in favour of a European federation abandon the vagueness of good intentions to become a definite will, a real and effective political attitude, that is, a daily relationship with the power structure. Those who do not aspire to this level operate inside the framework of the management of the exclusive national powers, even if they sincerely desire European unity, and therefore perceive only the events which maintain the national framework. Those who instead reach this point, that is, those who act to destroy the exclusive national powers, put themselves in a position to observe also the events of European integration that are undermining the national powers, creating at the same time, through a de facto unity, a de facto European power, and can exploit such events politically.

This exploitation, namely the opposition to the community, is not easy. Its negative aspect, the rejection of the exclusive national power, is evident, yet its positive aspect, the struggle to transform the de facto European power into an established, democratic power that is entrusted

to the people's will rather than to the blind force of events, is complicated. A power which has not yet been constituted remains invisible. In the case in point, only by analysing the situation in a rational way is it possible to distinguish, behind the facade of European integration, what will constitute this power: the European people in-the-making. On the other hand, an as yet unconstituted power does not make any decisions, that is, it neither favours nor damages any immediate interests: it remains outside the balance of these interests and hence also outside normal politics. For this reason, those who fight for the European power seem to be fighting for nothing. They can not organise immediate interests, nor exploit the possibilities of the existing balance of forces, but must act only with the aim of introducing a new element into this balance in order to create an opportunity that would otherwise not exist. Since they propose the constituent assembly (a solution that will always remain outside the realm of reality until the very moment of the crisis), they are able to fight only thanks to the contradictions of the normal political process, which presents problems that normal politics is unable to solve.

As we have seen, the major political and economic problems can not be satisfactorily solved in the sphere of the national states. Therefore, in periods when such problems arise, those who fight for the European power can join the battle alongside those who seek a real solution, whereas in periods when, in order to resolve problems with its imperfect means (the national governments and European co-operation), normal politics contents itself with imperfect and precarious solutions, the supporters of the European power must instead withdraw from the battle, denounce the compromise and constantly lie in wait for those who remain in the national framework. That is all. The commitment to the real solution of these problems coincides with the gaining of awareness of the European nature of the political alternative, that is, with the strengthening of the federalist vanguard and with preparing the initiative to decide in favour of creating the European federation. Compromises based on precarious solutions or the continuous fleeing forwards into an illusory future, represent a persistence with the national way.

*The foundation of the European federation.*

A struggle of this type, because of its practical and intellectual difficulties, can only attract a small portion of those people who regard the contradiction between events and values as a personal matter which concerns them. Yet these people are enough. As long as the problem

which will set off the crisis remains distant, the issue is simply one of survival, of entering and exiting the political balance with a flexible tactic that aims at building political fronts and of organising what already exists in the heart of the people, the European aspiration (diffused Europeanism), so as to have a popular platform ready at the decisive moment. Organised Europeanism (the MFE etc.) is sufficient to achieve this goal. Moreover, as this problem approaches and the European nature of the political alternative will become easier to understand, many of the above-mentioned type of people (organisable Europeanism) will end up embracing the federalist cause. And this will be a sufficient base for lighting the fuse of the decision to found the European federation. As in any technically revolutionary enterprise, the crisis of power, “with its high conductivity of ideas,” will do the rest. In this situation the watchwords corresponding to the need for power will “produce by themselves thousands of channels.”