

SOME FORMS OF POLITICAL UNITY IN EUROPE BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

Due to its geographical location and its culture and economy, Europe has never been a closed or isolated area from the rest of the world. Since antiquity, the first forms of government in Europe have proven economic, cultural and spiritual openness. The openness is partially the result of the geographical and cultural specificity of Europe. This openness led to the appearance and development of major trade routes of antiquity. The development of the trade routes resulted in the development of economy and has strengthened the economic and cultural relations among the European nations. To the closeness of the European states contributed the diversity of natural resources, soil fertility and the deepening social division of labour. The first attempts of association and alliance of European states are lost in the mists of time. A first step in the development of legal rules related to public international law was the occurrence of the first interstate military alliance. Concluding alliances using international treaties or agreements proved necessary to resolve international disputes. Countries in Europe have been associates and "friends" in one way or another in order to avoid wars. Leaders of European countries and thinkers of the time conceived the idea of "building" a federation of states or a large European country to avoid any war.

Keywords: *Europe, history of Europe, the European Union, European unity.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the leaders of the Greek sought to maintain permanent political dialogue and alliances. Alliances were made especially by concluding marriages between different royal families. The first royal marriages were made for political purposes between Greek city-states. Ancient Greece "invented" the first social and political rules, rules of law on private property and freedom of the citizen. Along with technical progress, city-states emerged (*polis* in Greek). A fortress - state was virtually an administrative-territorial entity with its own territory, population, legal and religious rules. Legal marriages between different families led to the first forms of "union between countries." Among the great thinkers of antiquity, Plato first supported the idea of peace by establishing a confederation of Greek states. A confederation should to be based on religious institutions and existing political institutions. Direct negotiation or arbitration must be ways of resolving disputes between Greek states [1]. Subsequently, for the first time in history, countries of Europe were united under the sceptre of Rome. The redoubtable military force of the "eternal city" managed to bring European countries under the same administration rules for the first time. Unfortunately, the brutal way in which this association was made and the lack of diplomacy in dealing with people made this "union" exist only formally. The Roman administration didn't serve to develop the generous ideas of unity but to satisfy economic and financial interests of the aristocracy and the Roman emperors. Because of these reasons, the collapse of the Roman Empire meant the ending of the so called "union of states" under Roman domination. Anyway, the importance of Roman domination results, as well, from the fact that, for the first time in history,

the countries of the Mediterranean basin were under the same administration and the same rules [2].

2. IDEAS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

Some thinkers believe that the Carolingian state laid the foundation of the first European unification, taking as its starting point the Christian ideology. Charlemagne was King of the Franks and master of Rome, whose patron he is considered to be, in tandem with the Pope. By his key position, Charlemagne appears as an undisputed leader and master of the West European Christianity [3]. At that time, he just missed a title by which to be recognized as the heir of the Roman emperors. In December 25, 800 in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Charlemagne was proclaimed emperor of the Romans, and crowned by the Pope. This imperial coronation marked the existence of an empire with a single chief having the mission to propagate the Christian faith, given that Byzantium was in full decline at that time, having serious economic and social problems. The period during which Charlemagne was a king meant a real renaissance of culture and arts. This revival was supported by the legal provisions issued by the imperial chancellor, the financial support and also because of the tax exemptions of the monasteries. Also, at that time the royal palace school and major network Benedictine monasteries were famous where priests were great literati and poets of the time. Meanwhile, the priests were charged with supporting and popularizing values of the Christian church, so they became teachers for the future "Christian teachers". Episcopal parishes and schools were established gradually throughout the empire and actively promoting social, political and cultural heritage of Western Christianity [4]. The main political and philosophical ideas about society and the

state in the late Middle Ages belong to common models. These models were developed by the Christian Church of the time, which was all-powerful. Based on unbounded power in society, the church adopted a set of moral reform, promoting the so-called "*pax Cristiana*" (Christian peace). The church strengthened the role and place of the family in society, promoting the Christian religious type marriage. Gradually, throughout the Western Christian church schools and universities were established, which were attended by young people from all over Europe. The network of universities in the Middle Ages developed, especially three university centres: Bologna, Oxford and Paris. Thanks to legal provisions issued by the Pope, three subjects were considered fundamental at that time - theology, Roman law and medicine. Teachers in universities at that time were considered "masters" and in order to teach those subjects, they had the obligation to be holders of so called "licenses". Teachers who came into possession of "licenses" had the right to teach at several universities in Europe, through the so-called academic wanderings. Among the "masters" of those times we could mention Thomas Aquinas or Roger Bacon. These developments led to a sharp growth of the society, which began for the first time in history to embrace the idea of European unity based on religious unity imposed by the strong Catholic Christian church. The idea of European unity was imposed due to repeated peacekeeping attempts dating back to antiquity. The first theories were based on religious dogmas of the Christian church. A practical way of achieving this goal would be war against infidels who occupied the "holy land of Jerusalem." This large European republic should be led by the sovereign Pontiff. Major legal issues that would have arisen from the state level should be solved by "apostolic council" formed by several bishops who ought to have its headquarters in the Vatican. Beyond the common bond created by Christianity, Europe underwent a series of important steps in the economic and commercial. Trade was a real "engine" of rapprochement between different European countries. Continuous attempts to remove customs "barriers" of the free movement of goods led to the removal of obstacles to the circulation of ideas and people [5]. In an attempt to develop trade in Europe, the countries of the Middle Ages built a vast trans-European road network. Creating this network of roads has boosted trade between states but gave an unexpected cultural exchanges boost. In the Middle Ages are developed communications and sciences grace to appearance of the major European roads - along the Danube, the Rhine, the Atlantic Ocean, the Black Sea, the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea.

3. THE PRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNIONISTS IN MODERN TIMES

In the modern era, between theories supporting the idea of the European unity, there stood the German thinker Immanuel Kant. Kant elaborated a comprehensive study according to which the common political will of the European countries can establish permanent peace. To achieve this, it was necessary to create a confederation of states at the European level.

This international organization should develop its own constitution. The Constitution ought to govern the relations and mechanisms of good cohabitation between these states. This European fundamental law should be assumed by all Member States freely. Permanent peace was necessary for the settlement of disputes between states to use some principles of public international law:

- renunciation of force in settling disputes between states.
- non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.
- using the negotiation and the diplomatic solutions.

Immanuel Kant advanced for the first time in history the idea of abolition of the permanent military service. He wanted to use a body of civil servants specialized in this field. Another way of achieving the much-needed eternal peace was identified by the philosophical school of the abbey of Saint-Pierre. This philosophical school believes that the use of public international law in solving disputes between states would have led to the accomplishment of the objective. According to representatives of the abbey, in order to eliminate the war, a system of international treaties of peace has to be established. These treaties should include all European countries and a set of legal rules should be stipulated, aimed to:

- keep the balance of forces among European countries.
- ensure borders of the European countries.
- promote interstate agreements especially in the economic and financial area [6].
- establish a permanent senate, made up of representatives of each European country. Important decisions should be laid in the hands of the Senate, referred to the territorial reconfiguration or change of the power relations. Any war between European states and a third country should be subject to the prior approval of the Senate. In cases in which a State shall not accept the decision of the Senate, it could be subject to sanctions. One of the harshest penalties could be related to removal of the right to have its own army. Senate decisions were to be adopted by a vote of at least two thirds of the Senators present. Another way to achieve eternal peace is presented in the nineteenth century by Prince Adam Czartoriski. Conclusion and adoption of an European code of international law could meet the European dream of eternal peace. That code shall govern political and diplomatic relations between the European countries. Guarantee the observance and enforcement of this code of international law could be made by the British Empire and the Russian Empire, which were the major European powers of the time. In the early nineteenth century, for the first time in history, the idea of a Society of Nations appeared [7]. The idea belonged to the politician and philosopher Joseph de Maestre, who wrote the famous book -"Soirees of St. Petersburg". In this book he established the idea of a society of states that have some common political and economic goals. Achieving these goals would lead necessarily and maintain a state of permanent peace. These ideas were quickly embraced by thinkers of that time and they actively progressed. The famous 1849 speech of the great writer Victor Hugo at the Paris Peace Conference. Addressing those present Hugo said: "the day will come when the weapons will be

forgotten and will be replaced by the free word and universal voting rights for all the peoples of Europe". This phrase made history and proved him as a true prophet. Another idea was a Swiss Johann Kaspar who in 1878 developed a theory stating that the judicious use of public international law would remove the threat of war. Establishment of a European confederation of states ruled by a European Council and the European Senate is the right way to bring peace. The Council and the Senate would be composed of representatives of all Member States. These national representatives should be elected by the population using the direct vote. The two institutions were tasked as executive (the Council) and legislative tasks (the Senate).

4. EUROPEAN THEORIES ABOUT UNITY AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After completion of the Second World War, Europe was devastated by the damage suffered and was in a critical financial and economic situation. Political institutions of the European countries were close to collapse and the two world superpowers had already started their first European disputes concerning the supremacy over the continent. United States openly expressed their desire to maintain their political and military influence, especially in the western European continent. Another stated goal was to stop the rise of communism system in the world. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) has started the expansion of its sphere of political influence by setting up many communist totalitarian regimes in "the old continent". Existing political and diplomatic situation caused major political and economic changes in Europe. Also, there were a series of significant changes in diplomatic and legal system. The existing situation determined the majority of the European countries to conclude successively several treaties, agreements and international multilateral understandings. Political and diplomatic relations between the United States of America and U.S.S.R. increasingly deteriorates during 1947 – 1950 period, amid the struggle for the world and European supremacy.

United States of America's President Henry Truman believed that democratic European states in Western Europe had to stand united and face together the communist danger. President Truman decided that only substantial economic aid would be able to limit the Soviet expansion. The historical conditions determined Western Europe countries to conclude a vast coalition to face domination and pressure from the Soviet Union manifested mainly in Eastern Europe, where "the Soviet boot" was being experienced very acute.

During this difficult context, the ideas of federalization of Europe were gaining more and more followers and adepts. In 1947, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill showed publicly the generous idea to create a "World Peace Temple" which had to be built on "four pillars": U.S.A., U.S.S.R., "United States of Europe" and "the British Empire"[8]. According to the British politician, this vision of the "United States of Europe" did not include the United Kingdom, who was a guarantor of the constitution of the federal structure, but

did not have to be part of this European structure. On the background of the "cold war" between the communist Eastern team and the Western Europe, General George Marshall, Secretary of State, founded in 1947 a team of specialists in the field of economy and finance, a team led by one of his leading advisors, George Kennan. The central aim of the specialist team was to design an economic and political strategy for economic and financial support to help out Europe, devastated by World War II. The American team had contact with the French Foreign Minister, Jean Monnet. Finally, after a laborious work, the team advisor George Kennan drafted and presented to the public "The recovery program for Europe", well-known in the specialist literature as the "Marshall Plan."

"The recovery program for Europe" was launched in the summer of 1947, after intense media coverage. To popularize the Marshall Plan media from the United States of America and Western Europe were used. The Marshall Plan was implemented in order to restore the economy of "the old continent" seriously affected by the Second World War. Restoration and reconstruction of Europe wanted to be achieved by providing economic and financial aid to all European countries. Although the "Marshall Plan" was addressed to all European countries, the aid was not accepted by all countries of Europe. The economic and financial plan was accepted only by Western European countries. For purely political reasons, under Soviet pressure, six European countries refused the American aid - Albania, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Yugoslavia, Poland and Romania, despite the fact their national economies were destroyed by the Second World War.

Once enacted, the plan provided assistance to European countries. U.S. transferred five billion U.S. dollars each year. Prerequisite for countries to benefit from this aid, is to establish a social order based on respect for democratic principles widely recognized. To manage issues related to the implementation of the Marshall Plan, the Americans decided to set up a structure called the Organization for European Economic Cooperation [9].

European Economic Cooperation Organization has been operating, bearing in mind the achievement of two very important economic and financial objectives:

- the first objective was to avoid economic collapse caused by the destruction of war. The first goal was achieved in 1952, after the United States of America completed grant of U.S. \$ 17,000 billion in Western Europe countries.

- the second objective, aimed at strengthening European economic cooperation is permanent. "The Marshall Plan" sought to intensify economic cooperation, especially by reducing taxes and tariffs and by reducing unemployment (by creating new jobs). Decreasing of the inflation was another important objective of the plan. The end of the Marshall Plan led to the intensification of cooperation in western European countries. The completion of the American plan stabilized the prices of raw materials and fuel and last but not least, established a sharp political and economic stability, which removed Soviet influence in the Western European countries. It is interesting to note that even after the end of the

"Marshall Plan" in 1952, the organization continued to exist as a space to promote free trade among the member countries. Over time, this organization received new members and other developed economically countries. It eventually became, in 1961 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), well known in the economical European area and not only in this space.

5. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EUROPEAN UNIONIST IDEAS

Finally, before the creation of the European Union, all these theories led to the emergence of generous ideas:

- ensuring joint economic development of European countries.
- ensuring higher standards of living for all citizens of the European states.
- ensuring the historical desideratum to avoid any conflagration in Europe.
- ensuring the defence of democratic rights and freedoms in the common European space.
- creation of political and economic preconditions for strengthening cooperation between European countries.
- harmonization and standardization of national laws.
- elimination of customs duties, protectionist obstacles and import-export restrictions.
- developing and adopting common legal rules to ensure free movement of the persons, capital and services.
- development and adoption of legal rules to help coordinate and standardize economic policies and the financial and banking system of the Member States.

The historical importance of these ideas is above any question. However, most of these ideas will be found in the European legal norms of the European Union today. A few figures show up the importance of these ideas today. Operating as a single market with 28 countries, the European Union is one of the largest worlds trading power. European Union economic and financial strategies seek to intensify growth by investing in infrastructure, industry, transport, energy and scientifically research. The European Union today is permanently looking for development minimising the negative impact on the environment. The European Union's economy (taking into account the goods and services it produces – G.D.P.) — is now larger than the United States'. European Union's G.D.P. in 2012 was estimated at 12,000,000 million EURO. The European Union population represents about 7% of the world's population. The European Union's trade with the rest of the world accounts for about 20% of global exports and imports. Around two-thirds of the European Union countries' total trade is done with other European Union countries [10]. The EURO currency is used every day by about 332 million Europeans. This currency is not only

regular money but is the most important and concrete proof of cooperation between European Union countries. Its benefits are immediately obvious to investors and banking system [11]. The single currency is encouraging the European cooperation and common policy in the financial and economic area. The European Union today wants to enhance further the democratic ways of cooperation between the Member States. Its policy is aiming to achieve the strengthening and the convergence of Member States economies and to develop the economic and monetary union including extend on European level of its single and stable currency. The Union permanently promotes economic and social progress for population, taking into account the principle of sustainable development and within the context of the accomplishment of the internal market and of reinforced cohesion and environmental protection [12]. The member States agreed to implement policies ensuring advances in the economic integration accompanied by parallel progress in other domain. The European Union implements a common foreign and security policy among Member States including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world [13].

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