



Fondazione  
Giangiacomo  
Feltrinelli

# Next European Democracy

The battle to change Europe.  
Excerpts from the 1<sup>st</sup> School  
of Democracy, 2015

Introduction by  
Gianni Pittella

**Utopie / 37**

**Innovazione politica**



Fondazione  
Giangiacomo  
Feltrinelli

# Next European Democracy

**The battle to change Europe.  
Excerpts from the 1<sup>st</sup> School of Democracy  
Reggio Emilia, 23-25 April 2015**

*Introduction by*  
**Gianni Pittella**

© 2016 Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli  
Via Romagnosi 3, 20121 Milano (MI)  
www.fondazionefeltrinelli.it  
ISBN: 978-88-6835-236-3  
First digital edition February 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, disk or otherwise, including cinema, radio, television, without written permission from the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation and the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament. Reproductions made for purposes of a professional, commercial or monetary, or otherwise for purposes other than personal use can be made as a result of specific authorization issued by Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation and the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament.

Texts written by Gianni Pittella, Martin Schulz, Jean-Paul Fitoussi, Nadia Urbinati, Carlo Feltrinelli, Christopher Bickerton, Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, Malika Hamidi.

Translated by Lisa Halliday

Editorial Board: Spartaco Alfredo Puttini



In collaboration with



Drawn from the First School of Democracy, Reggio Emilia,  
from 23-25 April 2015



## Summary

<i>Introduction by Gianni Pittella</i>	5
Gianni Pittella <i>For a New European Democracy</i>	7
Martin Schulz <i>70 Years of Liberation: Remembrance, Participation, and Support for Europe</i>	13
Jean-Paul Fitoussi <i>Democracy under Market's Attack</i>	19
Nadia Urbinati <i>Europe as a Democratic Laboratory</i>	23
Carlo Feltrinelli <i>Ten Books That Have Shaped Democracy</i>	27
Christopher Bickerton & Carlo Invernizzi Accetti <i>Party Democracy, between Populism and Technology</i>	39
Malika Hamidi <i>Feminism and Islam: an Antithetical Concept?</i>	51
Authors	66



## *Introduction*

*by Gianni Pittella*

Europe is at a crossroads. Either we accept the decline of the European project or we relaunch the European Union by shaping a new model of democracy. The European Union has been confronted with three major crisis. The financial crisis has been followed by the Greek crisis which has shaken the euro, one of the pillars of the Union. Currently, Europe is struggling with the refugee crisis that is challenging Schengen and the free movement of people which is the second pillar of the EU.

Europe has been shaken to its foundations. If we want to save Europe we need a quantum leap. We need a counter-offensive and to start imagining the next European democracy. The School of Democracy organised by the Group of the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament in Reggio Emilia intends to be a political laboratory to visualise a progressive Europe. The School took place between 22 and 25 April 2015, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Europe from the Nazi. 100 students, selected from more than 1000 applicants, coming from all EU countries and abroad met experts and representatives of the political, academic and economic spheres in an open debate on the future of democracy in Europe. At a time of populism, extremism and xenophobia, while facing a deep economic crisis dictated by speculative capitalism rather than universalist ideals, the dialogue with these young people helped us to better understand their vision for society and their expectations for a better future.

This book contains some of the Acts of the School. The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, focuses in his contribution on the importance of remembrance and the legacy of the fight for the liberation of Europe in shaping a new Europe. Nadia Urbinati sketches out the characteristics of the next European democracy and Jean-Paul Fitoussi underlines the challenging balance between markets and democracy.

Carlo Feltrinelli builds upon literature to imagine our European future while Carlo Invernizzi Accetti and Chris Bickerton analyse the emergence of populism in Europe and its impact on party systems. Malika Hamidi discusses the relationship between Feminism and Islam.

The School of Democracy would not have been possible without the fruitful cooperation of the Alcide Cervi Foundation and I would like to thank its President, Rossella Cantoni.

A special thanks to all the speakers and participants and to the secretariat of the Group of the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament for the impressive work in preparing the School. In particular, I would like to thank the Secretary General Javier Moreno Sanchez as well as Frazer Clarke, Nadia Buttini, Anna Colombo, Giovanna Pareschi, Francesco Ronchi and Jean-Louis Verheyden for their crucial contribution.

## **Gianni Pittella**

### *For a New European Democracy*

European democracy is facing its most significant historical challenge since its reconstruction following World War II – an existential crisis that, to paraphrase Antonio Gramsci, consists in the fact that ‘the old is dying and the new is not yet born’.

The ‘old’ democratic order was the result of deep historical shifts. In Europe, the collapse of the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes of the 1920s and ‘30s, gave way, in the 1940s, to renewed democratic regimes. These all had some elements in common: firstly, the liberal democratic nature of the state, where by the basic democratic notion of government as an expression of the ‘will of the people’ was reinforced by a system of checks and balances aimed at safeguarding democracy itself.

Hitler and Mussolini had both risen to power also because they enjoyed an authentic popular consensus, and this lesson deeply informed the mindset of post-war policy-makers. Thus, after the war, a whole set of institutions were created (such as constitutional courts) whose purpose was that of safeguarding democracy and upholding the rule of law in the face of plebiscitary threats. To avoid an excessive centralisation of power – or even worse, a slide back into tyranny – decision-making processes were designed to promote mediation and complexity. Hence, the preference for proportional electoral systems and forms of parliamentary government that favoured compromise over speed. This framework was also characterised by a certain distrust of referendums and direct appeals to the people, seen by many as dangerous plebiscitary instruments. Mediation, compromise, moderation – these were the guiding principles of the ‘old’ European democracy that we were accustomed to.

‘Mediatory democracy’ was a way of cooling down or at least of peacefully managing the passions and conflicts within our societies.

Of all the passions that characterised post-war European societies, politics was probably the greatest. Politics here shouldn’t be understood simply as a form of collective deliberation, but also – and perhaps even more importantly – as a tool that served an almost ‘aesthetic’ function: to give purpose to the lives of individuals through collective action.



Nothing better than the European Resistance movements exemplifies the moral and aesthetic tension that fuelled the birth of our new democracies.

This system, this 'old order', is today threatened – and to a certain extent is already a thing of the past. Compromise – and mediation-based democracy is floundering under the pressures of individualism. The traditional mechanisms of social identification have broken down: citizens today define themselves as individuals, not as members of well-defined social groups.

This process of individualisation puts considerable strain on the traditional instruments of political representations: political parties, of course, but also unions and the innumerable organisations that used to provide political representation to a variety of social groups.

As a result of these profound shifts, democracy runs the risk of being reduced solely to the act of voting. The exercise of our voting rights has become the democratic instrument par excellence at our disposal. Some believe that this is not a problem, that democracy is little more than an arena where competing groups and elites vie for power: at regular intervals, citizens are called to elect a winning party, which can be 'unelected' at the following round if its work is deemed unsatisfactory.

In my view, this purely electoral rendering of democracy is insufficient. Firstly, voter turnout has been steadily declining for decades, reflecting a wider crisis of legitimacy. Less and less citizens bother to vote; this has serious repercussions on the quality of our democracies.

Narrowing citizens' participation in the democratic process down to the simple act of voting risks withering away our democracies, opening the door to populisms and to those that seek to exploit popular dissatisfaction for their own ends, while offering no real solutions.

A healthy democracy needs to be accountable to its citizens. A healthy democracy is a daily plebiscite.

The crisis of democratic mediation therefore requires that we be bold in our aspirations. We have the duty to envision the European democracy that we want.

To this end, I would like to outline some of the features of this yet-to-be democracy.

For starters: its scale. The national dimension in itself is insufficient. Our societies and political systems have been transformed by globalisation. The huge challenges that we face cannot be solved at the national level.

Growing migratory flows, climate change, financial globalisation and other global trends underscore the centrality of the European dimension, because it is only at this level that these challenges can be met.

Investing in the European dimension, though, also means acknowledging the need for a profound rethinking of the European Union.

The first point that we need to clarify once and for all is the essential nature of the (new) Union. Once again, we are reminded of Norberto Bobbio's lesson about the need for any political project to define first of all its identity: 'They debate the future but they don't understand that they must first examine their own identities. Once they know who they are, they will have found their destiny'.

The European Union is characterised by a constitutive ambiguity, a fundamental indeterminacy that hinders its evolution.

The former German deputy chancellor Joschka Fischer coined the concept of a 'federation of nation-states'. The European Union did not want to be neither a single federal state nor a confederation of states but rather something radically new – a UPO ('unidentified political object'), to use Jacques Delors' expression.

The key wager underlying this UPO was that sovereignty could be shared between member states and the federation as a whole, through the establishment of new forms of political governance. The euro as a single currency and the border-free Schengen area have been the main components of this wager.

The euro is based on the idea that monetary policy can be centralised at the European level, while fiscal policy can remain in the hands of national governments. The Schengen agreement was meant to abolish internal borders between member states while leaving them in charge of the external borders of Europe as a whole.

Both the euro and the Schengen area have been successes but they have also revealed some structural weaknesses. The Greek crisis of the past summer has exposed the main weakness of the euro: it is simply unsustainable to have a single monetary policy and many national fiscal policies.

Meanwhile, the ongoing migration crisis has shown that removing national borders without a common management of the external borders is unsustainable.

The key reason for this is that it was never clear what a 'federation of nation-states' was meant to be. When a conflict of competences arises between a nation-state and the federation as a whole, who gets to have the final word? Clearly, sovereignty and the state cannot be expunged so easily from politics. As a result, political indecision and internal contradictions continue to weaken the European project.

The continent is now at a crossroads. It can decide to go forward with the integration project, but this requires being more forthright about what this requires: a transfer of sovereignty from the nation-states to a European federation.

This is the only possible solution: the establishment of a democratic European Federation with a fiscal capacity and its own foreign and defence policy.

This Federation should be streamlined: the decision-making process should be simplified, as the current system is unclear to many citizens. The European Parliament's powers should be strengthened, by granting it legislative powers.

We cannot fail in our struggle to create a European Federation. Otherwise, all sovereignty could be returned to the nation-states. This would transform the European Union into a loose confederation of states or into an international organisation analogous perhaps to the United Nations, in both weaknesses and strengths. This would mark the end of the European project and would dramatically weaken European democracies, as individual countries would be powerless in dealing with the current challenges.

Besides from being resolutely European, the democracy of tomorrow will also possess another defining feature. It will have to be more participatory. Individualism and the crisis of traditional mediatory bo-

dies can also be an opportunity for our democratic systems, because they signal a thirst for more direct and unconventional forms of democratic participation.

Many European citizens are tired of delegating to others: they want to have a direct say in matters that concern them. The post-war form of 'mediated democracy' thus needs to be revitalised with new participatory instruments.

The European Citizens' Initiative introduced by the Lisbon Treaty needs to be reformed in order to allow for legislative proposals. In the longer term, we should aim for the introduction of European-wide legislative referendums.

But these reforms alone are bound to fail if we aren't able to breathe new life into political parties and other mediatory bodies as well; these have to open themselves up to society and its needs once again. Finally, the need to reinvent European democracy does not relieve us political actors from the obligation to start reforming here and now with whatever tools we have at our disposal.



## **Martin Schulz**

*70 Years of Liberation:*

*Remembrance, Participation, and Support for Europe*

Gattatico, Italy: 22 April 2015

Dear Friends,

It is a privilege to be with you today to commemorate, celebrate, and reaffirm the importance to us of April 25th, Liberation Day.

I am all the happier because we are here to celebrate not just any April 25th but the seventieth anniversary of the Liberation.

And seeing so many of you here today, showing such commitment, I can only acknowledge that the spirit of resistance is more alive today than it has ever been, and that, while many are present here today, our true number is even greater, given that our ranks are swollen by:

the spirit of the previous generations,  
the Cervi brothers slain by the hand of barbarous fascism,  
Alcide Cervi, the heart of oak and guiding spirit of this place,  
the surviving partisans here with us, bearing valuable testimony,  
those who did not survive,  
those who departed defending their beliefs,  
and those who departed after devoting their lives to the same beliefs.

It is an honour for me to be here with you today, not only as a man who believes that Italy and Europe were founded, at least in part, on the Resistance, but also as a German and European citizen. It is an honour for me to have met and become acquainted with the mayors of Marzabotto and Stazzema, to whom I extend affectionate greetings. It is no coincidence that my first visit as President of the European Parliament was to Marzabotto. It is an honour for me to have met the survivors of the massacres perpetrated in those peaceful villages, the relatives of the victims and all those who are keeping alive the memory of the Resistance.

*[In German during the ceremony:]*

*We must and we will keep alive the memory of the devastation and destruction wrought by Hitler's Germany in Italy and Europe, the terrible crimes perpetrated by Germans in the name of National Socialist racism, the greatest affront to civilised values in the history of mankind, proffered by the generation of our parents and our grandparents at Auschwitz and elsewhere, and the opprobrium they incurred through their guilt.*

*Crimes are not born from nothing. Too many people have allowed the seed of hatred to take root in their hearts and grow. Too many people have looked away, not wishing to see, not wishing to know and remaining indifferent to the suffering of their fellow beings.*

*The guilty took their guilt with them to the grave.*

*But the responsibility to keep the oath that such things will never occur again is forever ours, that of future generations. While we bear no individual guilt, we are nevertheless collectively responsible for the actions of the society to which we belong. From the memory of this tragedy afflicting humankind must grow a sense of responsibility for the present and future that must guide our actions.*

*From this arises also our responsibility to defend the unity of Europe. Integration of our European states and peoples has indeed been Europeans' response to the war, destruction, and extermination that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, exorcizing old demons and making Europe safe from conflict. The demons of anti-Semitism, racism, and ultra-nationalism have been crushed but not definitively eradicated and occasionally even today continue to raise their ugly heads. We must all stand shoulder-to-shoulder in opposing any return to attitudes that have never brought Europeans anything but misfortune. I agree with the philosopher Edmund Burke that "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."*

*I am moved by the fact that I, a German citizen and a German president of a multinational assembly, can stand before you here today to commemorate with you the seventieth anniversary of the Liberation of Italy. And I am also grateful because it shows how far we have come together in Europe.*

The fact that a German can be among you here today, accepted as one of you and celebrating the Resistance together with you is not something that can simply be taken for granted.

A few years ago, I received a membership card of the National Association of Italian Partisans (ANPI) from Carlo Smuraglia, ANPI President, and Ennio “Cric” Odino, head of the Belgian ANPI. Ennio also recounted to me his incredible experiences, including his time with the partisans, his escape from execution, his imprisonment in the Mauthausen concentration camp, his passion for cycling and his commitment to Europe. What an honour for me to receive the ANPI card! Ennio died last year. Many other resistance fighters like him have also departed. But we must continue to tell their story.

And yet remembering the Resistance must not be an end in itself. Having met individuals of such great integrity and moral stature, I frequently have to ask myself two questions.

The first is: how would I have conducted myself during the Resistance? Would I have had the courage, determination, and vision to choose the right path? Any partisan faced ethical and moral dilemmas on a daily basis and had to pick sides. There is probably no clear answer to this question. But facing up to it might help us to escape the dangers of relativism, of falling into the trap of believing that our actions, our choices, are simply the result of the context in which we grew up, our education, our social background, our nationality.

And the first question leads me almost directly to the second: how would the partisans react today? What do they think, what would they think, of our societies, our Europe, our countries and our democracy?

Once again, I do not believe that there is a single answer to this question. I do not believe there is a single answer because membership of the Resistance was first and foremost a civic and individual choice before becoming a collective choice. However, in my experience, those who believe in the Resistance share a common set of values and ideas.

Firstly, those who believe in the Resistance do not forget – they are aware that memory, more than just respect for our predecessors, is a natural defence, an antibody, that keeps democracy alive.



And believe me, in Italy and in Europe, our memories badly need prodding. Look at those who now want to keep out all the migrants, forgetting how many emigrated from Europe. Let us stop, remember, and pass the message on to our children and our grandchildren at school and at home, so as to make this a better continent on which to live.

Secondly, those who believe in the Resistance are ready to contribute. That means taking risks, getting their hands dirty, not following like sheep, making mistakes but at the same time learning from themselves and others. The growth of the Resistance movement depended on partisans doing their bit, learning from the experience, improving and coming to realise just how strong they were.

Thirdly, those who believe in the Resistance believe in Europe. That does not necessarily mean sharing the same idea of Europe, just as supporting the Resistance movement did not mean having the same vision of the future, since it included Christian Democrats, Communists, Socialists, Liberals, and other parts of the political spectrum all pursuing the same objective: liberation.

Similarly, to be pro-European does not mean being satisfied with Europe today. I also would like to see a greater degree of social awareness, solidarity, and accountability. I only wish that it needn't have taken a massive loss of life in the Mediterranean to awaken Europe to its responsibilities. But criticising Europe as it is today does not mean disowning it.

Being pro-European today means defending our values, our freedom of expression, pluralism, and the rule of law and saying no to those who would instigate hatred of Jews, Roma, or Muslims, to those who would deny freedom of expression; it means defending human dignity and the dignity of work; it means refusing to remain indifferent to the death of migrants in the Mediterranean.

Being a partisan in today's world means squaring up to those who would disseminate hatred or shirk their responsibilities. Then, as now, it means confronting the Kesselrings of today and remembering the past.

Let me end with a poem by Piero Calamandrei that profoundly moves me and remains as true today as it was yesterday.

You shall have,  
Kamerad Kesselring,  
the monument you demand of us Italians,  
but it is we who shall determine  
the stone of which it will be made.

Neither the charred stones  
of the defenceless villages on which you wreaked destruction,  
nor the earth of the cemeteries  
where our young comrades  
peacefully repose,  
nor the untainted mountain snow  
which for two winters defied you,  
nor the spring that came to these valleys  
and saw you take flight.  
But only the silence of those tortured souls,  
harder than any stone,  
only the rock of this covenant,  
sworn among free men  
who of their free will came together,  
in dignity and not in hatred,  
resolved to redeem  
the shame and terror of this world.

Should you wish to return along these roads,  
you will find us at our posts,  
the living and dead with equal resolution,  
a people rallied round the monument,  
whose name is,  
now and forever,

RESISTANCE.



## **Jean-Paul Fitoussi**

### *Democracy Under Market's Attack*

There was a great writer who said: "The future is where we go to live for eternity." Democracy has to do with the future because it is the way by which we design a road toward the improvement of people's lives.

I have tried to study democracy in my own way, and, as an economist, I have identified three basic approaches through which to analyze it.

The first is that which concerns inequality. We live in a system that combines two contradictory principles of organization: on the one hand there is the market, with the organizational system of "one euro, one vote," and on the other there is democracy with the system of "one person, one vote." When there fails to exist a compromise between the two, the second is in danger of succumbing, as happened before the Second World War. To tell the truth, I am not certain whether today the second system is truly in effect: we have such a degree of inequality that I find it difficult to affirm that a country like the United States, in which election campaigns are financed by prominent names in the financial landscape, is a total democracy. If such phenomena exist, it means that there is something wrong with the principle of democracy, because we can no longer trust the validity of the principle of "one person, one vote"; rather, it happens that certain people have millions of votes, and others have few. There is a second issue related to inequality and that is that the rich come to own the media, the universities, the great schools, and the think tanks that influence people's votes, simply because they hold wealth. We are in a "quicksand" democracy.

Louis Brandeis, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, said in 1941: "We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." Today we are experiencing an increase in inequality that affects all countries, even emerging ones: in countries like China and India there is not a middle class being created but increasing disparities. Inequality is a universal phenomenon and this means that democracy is not.

The second approach with which I have studied democracy has brought me to focus on Europe. The problem in this case is that of having conceived a system in which debts are sovereign whereas the currency is not sovereign. This has made the European countries very fragile because it is not they who control the market but the market that controls them. Prior to this system, these things didn't happen; each state was entirely solvent and could produce money to repay debt while now it is at the mercy of the market. The lack of federalism and the asymmetry between monetary federalism and fiscal confederalism means that Europe is not a laboratory of democracy but a peculiar system of federal states that do not have a federal state. This has thus created a rift between legitimacy and power: while legitimacy is conferred by an election, power derives from the set of rules that we have conceived over time and that, as a result, confer all agency on the European institutions. Ours are rulers of the province because they no longer have more control over the currency, the budget, exchange policy, industrial policy. This means that the only freedom that remains is for citizens to change the government but not to change policy.

We see everywhere governments that change without then anything changing; the latest example is what happened in Greece: Greek citizens expressed their desire to change political strategies through their vote, but no one took them into account. Even earlier the same thing happened in France: President Hollande was elected with the great hope that the left would be united, but nothing changed. When the citizen loses the power to change policy, he turns to parties that are not very serious. I belong to a country where the National Front is the leading party and I ask myself how this is possible. The answer is that the French know that going from François Hollande to Nicolas Sarkozy will not change anything.

The problem is that Europe has not understood all of this, but it is necessary that it understands it and that its politics change because, unacceptable though it is, it is as if a kind of death penalty were in force. I thought that the death penalty was abolished in our country, but seeing that infant mortality in Greece is increasing, that life expectancy decreases in other European countries because the political choices include cuts to health care, then I tell myself this is because something is wrong, that we have lost our value system.

To demonstrate this is the third approach through which I have become interested in the subject of democracy: the measuring system. What we measure determines what we do. There exist many parameters that we do not measure and this means that we do not take into account the effect that policy has on them. For example, we do not measure human capital and therefore we do not take into sufficient consideration that the policies of austerity destroy it. The same goes for social capital or that of the environment. The problem is therefore that we have lost sight of quality, even before we have lost sight of democracy.

Democracy is a meta-institution that must be capable of repairing itself: what path toward the future will we succeed in forging if it is no longer able to do so?



## **Nadia Urbinati**

### *Europe as a Democratic Laboratory*

The place in which we find ourselves today [Reggio Emilia, editor's note] is important, first of all, for the unity of Italy, because it was in this city that the Italian flag was created, and also for what happened after World War II, the liberation from Nazi-Fascism: the point from which Europe was born. The European Union was not born as an experiment in liberation; it was born in order to offer a promise to a continent, made up of different people, some of them even ancient enemies: to realize the great project of that which Immanuel Kant called "perpetual peace," or rather how to reconcile, with all their differences, constitutions that in some respects are identical (with respect, for example, to fundamental rights such as equality, political rights, limits of power, and abolition of that terrible thing that was unanimity in the governing regimes of Fascism and Nazism).

Europe was born precisely with this important commitment: to unite peace and freedom. Do not think, now that we are finally at peace after so many years, that it is easy to retain these two things together. It all began in the simplest way, which is to say with deflation. Europe was an experiment in the deflation of tensions and grand ideals, in order to create a process of integration through bureaucracy, through rules and strategies for solving problems.

Today, after sixty years of Europe, we are here with two institutions holding it together: money and the court of human rights. These are nonpolitical institutions that set some limits on politics. Now is the time to realize the political level: democratic decision-making bodies, not only an intergovernmental mediation of compromises between countries large and small, strong and weak, but the possibility of having a common budget policy and a common immigration policy to handle these new waves of migrants.

These people are not disenfranchised and voiceless guests. During the Roman Republic an institution was invented called *civitas sine suffrage*, or: citizenship without the right to vote. This means that there are situations in which people need to be able to have equal



rights and the possibility of having a representative voice, in order that they may be heard by political bodies.

Many migrants and people without any documentation and therefore considered illegal continue to arrive in Europe, but nevertheless they must be able to have a voice. I agree with those who say that migrants should not be entitled to the complete rights of fully fledged citizens; however it is necessary that they have a political identity that gives them a voice and representation. It is possible: if the ancient Romans did it, why shouldn't we, in modern Europe? We are therefore in a time of experimentation, of great opportunity: we can take a step backward and return to states and nations clashing with each other, threatening to unleash conflict, or we can move forward on the path of integration, which would mean building democracy – democracy being a great laboratory, an institution of imagination.

An initial challenge, therefore, is that of conceiving of the migrants differently, in order to give them a voice; to consider them not merely desperate human beings, not objects or recipients of charity, but thinking people; to invent forms of legal protection that go beyond certain human rights.

The second is to have also the courage to create a political Europe that can govern “European citizens” and not merely “citizens of the EU member states.”

I know that what I say may sound idealistic, but democracy thrives on utopias. John Humphrey Hubbard spoke of a “pragmatic utopia”: we should set ourselves goals, do what we can so that utopia is not something unattainable or stupid. We must be utopistic to the best of our ability. True democrats know that all this is possible and for this reason I believe democracy in Europe can certainly be an important laboratory and not just an ideology.

Anti-Europeanism can wear the guise of populism. It's possible. Although mistakenly, populism expresses something that the other parties have not been able to address: the disappointment of the citizens of Europe – with respect to all of the promises of distribution, of social democracy, of wellbeing in Europe – has been completely forgotten. In the last years of the crisis, with austerity programs,

with sacrifices, with cuts and the substitution of public with private, in practice we have left ourselves open to the populists, because it is they who have taken up the argument for welfare for their citizens and their countries. So the challenge is serious; we cannot underestimate it. These movements are often racist and discriminatory, and this is the first challenge for us. But there is something more complicated: populism is obviously an extreme; when it becomes a regime, what will there be then? Perhaps a dictatorial or majority regime. For the moment it is a democratic movement, but in the meantime we have to be firm in finding a good argument with which to respond. Imagine that the populists are in power and hold power in the key states of Europe: what would Europe's image be? This is the real challenge.



## **Carlo Feltrinelli**

### *Ten Books That Have Shaped Democracy*

Being invited to speak at the first session of the School of Democracy gives me great pleasure, naturally, but it also took me aback: the truth is that I have never done anything like this; I do not consider myself an intellectual, let alone someone who deals in politics, strictly speaking, apart from the civil participatory duties anyone has. If I were invited here it must be because I represent at least two cultural and scientific institutions that have crossed paths time and again with the history of the left – the Italian left and the international left – forging a route not without its uncertain and difficult junctures, but where, I believe, the goal has always been that the restlessness of a certain Enlightenment vocation should prevail over the dogmatic or anti-modern slumber of a certain conservative world, and of the left as well.

This year, the publishing house Feltrinelli celebrates sixty years in business as an independent publisher. It could be said that its début coincided with the publication, in 1957, of a novel that transformed literary history, in addition to the entire twentieth century: *Doctor Zhivago*, by Boris Pasternak. Think of it: a young communist publisher, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who refuses to bow to the diktat of the Soviet regime and the Communist Party, the party with which he was registered, to publish, defend, and disseminate what would soon become the first great bestseller of modern publishing. Whereby the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* becomes first and foremost the inspiration of a literary and aesthetic stance that denies and triumphs over the ideological and political mindset of the Cold War, giving powerful meaning to the nascent adventure of an Italian – soon-to-be international – publishing house. For the sake of curiosity, I would like to bring your attention to a book that for me is extremely compelling on the complex editorial adventure that led to the publication of Boris Pasternak's masterpiece. This is *Inside The Zhivago Storm*, edited by the philosopher Paolo Mancosu, of the University of California, published in English last year in the Feltrinelli Foundation's *Annals* and also available as an e-book.

One could say there are three leitmotifs that inspired our publishing house's original intent: "a coherent and consistent anti-Fascism,"

“the search for a form of coexistence by countries of different economic and political structures,” and attention “to the new forces of the Third World that emerged from colonial rule.” This approach, along with our pursuit of innovative and avant-garde forms of new literature, is what has characterized the imprint of our editorial undertaking. This has meant, for example, discovering the Latin American imagination of hope and liberation (from *The Diary of Che* to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*) to demands for radical change in the late ‘sixties and ‘seventies, also relevant to Giangiacomo Feltrinelli’s political and existential journey. The necessity of rethinking political theory more maturely as a result of the end of the great ideologies that had defined the twentieth century instead characterized the 1980s, when we first introduced into the Italian debate the great figures of the Anglo-Saxon school of political philosophy (from John Rawls to Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer to Isaiah Berlin). At the beginning of the ‘nineties we immediately raised the issue of new technologies, exploring the social problems posed by their impact, with authors such as Donna Haraway, Mike Davies, Stefano Rodotà, and Manuel Castells. The lightening-quick process of economic and cultural globalization has led us in the last twenty years to reflect critically on what’s been happening, also to identify with the causes of social movements both Italian and international, and to champion the best reflections on the radicalization of part of the Islamic world (the studies of Gilles Kepel, Olivier Roy, and Ahmed Rashid, not to mention the seminal *Orientalism* by Edward Said). I wanted to make this brief foray into our catalog in order to present to a non-Italian audience our work of the past sixty years.

And now I come to the other institution I have the honor of representing: the Feltrinelli Foundation, also the result of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli’s idealist drive. In this case it came about just after the Second World War, at the end of the ‘forties, and from a very simple idea: it is not possible to study the labor movement until you have done an enormous amount of work collecting sources, materials, and documentation. Forward thinking cannot be separated from memory; this is a perpetual tension. It was necessary to reconstitute the threads of a tradition that Nazism, Fascism, and war had cut. It was necessary to take stock of a world that seemed an open crater, and to find the right tools with which to change it. That was the

idea, and the idea would be converted into the construction of one of the world's most impressive centers of documentation on the history of ideas and social movements from the French Revolution to the present day. But the Foundation's contribution to the history of the socialist labor movement consists not only of the breadth and depth of the documents it has accumulated, but also in the development of the same, which saw a new generation of Italian historians at work, ones with strong references and international interlocutors. The topics taken into consideration cover the whole of the history of the labor and socialist movement, beginning with its origins, its struggles, its achievements, its degeneration, and even its horrors.

Between the mid-seventies and late 'eighties our foundation became a "place for the confrontation of ideas in the space of society's knowledge." This happens when the tradition of the sciences and historical disciplines comes into conflict with the development of economic theory, of sociology, of the scientific method, of science and of political philosophy. It is an "open field" that ideally brings us up to the present day and to a Feltrinelli Foundation engaged in the scientific curatorship of the Universal Exhibition that will open in Milan on May 1 and which is dedicated to the theme Feeding The Planet: Energy For Life – also to the coordination of the editorial board of the Milan Charter that will be presented next week very much as the legacy of Expo 2015. But we will talk about our Foundation's projects at the end of this speech, with a thorough presentation that I would like to give to you with Massimiliano Tarantino. Now, however, and not without some hesitation, I come to what I imagined myself wanting to talk about today.

### *Thinking about the contemporary world: Ten books, ten stages*

Thinking about the contemporary world is difficult. We live immersed in it. We don't have the distance necessary to see it, to understand it. We have the urgency of responding instantaneously to stimuli that are instantaneous.

It is obvious that the simpler, more economical road is the one in which we apply old answers to new problems. If I may put in my two cents: the desultory, so-called "left" of Italy is the champion of this.

Coming up with new answers to new problems requires much more time. It requires the protracted timeline of invention. And invention is always the realm of hesitation: not the shortest path between two points, but the longer path – the much longer path.

So what I've had in mind is a brief and digressive narrative of the contemporary world. A counter-narrative, a narrative that rises anew from the great dominant one. A narrative that proceeds backwards, dismantling the evidence, the obvious answers. A narrative marked out by ten stages: one book for each stage, a gesture for each book: a gesture that seems to me to summarize it, to offer an indication of how to think about the present world – of how to think, that is, about the many worlds that comprise our present.

### *Stage One / Taking a long view of the present*

Tony Judt was a great contemporary historian, a Jew born in London in 1948 and who died in his early sixties in 2010. His spiritual testament is collected in a long interview entitled *Thinking the Twentieth Century*. Judt's snapshot of the past century looks like this: it is a century that begins with a catastrophic war, that destroys the equilibrium of nineteenth-century Europe, and that triggers a spate of revanchism (nations against nations, classes against classes, ideologies against ideologies), a series of chain reactions that would become different forms of totalitarianism; then there is the Second World War, which derives from this directly; then there is the long postwar period, rife with repercussions evermore remote and indirect but always tied to that first Big Bang – from Korea to Afghanistan, from the Iraq of the early 'nineties to the Iraq of today.

What remains in play, after the fall of ideologies, is the monster that is global neoliberalism, the only view of the world that has survived because it's the only one to have had the shrewdness not to present itself as a worldview. Liberalism presents itself as non-ideological, non-political, non-partisan. The pure and simple and reasonable and disenchanting administration of things. And yet was not the Great War born precisely out of liberalism, out of failures of industrialism, out of the atrocious tensions of capitalism? In the end, the origin of the problem reinvents itself as the only solution to the problem. Chapeau.

### *Stage Two / Asking ourselves who benefits from the great narrative*

Wolfgang Streeck wrote a book called *Buying Time*. He is an heir of the Frankfurt School, led at the time by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. He is not, however, an heir to Habermas, who believed in progress through dialogue, in mutual acknowledgment of good reason, in the idea of a universal justice that makes its way through the spread of this virtuous exercise of shared reasonableness. Streeck is an angry and partisan heir capable of accounts that are rigorous but not neutral, objective but not equidistant.

Streeck teaches us to ask ourselves who benefits from the great narrative of the wasteful populaces, the senseless States that have squandered immense riches, and that are now quite rightly being brought into line by the banks and markets. The title of his book says it clearly: *Buying Time*. According to Streeck, the capitalism of the period following World War II sought only to gain time, to postpone the catastrophe clearly foreseen in the war rooms, to wring a few years of good business out of the crisis that awaited just around the corner. The wasteful States have enjoyed immense loans to sustain a level of consumption that is increasingly high, increasingly widespread, increasingly inflated. Who granted those loans? Banks. Who needed those loans? Not so much consumers as manufacturers, industrialists, capital, because only in this way could the wasteful people waste as much as commerce needed them to.

So, Streeck shows that the central banks have never been the guarantors of any equilibrium, disinterested, natural, or neutral. And that the States, much earlier than we have imagined, began to allow politics to be dictated by economy (not by the economy as an automatic and anonymous mechanism, but by the economy wanted and desired by certain economic players, by a certain economic class). Today, the banks are asking the States to pay a steep bill, which is primarily the banks' bill, not the States'. Again, chapeau.

### *Stage Three / Looking the reality of capital in the eye*

Thomas Piketty has written a book of enormous international success: *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. It says one thing very clear, very evidently, and which must serve as our starting point. But it is something



so old-fashioned, so unspeakable, so out of the choir, that it requires six hundred pages dense with tables and economic analyses to say it.

Technically, the Piketty thesis goes like this: the rate of return on capital is always greater than the economic growth rate. Translated, this means that capital produces inequality and not redistribution, as we have heard ad nauseam from its defenders. After years, even decades of our hearing it sermonized that, at least as an unintended effect, at least as a side effect, capital would yield the redistribution of wealth, Piketty steps in to show that the dynamics of capital cannot work if they don't produce a concentration of wealth, a concentration in the hands of an increasingly exclusive group, concentration within increasingly colossal and increasingly monopolistic cartels.

The idea that we need a few counterweights has regained legitimacy. The idea that the real conflict is between work and income returns to take center stage. The idea that taxes are sacrosanct but we must ask ourselves how to redistribute the burden of taxation is the mainstay of Piketty's movement and of many others that now draw on the work of this economist who, incidentally, is barely more than forty years old.

#### *Stage Four / Recognizing the violence of ourselves in the violence of others*

Olivier Roy has written a book that sheds light on the desperation of those who come to plant bombs in our cities, of those who threaten the serene life of our just and peaceful society with their violence. Olivier Roy has written a book called Holy Ignorance.

The questions Roy begins with are simple. Why do tens of thousands of Muslims convert to Christianity or become Jehovah's Witnesses? How is it that the fastest-growing religion in the world is Pentecostalism? Why does Salafism, a particularly severe Muslim doctrine, attract young Europeans?

The answer: because he who has only crumbs clings to those crumbs. He who is constrained by ignorance turns ignorance into something valuable, an identity, a weapon. He who is a victim of destruction will know only destruction as a way of being. Holy ignorance is the distorting mirror in which Olivier Roy teaches us to recognize the

features of our own clean, wise, peaceful, and prosperous faces. The violence of others is our own. How can we make something of this uncomfortable discovery?

### *Stage Five / Multiply the fissures within the landscape*

Everywhere people are talking about Islam and the violence of Islam. As if it existed, Islam. As if it were a unified, compact, and homogeneous entity. Reza Aslan has written a book called *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. His proposal is simple. It is not a clash of civilizations that we face; it is not a clash between Islam and the West. It is a clash between one component of Islam and another component of Islam.

Certainly, each of the key moments of Islamic history has the potential to occasion a confrontation with the West. The rise of Muhammad in the Arabia of the sixth century, the trauma of twentieth-century decolonization, the periodic explosion of fundamentalism... Reza Aslan retraces this story; he rereads fifteen hundred years of clashes between Islam and the West as an uninterrupted series of clashes within Islam and within its vision of the West, within its relationship with Christianity and within its relationship with European reason.

From this emerges a suggestion that opens a window onto a crucial geopolitical issue, but that can easily be applied in various different contexts. Where we are used to seeing an opposition between two fronts, where it's easier to see two opposing blocs, we must multiply the lines of demarcation, multiply the differences within each front, bring to the fore the many divergent lines that intersect them. Old alliances, the old rules of the game — these become impractical. New constellations and new alliances become possible, often practical, at times even inevitable.

### *Stage Six / Deciphering recolonization disguised as globalization*

We come from twenty years of reflection on globalization – that is, on the supposed Westernization of the world. The entire world becomes European, the entire world becomes industrial or post-industrial, the entire world becomes financial or post-financial. Is this really the case? Might we be missing something?

A book on Africa helps us to reflect on the converse of this story: Congo. It was written by David van Reybrouck, a writer and anthropologist who accompanies us into the former Belgian colony to see first-hand all of the violence of one of the most brutal colonial adventures in European history. Colonization was followed by a decolonization that took place in the name of equally violent local groups. And in the end came the silent re-colonization that the Congo has been undergoing in recent years, recent months. Entire areas of Congolese territory are being bought every day by multinational companies hungry for natural resources. Entire areas are being bought by Chinese money that will annex not only the territories but also the inhabitants of those territories, casting a net of new jurisdictions over those territories and over those inhabitants who are no longer Congolese and yet not really Chinese.

The result: a new colonialism, but not a form of globalization. A new form of capitalism, but not in the spirit of the West. A new form of deterritorialization, but not without nationalistic connotations and precise geopolitical allegiances. How can we grasp this reconfiguration of affinities that shift, that yield utterly unexpected alliances, areas of miscegenation that are indefinable except within a new conceptual framework, no longer based on the simple opposition of local versus global, national versus supranational, politics versus economics, law versus finance, culture versus money?

*Stage Seven / Resume thinking in terms of collective subjects rather than individual ones*

We come from thirty years of criticism of the State: the State is the "old," the torpor of bureaucracy, the anonymity of obtuse power, the eternal reproduction of bloated and self-referential structures. In the end came the idea that globalization has swept away all power founded on a place and rooted in place, all forms of government that forge welfare projects over time and build a common and shared existence. Globalization would be everywhere and nowhere; it would act with instantaneous speed; it would anticipate, at most, a future as fine and thin as a blade.

But one has only to look deeper, as Mariana Mazzucato teaches us to do in *The Entrepreneurial State*, and to ask ourselves a real question, without prejudices, without blinders on: Who is the entrepreneur who bets on the longer-term trajectory, and thus the more difficult one, but also the one that is more cost-effective and shareable horizontally? Who finances broad sectors of research that private investors would never take on because they are too risky and exposed? Who invests in the green economy, in telecommunications, in nanotechnologies, in pharmaceuticals?

The answer is simple. The State. The State, through its own decentralized funds, through a strategy that feeds on a broad differentiation of risk, to finance broadly the development of new products, of revolutionary technologies such as those that have changed our world: the Internet, the touch screen, GPS. The Entrepreneurial State is a contradiction in terms for the great dominant narrative. For those who look reality in the eye, the State is the only entity able to sustain so many undertakings, undertakings that are so risky, so fecund, so intersecting and horizontal.

### *Stage Eight / Seeing hope in fear*

I will now tell you about a book that can cause great fear or give great hope. It was written by two scholars at MIT in Boston: McAfee and Brynjolfsson. It's called *The Second Machine Age*.

The book says two things. The first is this: with the first machine revolution, in 1700, machines took work out of the hands of men in order to transfer it to the cogs of apparatuses, presses, assembly lines. They removed work from the hands of men and transferred it into men's minds, to create a new kind of work: operating, coordinating, supervising, designing. Even a worker, in this sense, was the fruit of this reinvention of work, this reinvention of man.

Today something similar is happening, say the authors of this book. The machines of today are removing jobs from the minds of men by assuming more and more of the functions of coordination, supervision, and design. And thus the first machine revolution, resulting in ever-fewer people needed to perform manual labor, is compounded by the second machine revolution, which results in ever-fewer people needed to perform mental work, cognitive work.

But even this is not the second thing the authors explain. The book does more than establish this correlation: work is removed from the human hand, then work is removed from the human mind; in short, this leads to rising unemployment, rampant unemployment, unemployment that is not a side effect but a structural effect of our economy. The second thing is this: just as the first revolution eliminated manual work and invented cognitive work, just as it created manual unemployment in favor of cognitive employment, so the second revolution is creating cognitive unemployment, and we are all caught up in the drama of this unemployment, and we have a thousand good reasons to be concerned by it and to work together to develop some measures to attend to this transition. But at the same time we must remain open; we must decipher the signs of the arrival of a new anthropological type, we must seize the opportunity of this slow and dramatic formation of a kind of man who does not work in the ways we used to be familiar with – a man who does not work with his hand and who does not even work with his cognitive mind, his organizational mind, his conceptual mind...

With what mind will he work, this man? Or, if there won't be work, what other, different kind of work will hold together the society created by this new man who effectively is already among us? It's a frightening question, as I said. Maybe, however, it's a question that not only breeds fear, but gives us permission to open ourselves up to something new, to be alert to the clues, the signs of the future.

### *Stage Nine / Work almost invisibly, like ants*

An interviewer once asked Andrea Zanzotto, the great poet: "What is there to do in these very difficult, very gloomy times?" The poet's answer was startling: "Work like ants, almost invisibly."

A few years ago Richard Sennett wrote a valuable book full of stories, news, facts great and small, all framed by a revolutionary vision. A vision not of the entrepreneurial man, the anthropological myth of our time, but the craftsman, the artistic man, the man who creates. It is an antirhetorical myth, his. An upside-down myth. A quotidian myth. The artisanal man is the man who pursues a mix of perso-

nal fulfillment, perfection of his work, manual wisdom, contextual knowledge, an overall view, attention to detail, the ability to cooperate, individual genius...

Sennett speaks of the ancient workshops where Raphael and Leonardo learned their trade, or of the ateliers where Stradivarius took shape. But he also speaks of the kitchens of a provincial restaurant, and of many other places of secret, daily, sustainable craftsmanship. He queries the miraculous workings that are synergy between mind and hand, desire and reason, of an idea and the material in which it will assume form. He navigates between small and great, the everyday and the sublime. He reliably identifies a middle road, a creative capacity by which to measure and reconcile man and world. The West has long acknowledged this sense of proportion, this sense of creativity that is energetic, concrete, happy. It's forgotten it. Perhaps it's rediscovering it.

*Stage Ten / Look for the "new" where you least expect to find it*

The last book I'll tell you about is *Laicismo indiano: Indian laicism*. It was written many years ago by Amartya Sen.

India is not only the country of origin of Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics and a thinker who has inherited a double tradition that is both Western and Eastern, a double vision oriented to the breadth of the Western universe and to the Eastern attention to context, to the local dimension, to the particularity of cultures, to autoregulated systems, systems that are human and natural, economic and ethical.

For Amartya Sen, India is the place of "concreteness." It's the place of another sort of reason, reason that is practical rather than abstract. Another sort of reason is not the "other" of reason; it's not mythology or irrationality; it's not the antidemocratic despotism of castes or the obscure narrative of meditation that we don't know how to comprehend. India is the place of another kind of reason, of a refined, philosophical culture, of an art of bodies and senses, of an artisanry of speech and eloquence that has fed a long tradition of public debate, and then a subtle legal mind, inventive and rich

with creativity. Amartya Sen's India is an anthropological treasure, a treasure from which the West could glean a less functionalist mentality, a mentality less abstractly economic, less individualistic and claustrophobic with respect to freedom and happiness.

*Conclusion / A final book, not of this world*

I have spoken to you of Africa, of India, of the Arab world. I have also spoken a bit of old Europe and of what was once the New World, America. It always seems to me important to look beyond the borders of home, whatever that home may be.

That said, in our West, many are convinced that, to foster innovation and to set the imagination in motion, it is an inevitable must to erase and eliminate a sense of the past. The design of new ways of living together requires razing the legacy. I think this is a profoundly misguided notion. The political and social imagination avails itself of listening to the voices of humanity behind us, of remembering social and institutional experiments as well as the ruins, victims, and catastrophes strewn throughout our history. This sense of the past is, at least in part, what feeds one's sense of possibility and exercises the political imagination. A moment of crisis – as we know and as our sense of the past and perhaps our desire for the future suggest to us – is an amalgam of hardship and opportunity. Certainly it is very difficult to find new paths toward a more worthy future. But we know two things that must be borne in mind as we exercise our political imaginations: first, the inflationary and conservative conversion of difficult things, even very difficult things, into impossible things, is never a good move. Second, as Max Weber taught us in the terrible 'twenties of the last century, "it is quite correct, and confirmed by all historical experience, that what's possible would never be achieved if in this world one does not attempt, time and again, the impossible."

## **Christopher Bickerton & Carlo Invernizzi Accetti** *Party Democracy, between Populism and Technology*<sup>1</sup>

*“Instead of the alarms and excursions of the past,  
we now have technocrats versus populists.”*

(Niall Ferguson)<sup>2</sup>

Observers of contemporary Western democracies have increasingly taken note of two important developments. One is the empowerment of non-majoritarian institutions whose legitimacy is drawn from their technical competence and administrative expertise. This “rise of the unelected” (Vibert, 2007) prevails across many policy domains. In monetary policy, independent central banks have gone from being the exception to the norm. There were around ten independent central banks at the end of the 1980s. A decade later, the number had risen to over one hundred (Marcussen, 2005: 904). In fields such as health care, media, environment, and finance, the proliferation of independent bodies with regulatory and executive functions has been of strikingly recent vintage. The EU, a technocratic body par excellence, had only two semi-autonomous agencies prior to 1992. Today, there are thirty-five, with many of them having substantial monitoring and oversight powers (Dehousse, 2013: 15-16). In his most recent writings, Jürgen Habermas warned against the “lure of technocracy” that he argued hangs over the European project (Habermas, 2015).

The other important development is the rise of populism. Whilst this term has a long history, scholarly interest in populism spiked from the mid-1990s onwards with Cas Mudde writing of the “populist zeitgeist” in 2004 (Canovan, 1981; Gellner and Ionescu, 1969; Taggart, 2000; Mudde, 2004; Ardit, 2004; Arbertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Muller, 2013; Urbinati, 2014). Across Western democracies, we observe the emergence and success of a variety of populist movements and parties, appealing directly to “people” in order to mobilise opposition against established institutions and elites. In Europe, populist mobilisation challenges the traditional Left/Right distinctions that have structured political life for generations. In the 2014 European elections, much of Marine Le Pen’s campaign in France was run on the idea that the National Front was “neither left- nor right-wing”



(*ni de droit et ni de gauche*), but rather a defender of popular sovereignty against the French and European political establishments. In Spain, the leader of the Podemos party, Pablo Iglesias, mixes a classically left-wing economic agenda with coruscating attacks on the political casta who he claims no longer represents any interests other than its own (Iglesias and Rivero, 2014; Iglesias, 2015). Similar language is used by Beppe Grillo in Italy. In the 2013 elections, Grillo spoke of the PDL and the PD-minus-L, referring to the main right-wing party (*Il Popolo della Libertà*) and the main centre-left party, *the Partito Democratico*.

In contemporary discussions of these two developments, it is most common to posit them as opposites to each another. Whilst technocracy assumes that un-elected experts are best placed to consider what is in the public interest and to make decisions on the behalf of “the people,” populism asserts the power of the people against the establishment. Populist figures – from Marine Le Pen in France to Alexis Tsipras in Greece – regularly criticize the shadowy world of technocrats that they associate with the IMF and the European “Troika.” Technocratic bodies and their representatives often warn against the dangers of a populist backlash. When Syriza looked likely to win the 2015 elections in Greece, the president of the European Commission weighed in on the debate, saying that he would prefer to see “known faces” win in Greece and warned against “extremist forces” like Syriza taking power, something he described as “the wrong outcome” (EurActiv, 2015). Such examples reinforce the idea that populism and technocracy also contain opposing economic policies: economic protectionism and expansionary fiscal policy in the case of populism, and market liberalization and fiscal discipline in the case of technocracy (Panizza, 2009; Reynié, 2013; Dargent, 2015).

There are clearly many reasons to think of populism and technocracy as two opposing forces in contemporary political life. However, to focus exclusively on these antagonisms is to miss the affinities that also characterize the relationship. These affinities are important as they challenge the views typically held of how these two prominent developments in contemporary political life relate to each other. Upon closer analysis, we can in fact observe that populism and technocracy enjoy a relationship that is more complex than merely one of pure antagonism or opposition. For instance, both phenomena

are often present within single political figures. Studying the political style of Barack Obama, David Bromwich observed that he adopts two different tones depending on his audience: the folksy populist tone when speaking to those he considers “ordinary people” and the more elevated technocratic tone that he uses when speaking to policy professionals. There is little outside of these “two distinct registers of diction” (Bromwich, 2010). Affinities are evident in other key political figures, such as former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Both presented themselves as direct interlocutors with the people whilst also adopting a managerial view of political life. This similarity was behind the term “Sarkoberlusconisme,” referring to this distinctive blend of populist and technocratic styles (Musso, 2008). The philosopher Slavoj Žižek went as far as coining the term “post-political populism” to capture this close affinity between populism and technocracy, which he described as “a mediatic-administrative government legitimizing itself in populist terms” (Žižek, 2008: 268).

To understand what makes this coexistence possible, we can observe that within the field of concrete political discourse the notions of populism and technocracy are in fact frequently used in a complementary manner, as vectors for a critique of the same political object: a specific conception of democracy, which for the purposes of this paper we shall refer to as “party democracy.” This term refers to a vision of democracy characterized by two distinctive features: a conception of politics as structured around the conflict between organized interests (i.e., parties) and a conception of democracy as defined by a specific set of institutionalized procedures revolving around the notion of majority rule.<sup>3</sup> Another way of stating our key thesis is therefore that, beyond their apparent opposition, there is also a significant degree of convergence in the way the notions of populism and technocracy are used and defined, beginning with the fact that they are both construed as opposites of the same thing: “party democracy.” In this sense, despite the differences in the way the two terms are used and defined, they ultimately appear to partake in a common overarching project.

The rest of this paper will be dedicated to an attempt at substantiating this claim, through a more detailed analysis of a couple of exemplary and highly influential political theory texts. This analysis is intended to tease out more precisely what the various different uses of the notions of populism and technocracy have in common.

We begin from an analysis of one of the most influential recent discussions of the notion of populism, contained in Ernesto Laclau's monograph *On Populist Reason*. This text is explicitly presented as a response to the difficulties experienced by political science, and in particular political theory, in formulating a clear and analytically viable definition of the term. In order to propose a more viable definition, Laclau accordingly starts from a comprehensive distinction between two different ways in which a political order can be constructed, based on the way in which it articulates or assimilates the various kinds of social "demands" that are raised from within it. At one extreme, he contends, demands can be dealt with as "singular" occurrences, which for him means trying to find specific solutions for every particular problem that is raised. This is supposed to be the characteristic feature of a kind of politics Laclau describes as purely "administrative" or "democratic," with reference in particular to the kind of "technocratic pragmatism" he sees as having emerged as dominant in the contemporary "post-ideological" age (Laclau, 2005a: 125-128).

At the other extreme, Laclau contends that social demands can be assimilated by being grouped with one another in what he calls a "chain of equivalences." This is supposed to be the distinctive feature of the kind of politics Laclau describes as "populist," in the sense that it is characterized by the attempt to construct an overarching political entity (i.e., a "people") out of a multitude of separate social demands. The key point for Laclau, however, is that because these various individual demands are initially assumed to be qualitatively different from each other, the only way they can be grouped together in a single entity is by being collectively opposed to something else, against which they are said to form a common front. The implication is that what Laclau describes as the "populist" mode of politics can only succeed in defining a specific identity of the "people" by opposing the latter to some figure of an "other," posited as a sort of constitutive "outside." Thus, populism is ultimately assumed to be a mode of structuring the political space in terms of a binary distinction between the "people" and their "other," rather than in terms of a multitude of social "demands" in search of a practical "solution" (Laclau, 2005a:93-124). This overarching conception is summarized by Laclau himself in a comment on his own theory made in a chapter he wrote for an edited book on populism:

We have presented political practices as operating at diverse points of a continuum whose two *reductio ad absurdum* extremes would be an institutionalist discourse, dominated by a pure logic of difference, and a populist one, in which the logic of equivalence operates unchallenged. These two extremes are actually unreachable: pure difference would mean a society so dominated by administration and by the individualization of social demands that no struggle around internal frontiers – i.e., no politics – would be possible; and pure equivalence would involve such a dissolution of social links that the very notion of ‘social demand’ would lose any meaning... (Laclau, 2005b:46).

What we have here therefore initially appears as a conception of the political defined by the opposition between “populism” on one hand and “administration” (or “technocracy”) on the other. What we would like to show, however, is that on closer inspection it emerges that this whole schema is predicated on an implicit critique of precisely the two key features we have associated with the notion of party democracy: a conception of politics as structured around the conflict between organized interests (i.e., parties) and a conception of democracy as defined by a specific set of institutionalized procedures revolving around the notion of majority rule. To illustrate this point, it is useful to refer to a second body of work that, although stemming from a very different theoretical background than Laclau’s, proves to display some uncanny elements of overlap with it: Philip Pettit’s work on the conditions for effective deliberation within a broadly republican conception of democracy. In particular, the following analysis will draw extensively from an article in which Pettit explicitly contrasts what he calls the “populist” or “plebiscitarian” conception of democracy to his preferred form of “depoliticized” deliberative democracy (Pettit, 2004).

The overall purpose of this article is to defend the normative ideal of a politics oriented towards the pursuit of the “common good” (which for Pettit is implicit in the notion of “deliberative democracy”) from the dangers that for him stem from an excessive politicization of the process of making collectively binding decisions. These dangers are identified as falling into three main categories: “popular passions,” which for Pettit correspond to the irrational impulses and desires of the masses in responding to concrete political problems; “aspirational morality,” which for him corresponds to the misguided tendency to privilege abstract solutions embodying normatively “pure” ideals, instead of confronting the material consequences that are likely to result from any concrete decision; and “sectional interests,” which are intended as a reference to

the fact that individuals or social groups may have incentives to pursue their own private gain rather than or in contradiction to what Pettit calls the “common good” (Pettit, 2004: 54-58).

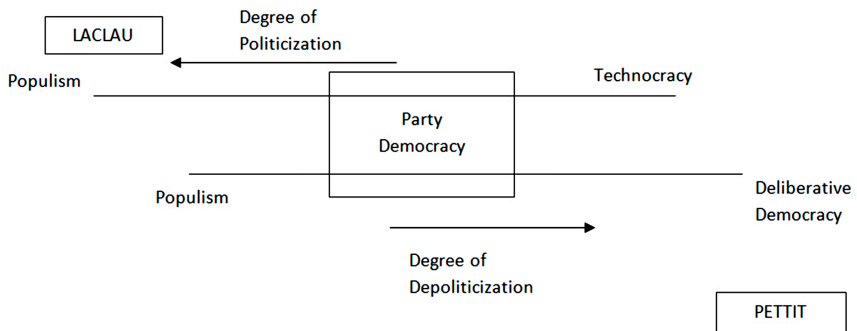
In order to address this set of problems, Pettit contends that the process of making collectively binding decisions needs to be “depoliticized” in several ways, which have in common the idea of removing certain specific areas of policy from the direct control of elected representatives in order to entrust them to the oversight of independent bodies specifically designed to be more apt topursuing the common good. With respect to the problem of “sectional interests,” for example, Pettit recommends the creation of an independent “commission” thatwould “operate at arm’s length from parliament and government” and whose function would be “to review and approve any proposed government expenditures ... that benefit constituencies which are marginal in stipulated degrees” (Pettit, 2004:53-54). Similarly, with respect to the problem of “popular passions,” Pettit contends that:

the only hope would seem to lie in depoliticization. It would require parliament to appoint a commission representative of relevant bodies of expertise and opinion, as well as of the people as a whole, to oversee [the activities of government]... Parliament might well retain ultimate control over such a commission but by putting its control at arm’s length... it would serve the cause of deliberative democracy rather better than does the status quo (Pettit, 2004: 55).

Although Pettit does not explicitly use the concept of “technocracy” to describe his proposal, he does contrast it explicitly with what he calls a “populist” or “plebiscitarian” conception of democracy, which for him is characterized by the fact that all the powers for making collectively binding decisions are granted to “a parliamentary majority” (Pettit, 2004:52). This suggests that implicit in this text there is an overall conception of the political spectrum that has many features in common with the one we have already encountered in Laclau’s text above – even though the overall normative orientation of these two respective theories is almost diametrically opposed: while on one hand Laclau seeks to defend “populism” by opposing it to a depoliticized form of purely administrative “technocracy,” on the other hand Pettit seeks to defend a depoliticized conception of “deliberative democracy” by contrasting it withwhat he alternatively calls “populist,” “plebiscitarian,” or simply “majoritarian” democracy.

The most important element of complementarity between these two theories, however, lies in the fact that, even though their overarching normative outlooks are in this sense diametrically opposed, on closer inspection it emerges that they both ultimately also function as criticisms of the same thing, which is precisely what we have defined as “party democracy” above; that is, a conception of politics as structured around the conflict between partisan interpretations of the general will, within the framework of a set of majoritarian procedures. This element of complementarity between Laclau’s and Pettit’s respective theories emerges clearly in the fact that both ultimately assimilate the characteristic features of what we have called “party democracy” within the semantic framework of the specific concept that their theories are meant to criticize (i.e., “technocracy” in the case of Laclau and “populism” in the case of Pettit). On one hand, Laclau is explicitly dismissive of the concept of “democracy” itself, which he lumps together with what he calls the “administrative” way of dealing with social demands as singular problems to be solved individually (Laclau, 2005:125-128). On the other hand, Pettit unproblematically describes the idea that political decisions ought to be taken by a “parliamentary majority” as “plebiscitarian” and later also as “populist” (Pettit, 2004:52 and 56). Thus, the implicit point of convergence between their respective theories lies in their common opposition to a conception of democracy as the self-government of an internally divided (i.e., politically fractured) conception of the people through the procedures of majoritarian rule.

This point can be illustrated graphically by the following diagram:



Here, we have represented the spectrum that defines the space of the political for Laclau by a horizontal line that runs from the maximum degree of politicization on the left (assumed by the author to correspond to the notion of "populism") to its minimum degree on the right (assumed by the author to correspond to the notion of "technocracy"). Similarly, we have represented Pettit's conception of the political spectrum by a horizontal line that is meant to represent increasing degrees of depoliticization, from what the author calls "populism" on the left to "deliberative democracy" on the right (the dotted continuation of the line being meant to represent further degrees of depoliticization, which may presumably be possible for Pettit).

The key point this diagram is meant to illustrate is that the two authors' respective ways of conceptualizing the political spectrum are such that the corresponding lines overlap in a zone that covers the conceptual space for the notion we have defined as "party democracy," which both authors oppose; thus the lines also suggest an explicit assimilation by their corresponding theories to the very concept they are designed to criticize. It is in this sense that we contend that contemporary theoretical articulations of both technocracy and populism ultimately converge over the fact that they are both predicated on an implicit critique of party democracy as we have defined it.

To be sure, if the above analysis is correct, it raises an important question concerning the normative desirability of "party democracy" itself. In this article, we have avoided taking a principled position on this issue, restricting ourselves to identifying the manner in which "party democracy" exists only implicitly, as an object of critique, in the way the notions of populism and technocracy are construed across the different theoretical works we have analyzed. It is, however, worth noting that this implicit dismissal of "party democracy" leaves us with a fundamental question concerning the way in which particular interests in contemporary societies are to be rearticulated in the language of the "common good," whilst also respecting the democratic imperative of the equal political representation of citizens.

Parties are far from perfect as expressions of opinion and will, but they are at least, as we argued above, attempts at combining the representation of interests with respect for the procedural rules of majoritarian politics. They exist as ways of mediating the particular

and the general interest, whilst also playing to the partisanship required of majoritarian politics. Critics of “party democracy,” by contrast, tend to dismiss the notion of legitimate disagreement within society by positing in its place some notion of an absolute “truth”: as given by “the people” or by evidence and the judgment of experts. At issue therefore lie some fundamental questions about democracy, truth, and the nature of political conflicts in contemporary societies – questions we may find much more difficult to answer if the possibility of “party democracy” is excluded by the acceptance of populism and technocracy as the new structuring cleavage of contemporary political life.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This chapter draws on an argument developed in greater detail – and with reference to different sources – in Bickerton and Invernizzi Accetti (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Niall Ferguson (2015) “The nasty Greek outcomes that democracy precludes,” *Financial Times*, 4/5 July 2015.

<sup>3</sup> According to Manin, the expression “party democracy” is his own, and comes from a combination of the German “*Parteienstaat*” and the English “party government” (Manin, 1997: esp. 196, fn 6). For a classic exposition of the notion of the “*Parteienstaat*,” see Kelsen (1929); for a discussion of the notion of “party government,” see Katz (1986) and Mair (2007).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bickerton, C. J. and Invernizzi Accetti, C. (2015). “Populism and Technocracy: Opposites or Complements?,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, forthcoming. (Earlyview available online as of April 2015.)

Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Centeno, M. A. (1999). *Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.



- Centeno, M. A. (1993). "The New Leviathan: The Dynamics and Limits of Technocracy," *Theory and Society*, 22/3: 307-335.
- Dargent E. (2005). *Technocracy and Democracy in Latin America: The Experts Running Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dehousse, R. (2013). "The Politics of Delegation in the European Union," *Cahiers de Sciences Po*, 4/2013, 4-27.
- Duverger, M. (1954). *Political Parties. Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. New York: Wiley.
- Gellner, E. and Ionescu, G. (1969). *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*. New York: Macmillan.
- Habermas, J. (2015). *The Lure of Technocracy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Iglesias, P. (2015). "Understanding Podemos," *New Left Review*, 593, May-June, pp. 7-22.
- Kriesi, H. (2014). "The Populist Challenge," *West European Politics*, 537:2, 361-378.
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.
- Leonard, Mark (2011). *Four Scenarios for the Reinvention of Europe*. London: European Council of Foreign Relations. Available from: [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR43\\_REINVENTION\\_OF\\_EUROPE\\_ES-SAY\\_AW1.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR43_REINVENTION_OF_EUROPE_ES-SAY_AW1.pdf).
- Maier, C. (1981). "Fictitious Bonds... of Wealth and Law: On the Theory and Practice of Interest Representation." In S. Berger, ed. *Organizing Interests in Western Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mair, Peter (2000). "Partyless Democracy: Solving the Paradox of New Labour," *New Left Review*, 2.
- Mair, Peter (2002). "Populist Democracy vs. Party Democracy," in Mény, Yves and Surel, Yves, eds. *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Mair, Peter (2006). "Ruling the Void? The Hollowing of Western Democracy," *New Left Review*, 42.
- Mair, Peter (2008b). "The Challenge to Party Government," *West European Politics*, 31:1.

- Marcussen, M. (2005). "Central Banks on the Move," *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12:5, 903-925.
- Mudde, C. (2004). "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition*, 39:4, 542-563.
- Muller, J.-W. (2013). "We the People. On Populism and Democracy." Lecture, Institute for Human Sciences of the University of Vienna. Available from: <http://www.iwm.at/events/event/iwm-lecture-in-human-sciences-we-the-people-on-populism-and-democracy-ii/>.
- O'Donnell, G. (1994). "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, 5:1, 55-69.
- Offe, C. (2013). "Europe Entrapped," *Modern Law Review*, 19:5, 595-611.
- Pettit, Philip (2004). "Depoliticizing Democracy," *Ratio Juris*, 17:1.
- Rovir Kaltwasser, C. (2014). "Latin American Populism: Some Conceptual and Normative Lessons," *Constellations*, 21:4, 494-504.
- Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmidt, Vivienne (2006). *Democracy in Europe: The EU and National Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taggart, Paul (2000). *Populism*. New York: Open University Press.
- Urbainati, N. (2014). *Democracy Disfigured*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vibert, F. (2007). *The Rise of the Unelected: Democracy and the New Separation of Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weyland, K. (2001). "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics," *Comparative Politics*, 34:1, 1-22.



## **Malika Hamidi**

### *Feminism and Islam: an Antithetical Concept?*

In the late '80s, we witnessed the emergence of a female Muslim consciousness, both in the Islamic world and in the West. These female Muslim intellectuals and activists are part of the reformist tradition and are defined in large part as "Islamic feminists." Their voice rises from a re-appropriation of the political and religious debate to deconstruct the stereotypes that stem from their cause, but also to clarify the stakes and difficulties of the battles they carry out on various fronts.

According to some intellectuals and activists, Feminism and Islam seem bound to be in a conflicting relationship in the ideological and political sphere. Each of the two claims a vision of female emancipation on the basis of ideological currents that are considered contradictory. Presented as two opposing visions on the issue of women's role in society, can "Feminism and Islam" be reconciled? Based on such stereotypes or misunderstandings, does one see a conflicting relationship between them? Are feminism and Islam incompatible?

#### *1. Islam and Feminism: A mutual adaptation?"<sup>1</sup>*

These questions, which remain legitimate, imply the need to overcome the dominant stereotypes on both sides. Indeed:

- On the one hand, this feminist "Muslim" movement has its origins in a religious paradigm. While Islam would be the antithesis of the values that a certain feminist culture in the West claims to defend.
- On the other hand, a number of Muslim women in the Islamic world, as in the West, reject the feminist label for the "colonialist" and Western connotation that it carries.

Over the last fifteen years, the relationship between Islam and feminism has been at the center of a passionate and adversarial debate. This concept is as controversial as it is claimed by supporters of a Muslim feminism. In fact, we are witnessing the emergence of a movement of thought claimed by women who challenge the idea

that feminism is an ideology in itself, that it does not require additional adjectives. Nevertheless, these women do not actually renounce defining themselves as feminists.

Before exploring the compatibility of feminism and Islam, however, it seems necessary to recall the origin of the stereotypical perception and counter-perception between these two currents, which would appear to be diametrically opposed.

## 1.1. The prejudices face-to-face

### 1.1.1. *From colonial myths to stereotypes of the Muslim woman*

The history of this conflict does not date from the present. In the context of colonial feminism, E.-F. Gauthier expressed his "pity for the Muslim women forced into seclusion and tyrannized," and their emancipation seemed to him "a duty of humanity, a law of progress" (Gauthier, 1955: 42). Thus, through a certain number of texts (travelogues, novels, sociological studies...) colonial feminism constructed "the enemy" and all these texts exploited different elements that consented to the construction of a negative image of the Muslim woman. Women were victims of a religion that constrained them: "Islam has contributed to the demotion of women's position" (Bourilly, 1932: 69).

Already in 1896 *the Revue encyclopédique* had put in place one of the foundation stones on which the stereotypes about Arab women began to be constructed: "superstitious and sensual, the Moroccans make use of aphrodisiacs, amulets, and potions" (*Revue encyclopédique*, 1896: 903). These writings have clearly reinforced the negative portrayal of Arab and Muslim women.

Furthermore, there was the need and urgency to justify colonization: the woman's body was thus taken hostage by public debate. Colonial feminism emphasized the inextricable link between the oppression of Muslim women and Islam. This religion that was deemed archaic and misogynist was a central obstacle in the framework of the project of women's emancipation during the colonial period. Feminists belonging to this school of thought cultivated the image of a passive Muslim woman, exploited and reduced to silence, a woman who had to be "civilized" and liberated from the constraints of religion.

In the Western imagination, the Orient has long evoked *A Thousand and One Nights* and the world of harems in which women were completely subdued. A feeling of wonder and admiration mingled with a feeling of contempt and superiority. In 1978, Edward Said published his work *Orientalism* (Said, 1997), in which the principal thesis aims to demonstrate, through the reading of works of European culture produced from the end of the eighteenth century, that the East is presented as a creation of the West. "Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his World" (Said, 1997). So, Edward Said determined that the Orient is a "collective phantom" blinded by stereotypes concerning the people studied. His analysis of Orientalism reveals the attitude with which the West has come to know this "Other."

Therefore, in the book *Face-to-Face with Political Islam* (Burgat, 1996; 2005 English edition), and in particular in the part devoted to Islam and women, François Burgat, a researcher at CNRS (Institute for Research and Studies in the Arab and Muslim World, in Aix-en-Provence) highlights the "passionate" dimension from the point of view of the West on the relationship that exists between Islam and women's movements in the Arab world. In fact, the "media hype" of women threatened by Islamist movements in these countries only serves to distort the analysis of trends in progress, given the lack of understanding that establishes itself among Western public opinion and the reality of the context on the ground. "To settle for departing from radical Islamist discourse in order to identify a culprit with respect to the condition against women (...) without re-establishing the context of male-female relationships, is an act of superficiality, if not manipulation" (Rahal Sidhoum, 1994). From this position Burgat wonders whether the "question of women" is "more a question of the Western view of Islamism" (Burgat, 1996: 211), a view characterized by a number of clichés regarding Islam, clichés that ignore this female component that fully reveals its adherence to Islamic discourse.

A certain secular mindset in the West as in the Muslim world cannot conceive of a feminist discourse anchored in an Islamic framework. For this mindset, the Muslim religion can be only patriarchal and cannot encourage gender equality in the private sphere as in the public arena.

For her part, Nilufer Göle, sociologist and director of studies at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS), in Paris, highlights that there is another reason: the West's idea of itself as avant-garde. Western intellectuals are considered and behave as though they are avant-garde in relation to non-Western countries. Even feminism therefore would assume this posture of superiority in debates over women's issues: "The non-West is then not regarded as an interlocutor, but as a subject, in a relationship of intersubjective communication" (Gole, 1998).

The adversarial relationship between feminism and Islam appears then as a struggle between men and women, between East and West. Stereotypes and social representations of the Muslim woman, as they appear in the colonial feminist ideology, seem today to have an impact on the process of learning and understanding the concept of "Muslim feminism" on the part of some feminists, in the West as in the Islamic world.

This vision of the Muslim woman reminds us today of the essence of a certain feminist discourse that claims to be universal but essentializes the condition of Muslim women to justify a posture of superiority in terms of a project of emancipation. It is what Christine Delphy<sup>2</sup> has defined as the intersection of sexist and racist oppressions in the discourse of a certain feminist current of thought. This current considers in its studies and in its research the Muslim woman as "the Other," with the classic terminological corollaries "oppressed," "inferior," "traditional," "veiled"...

### 1.1.2. *The Western model of liberation in question:*

In the '80s, women in the Southern Hemisphere called into question the cultural representations of the feminists of the North and qualified the writings of Western feminists of colonialist discourse. Women from the Third World at that time denounced a "neo-colonial" approach in the struggle for equality between the sexes which concealed the differences.

Chandra Mohanty, postcolonial feminist theorist and a professor in the Department of Women's Studies at Syracuse University in the United States, has leveled an accurate critique, which retains all its relevance even twenty years later: she considers that the Western

feminist research depicts women of the Third World as victims. This is the criticism formulated in "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" (Mohanty, 1991). Mohanty reproaches the Western feminist research for creating the image of a "Third World woman" who has no depth, as a victim with no spirit of initiative, oppressed by family, culture, and religion (Jolly, 2002). Mohanty looks at representations of the Third World in the Western feminist writings on topics such as female genital mutilation or the "women in development" perspective. The works she studies consistently describe women as objects, victims, at the mercy of male violence, the colonial process, the Arab family system, the process of economic development or the Islamic code and not as actors, protagonists capable of reacting (Hamidi, 2008).

From the point of view of some activists and intellectuals of the Muslim world, who feel observed through the prism of an ethnocentrism made palatable by exotic sentiment and based on colonialist prejudices, the Western model of liberation is then called into question and challenged by these women who refute the idea of a "Muslim feminism."

The "feminist" current is in the grip of those negative connotations that take the collective unconscious back to the colonial period, to colonial feminism and the West. There are some who consider the feminist choice to be intrinsically linked to the secular choice – that there can be no liberation of a woman without rejection of religious references. According to other activists, women's rights in Islam can be claimed without reference to feminism. Secularism and feminism are considered Western concepts that have no place in their strategy of liberation, as these concepts are not the only guarantors of women's emancipation. We are faced with Muslim women engaged in the struggle for a re-reading of the sacred texts that permits the eradication of every misogynist interpretation and supports their arguments on values and on Muslim culture.

Merieme Yafout, of University Hassan II, in Morocco, notes that these activists refuse to generalize the Western model of liberation (Yafout, 2008). As an example, she cites Heba Raouf Ezzat, a professor of political science at Cairo University, who believes the Western model cannot claim to have a monopoly on the project of emancipation of all women:



This is important to clarify that the liberating potential of Islam is inherent in Islam itself and its history and is not a result of forces outside the culture and civilisation of Islam (...). The issue is not necessarily “feminist” and other terminology can – and sometimes should – be used instead of the confusion and the enforcement of the concept “feminist” on the Islamic concepts and their semantic field as a key concept.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the term “Muslim feminism” was created by Western intellectuals to classify a new form of activism by Muslim women in the West and in the Islamic world, according to Omaima Abou-Bakr. It is that which she has called “the hegemonic definition of the Other” (Abou-Bakr, 2001). While a number of Muslim intellectuals who are engaged in research on the rights of women in Islam deliberately assume this terminology, others reject it (Wadud, 2000, 2006; Ezzat, 1995) and prefer to use the term “believing women” (Barlas, 2002) or “Muslim women scholar-activists” (Webb, 2000). These definitions are disputed as much by some Western feminists as they are by some Muslim women, who are in any case engaged in the pursuit of gender equality. However, in her research, E. Warnock Fernea, Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas, explained that despite the refusal of this label, these women do not hesitate to derive some of their concepts and strategies from the feminist ideology (Warnock Fernea, 1998: 421).

After trying to understand in what way the concept of “Muslim feminism” might seem contradictory from the perspectives of the Western and Muslim frames of reference, and this bearing in mind the main points of discussion, we must wonder whether feminism can be characterized by a religious reference such as Islam.

### 1.1.3. *Muslim and feminist: a hybrid identity under construction*

Thus, the supporters of a Muslim feminism see no incompatibility between the alleged adherence to a faith and the claiming of women’s rights in that Islam has already granted them some of the rights that they claim today reappropriating the religious debate, the relationship with the texts, and the re-reading of the sacred scripture.

Margot Badran, a researcher at Georgetown University in the United States, defends the compatibility of the two concepts. In the collo-

quium "Does a Muslim feminism exist?," organized by UNESCO in September 2006, she demonstrated that to claim that feminism is a Western way of thinking that cannot be appropriated by Islam reveals a "great ignorance."

We must recognize that Islam possesses traditional and cultural aspects that are not necessarily in tune with Western feminist movements. But, when the Muslim feminists are committed to deriving cultural activities from the religious dimension, they see the founding principles and teachings of Islam as their best allies. Moreover, there are numerous theological arguments evoked to counter some barbaric practices that are commonly regarded as "Islamic." Muslim feminists do not present their struggle as a battle against Islam. On the contrary, they always consolidate their positions with references to the Quranic verses, they discuss the principles of Sharia (Islamic law) carefully so as not to leave the monopoly to the traditionalist readings of women's issues. Islam is not responsible for the problems of the Muslim woman. These are more related to the "socio-economic causality, to the absence of democracy in the Arab-Muslim world," according to Nawal Saadawi (Dialmy, 1997: 176).

From our point of view, the use of the term "feminism" seems to apply perfectly to this new religious identity under construction. Feminism is something more than an ideology that inspired a few resistance movements. It is a practice that puts into perspective the notion of gender to analyze social inequalities.

Miriam Cook, a professor at Duke University in the United States, specifies in this regard that:

Feminism provides the analytical tools for assessing how expectations for men and women's behavior have led to unjust situations, particularly but not necessarily only for women (Cook, 2005).

When the female Muslim intellectuals propose new methods for approaching the sacred scripture in terms of analysis and interpretation to promote gender equality, they subscribe completely to this mindset. Feminist thought is heterogenous and covers a range of different positions. In fact, there are several trends within feminism and the very heart of the claims differs depending on the socio-political context. Every women's movement contextualizes its own struggle

according to its own priorities in terms of social relations between the sexes. If we define feminism as a practice rather than as an ideology, and we argue that this practice is modeled from a social, cultural, and political life, we can identify Muslim feminism as a feminism among other feminist currents (socialist, Marxist, egalitarian...).

Valentine Moghadam, a professor of sociology at Illinois State University, in the United States, explains that the various feminist currents are part of the feminist tradition and that regional demands share the political philosophy of feminism and the women's social movement. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, we have witnessed the emergence of a global movement of women and a philosophy of the "classic" feminists who try to reflect the socio-political realities of women worldwide. Moghadam illustrated her proposals beginning with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Women in September 1995. In order to promote equality between the sexes, a number of measures were identified, beyond ideological disputes. What seems to have been born is a global feminism, and Muslim feminism will have all the space it needs.

In conclusion, we note that the similarities are more important than the differences because, in general, and even if the Western feminist movement is itself intersected by different currents of thought, the essence of the demands concerns equality between men and women at the social, political, and legal levels. The differences concern the causes of the subordination that may vary from one context to another and the strategies of change that evolve according to different registers. Feminism must be understood as a theoretical perspective and a practice that denounces the inequalities in social relations between the sexes in our contemporary societies. Its objective is to provide women with the tools to free themselves from all forms of domination. As such, it is the woman and not the religion that must be at the center of theoretical considerations. For this reason, every woman will use different strategies to improve her own situation: hence, as concerns discrimination relating to certain misogynistic interpretations of sacred scripture, it is through a religious argument that the feminists call into question different practices in the name of a certain reading of Islam. Feminist practice is not therefore impermeable to Islam when it is about denouncing discriminations justified in the name of religion.

Moreover, some Islamic movements appropriate feminist ideals and even emerge as defenders of women's rights. The liberation of women in the Muslim world and the West in a feminist perspective is going to become an essential element of a "social Islamic movement." Accordingly, the political, social, and cultural participation of women is by now a definitive conquest of Muslim feminism.

It is likely that this mutual appropriation is not only strategic, responding above all to economic political considerations in a context in which the Muslim religion is at the center of international debates and judged as a threat to Western identity. However, some questions remain on the table: how to be considered a feminist while also a Muslim? How to remain Muslim while being a feminist? After all, the question put forth is that of a religious identity in the making. A tormented identity, a faith put to the test by a socio-political context very unfavorable to women of the Muslim faith, in the West as well as in the Islamic world.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Malika Hamidi, "Islam et féminisme: une appropriation mutuelle," <http://www.wluml.org/node/4332>.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Delphy, "De l'affaire du voile: de l'imbrication du sexisme et du racisme," [www.lmsi.net](http://www.lmsi.net).

<sup>3</sup> Heba Raouf Ezzat, "Women and the Interpretation of Islamic Sources," [www.islam21.net](http://www.islam21.net).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WORKS:

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, Princeton University Press, 1998.

Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

Valérie Amiraux., *Musulmanes, musulmans au Caire, Téhéran, Istanbul, Paris, Dakar, Paris, Indigène*, 2004.

Asma Afsaruddin, (éd.), *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female Public space in islami/cate Societies*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999.

Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2002.

Homi Bhabha, *Les lieux de la culture. Une théorie post-coloniale*, Paris, Payot, 2007

Said Bouamama, *L'affaire du foulard islamique. La production d'un racisme respectable*, Geai Bleu, 2004.

Said Bouamama, Pierre Tevanian, «Peut-on parler d'un racisme postcolonial» (1961-2006)», in: P. Blanchard, S. Lemaire, N. Bancel, *Culture coloniale en France. De la Révolution Française à nos jours*, Paris, CNRS, 2008

Fabienne Brion, *Féminité, minorité, islamité : questions à propos du Hijab*, Bruxelles, Academia-Bruylant, 2004.

Ismahane Chouder, Malika Latrèche, Pierre Tévanian, *Les filles voilées parlent*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2008.

Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, *Femmes et politique au Moyen-Orient*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005.

Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, «Le voile dans la cité», in : M. Bouyahia, M. E. Sanna, (éd.), *La polysémie du voile, politiques et mobilisations postcoloniales*, Archives Contemporaines, 2013.

Christine Delphy, *L'ennemi principal I/Economie politique du patriarcat*, Syllepse, 1998.

Christine Delphy, *L'ennemi principal II/Penser le genre*, Syllepse, 2001.

Elsa Dorlin (éd.), *Black Feminism. Anthologie du féminisme africain-américain, 1975- 2000*, Paris, L'Harmattan, Collection Bibliothèque du féminisme, 2008.

Elsa Dorlin, *Sexe, genre et sexualités*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, Collection Philosophies, 2008.

Bell Hooks, «Sororité: la solidarité politique entre femmes», 2008 in: E. Dorlin (éd.), *Black Feminism. Anthologie du féminisme africain-américain, 1975-2000*, Paris, L'Harmattan, Collection Bibliothèque du féminisme, p.113.

Elsa Dorlin (éd.), *Sexe, Race, Classe, pour une épistémologie de la domination*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, Actuel Marx Confrontation, 2009.

Françoise Gaspard et Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Le foulard et la république*, Paris, La Découverte, 1995.

Nilufer Göle, *Musulmanes et modernes, voile et civilisation en Turquie*, Paris, La Découverte, 1993.

Nilufer Göle, *Interpénétrations : L'islam et l'Europe*, Paris, Galaade, 2005.

J. Goody, *L'islam en Europe : histoire, échanges, conflits*, Paris, La Découverte, 2004.

Alain Gresh, *L'islam, la république et le monde*, Paris, Hachette, 2006.

S. Khan, *Aversion and Desire: Negotiating Muslim Female Identity in the Diaspora*, Toronto, Women's Press, 2002.

Farhad Khosrokhavar, «Les prisonniers musulmans en France», in: R. Leveau, K. Mohsen Finan (éd.), *L'islam en France et en Allemagne : identités et citoyenneté*, Les Etudes de la Documentation française, 2001.

Farhad Khosrokhavar, «L'islam des jeunes en France». in *Islam et changement social*, Lausanne, Payot, 1998.

Farhad Khosrokhavar, *L'islam des jeunes*, Paris, Flammarion, 1997.

Françoise Lorcerie, *La politisation du voile : l'affaire en France, en Europe et dans le monde arabe*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005.

Saba Mahmood, *Politique de la piété. Le féminisme à l'épreuve du renouveau islamique*, La Découverte (Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject, 2005), collection Textes à l'Appui, 2009.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The religious Debate in Contemporary Iran*, Princeton University Press, 1999.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *The Constuction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform*, Hawwa, 2003.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *La recherche d'une justice entre les sexes, les voix féministes émergentes de l'islam*, Women Under Muslim Laws, 2005.  
Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism Whitout Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Duke University Press, 2003.

Chandra Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (éd.), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991.

Charlotte Nordmann (éd.), *Le foulard islamique en questions*, Amsterdam, 2004.

Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the 20th century in Iran*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, la réforme radicale : Ethique et libération*, Presses du Châtelet, 2008.

Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

Scott, *La citoyenne paradoxale: les féministes française et le droit de l'homme*, Albin Michel, 1998.

Bouthaina Shaaban, «The Muted Voices of Women Interpreters», in: H. Moghissi (éd.), *Women and Islam: Critical Concepts, in Sociology*, New York, Routledge, 2005.

Gayatri Spivak, «Can the Subaltern Speak?», in: C. Nelson, L. Grosberg (éd.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, 1988, p.271.

S. Van Koningsveld (éd.), *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: the Position of Islam in the European Union*, Leuven, Peeters, 2002.

Nancy Venel, *Musulmanes françaises: des pratiquantes voilées à l'université*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1999.

Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women's Reform in Islam*, Oneworld, 2006.

Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Reading of the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Women*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Amina Wadud, *Quran and Women*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1992.

Gisela Webb (éd.), *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar – Activists of North America*, Syracuse University Press, 2000.

#### SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES:

L. Abu-Lughod, «Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others», *American Anthropologist* 104, No. 3, 2002, p. 783.

V. Amiraux, «Discours voilés sur les musulmanes en Europe : comment les musulmanes sont-ils devenus des musulmans», *Social Compass* 50, No. 1, 2003.

Margaux Badran, «Où en est le féminisme islamique ?» in : «Le féminisme islamique aujourd'hui», *Critiques Internationales*, No. 46, 2010, p. 30.

Bilge, «Théorisations féministes de l'intersectionnalité», *Diogène, Revue internationale des sciences humaines*, No. 225, janvier-mars 2009, p.158.

Bilge, «Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women», *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31, No. 1, 2010, p. 9.

A. Brah, A. Coombs, «Hybridity and its discontent», London, Routledge, 2000 in: J. Hutnyk, «Hybridity», *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, January 2005, p. 79.

Cooke, «Critique multiple : les stratégies rhétoriques féministes islamiques», *L'homme et la société* (trad. de l'anglais par L Thiers-Vidal) 4, n°158, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005, p. 169.

Crenshaw, «Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Practice», *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 89, p.139.

Crenshaw, «Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women», *Stanford Law Review* 43, 1991, p.1241.

Crenshaw, «Cartographie des marges: intersectionnalité, politique de l'identité et violences contre les femmes de couleur», *Cahiers du genre*, n°39, 2005 p 51.

Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, «De l'autonomie des femmes en pays d'Islam. Perspectives post- coloniales», *Contre Temps*, 2008, p. 21.

Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, «De Frantz Fanon à Edward Said: l'impensé colonial», *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, University of Pittsburgh Press 19, n°1, 2011

Dorlin, Bessin, «Les renouvellements générationnels du féminisme: mais pour quel sujet politique?», *L'Homme et la société* 4, n°158, 2005, p. 11.

Dorlin, Bessin, «Corps contre Nature. Stratégies actuelles de la critique féministe», *L'Homme et la société*, n°150/151, 2003/2004.

Dorlin, Bessin, «De l'usage épistémologique et politique des catégories de 'sexe' et de 'race' dans les études sur le genre», *Cahiers du genre* 39, 2005, p. 83.

Dorlin, Bessin, «L'Atlantique féministe : L'intersectionnalité en débat», *Papeles del CEIC*, 2012.

N. Fraser, «Justice sociale, redistribution et reconnaissance», *Revue du Mauss*, n°23, 2004, p.152.



Farhad Khosrokhavar, «L'identité voilée», *Confluences Méditerranée*, 1995-1996. – «La laïcité française et les enjeux de la modernité», *Cahiers d'Europe*, Printemps – été, 1996, p. 302

A. Kian, «Le féminisme islamique aujourd'hui», *Critique Internationale*, Janvier/Mars, Paris, Sciences Po Les Presses, 2010, p. 59.

A. Kian-Thiébaud, «Le féminisme et l'islam. Les conservateurs iraniens face aux mouvements des droits des femmes», *La vie des idées*, mai-juin 2007, p. 89.

Latte Abdallah, «Le féminisme islamique vingt ans après : économie d'un débat et nouveaux chantiers de recherche», *Critique Internationale*, janvier-mars 2010.

Mohanty, «Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses», *Feminist Review*, n°30, 1988.

Mojab, «Theorizing the Politics of "Islamic Feminism"», *Feminist Review*, n°69, 2001, p.124.

Tersigni, «Jalons pour une lecture imbriquée du genre et du religieux dans le champ des migrations et des relations interethniques en France», *Cahiers du CEDREF*, avril 2008.

Tersigni, «"Prendre le foulard" : les logiques antagoniques de la revendication», *Mouvements*, n°30, 2003, p.116.

Tersigni, «Foulard et Frontière : le cas des étudiantes musulmanes à l'Universités Paris 8», *Cahiers de l'URMIS*, n°4, 1998, p.47.

Weibel, «Femmes, Islam et identité religieuse dans l'immigration turque en Alsace», *CEMOTI*, n° 21, mai 2006.

Weibel, «Islamité, égalité et complémentarité : vers une nouvelle approche de l'identité féminine», *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 95, n°1, 1996, p.13

#### ARTICLES:

N. Benelli et al., «Édito: De l'affaire du voile à l'imbrication du sexisme et du racisme», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 2006a, vol. 25, n°1, p. 4.

N. Benelli, «Édito: Les approches postcoloniales: apports pour un féminisme antiraciste», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 2006b, vol. 25, n°3, p. 4.

Delphy, «Le patriarcat, le féminisme et leurs intellectuelles», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* Volume, n°2, 1981, p. 58.

Delphy, «Antisexisme ou antiracisme? Un faux dilemme», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25, n°1, 2006, p. 59.

Delphy, «Trente ans de *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 30, n°2, 2011, p. 4.

D. Haase-Dubosc, M. Lal, «De la postcolonie et des femmes: apports théoriques du postcolonialisme anglophone aux études féministes», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25, n°3, 2006, p. 32.

C. Hamel, «La sexualité entre sexisme et racisme : les descendantes de migrant-e-s du Maghreb et la virginité», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25, n°1, 2006, p. 41.

G. Jasser, «Le voile en deux maux», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 16, 1995, p. 51.

G. Jasser, «Présentation», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 20, n°3, 1999, p. 2.

G. Jasser, «Voile qui dévoile intégrisme, sexisme et racisme», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25, n°3, 2006, p. 76.

P. Roux et al., «Féminisme et racisme. Une recherche exploratoire sur les fondements des divergences relatives au port du foulard», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25, n°1, 2006, p. 84.

P. Roux, «L'instrumentalisation du genre : une nouvelle forme de racisme et de sexisme», *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 26, n°2, 2007, p. 92.

## AUTHORS

**Gianni Pittella** is president of the S&D Group on the European Parliament. After graduating in medicine and surgery, in 1996, he was elected to the Italian Parliament. His passion for Europe led him to pursue his political work at the EU level and he was elected to the European Parliament in 1999, joining the Group of the Party of European Socialists (the former name of the S&D Group). He was Head of the Italian delegation (since 2006), Vice-president of the European Parliament (2009-2014) and President of the European Parliament in June 2014.

**Martin Schulz** is President of the European Parliament since 2014. He was leader of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament. He was elected in the European Parliament since 1994 and has served on a number of committees, including Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

**Jean-Paul Fitoussi** is Professor of Economics at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris. He was President of the Observatoire Français des Conjonctures Économiques from 1989 to 2010, Professor at the European University Institute in Florence and visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Nadia Urbinati** is a political theorist specialized in modern and contemporary political thought and democratic and anti-democratic traditions. She co-directed the Columbia University Faculty Seminar on Political and Social Thought and founded and directed the Workshop on Politics, Religion and Human Rights. She's a member of Scientific Committee and scientific coordinator of Political Innovation research Project of Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

**Carlo Feltrinelli**, born in 1962, is President of Feltrinelli Group, leading an integrated cultural player operating in the industries of book publishing, retail, television, sociological research and real estate. The Feltrinelli Editore Publishing House was founded in 1955 by his father, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. In the retail industry, the Group counts 119 bookstores all over the Italian territory. Since 2001, Mr Feltrinelli is President of the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation, one of Europe's foremost centers for scholarly research on social, political and economic thought and history. He is also the author of *Senior Service*, which has been translated and published in over 10 countries.

**Christopher Bickerton** is University Lecturer in politics at POLIS and an Official Fellow at Queens' College, Cambridge. He obtained his PhD from the University of Oxford in 2008 and since then has held teaching positions at Oxford, the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and Sciences Po in Paris.

**Carlo Invernizzi Accetti** is Assistant Professor of Political Theory at The City College of New York (CUNY) and Associate Researcher at the Center for European Studies of the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po). He holds a PhD in Political Science from Columbia University, a Master's Degree in History and Theory of Politics from the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) and a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University (Lincoln College).

**Malika Hamidi** is doctor of Sociology from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris. She's explores Muslim Feminism with particular focus on case studies from Europe. She heads the Brussels-based think tank European Muslim Network (EMN – [www.euro-muslims.eu](http://www.euro-muslims.eu)).

