

ELIANA VERSACE and
MARIA CHIARA MATTESINI

LUIGI GRANELLI

A CHRISTIAN'S COMMITMENT
TO THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

ISTITUTO LUIGI STURZO

RUBETTINO

Eliana Versace and Maria Chiara Mattesini

Luigi Granelli

A Christian's Commitment to the Democratic State

Eliana Versace and Maria Chiara Mattesini

Luigi Granelli

A Christian's Commitment to the Democratic State

RUB3ETTINO

© 2026 - Istituto Luigi Sturzo
Via delle Coppelle, 35 - 00185 Rome
www.sturzo.it - sociologia@sturzo.it

© 2026 - Rubbettino Editore
88049 Soveria Mannelli - Viale Rosario Rubbettino, 10 - Tel. (0968) 6664201
www.rubbettino.it

Editors' Note

The material analysed and presented here is drawn primarily from the private archive of Senator Luigi Granelli, held at the Luigi Sturzo Historical Institute. Even where texts were previously published, preference was given to the originals. The speeches were reproduced faithfully from the documents consulted. Some abbreviations were standardised for consistency throughout the text.

The curators would like to express their warm thanks to Adriana Granelli and to all those who supported this publication: Flavia Nardelli, Francesco Malgeri, Concetta Argiolas, Michela Ghera, Alessandra Gatta, Patrizia Severi, Roberta Bruno and Jacopo Algozzino.

PART ONE

Luigi Granelli in Christian Democracy

In the early 1950s, a new generation of Catholic politicians began to emerge within the Christian Democracy party (DC). Their key cultural contribution helped to fuel a political debate that had undoubtedly been impoverished by Giuseppe Dossetti's sudden withdrawal from the public scene in Italy.

In this context, it is reasonable to suggest that the new and diverse currents that emerged within the DC youth movement during those years can be attributed to a distinctive 'generational issue', which appears almost inherent to the very structure of the party. Nevertheless, the history of the Christian Democracy party cannot be viewed solely as an effective synthesis of the diverse and often conflicting tendencies and currents that shaped it. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to reduce the party's historical development simply to a fruitful – yet at the same time contentious and divisive – generational clash¹.

¹ In February 1952, Mariano Rumor raised a 'generational question' in the journal *Iniziativa Democratica*. According to Rumor, the debate on the political attitudes of Italian Catholics would have been more fruitful if it had been conducted in terms of generations. In fact, in the view of this member of *Iniziativa Democratica*, it is precisely between the generational boundaries that 'the discernment line between the various attitudes producing the dialectic of our political world' runs. M. Rumor, 'Due generazioni' [Two Generations], in G.

Indeed, a ‘third generation’ of Christian Democrats emerged, further removed in age from De Gasperi’s circle of former members of the Italian Popular Party (PPI) who had secretly founded the party during the war. This also differed from the second generation, which had grown up mostly within Catholic associations under the Fascist dictatorship, and had coincided almost entirely within the *Iniziativa Democratica* faction of the party. By contrast, as Francesco Malgeri has noted, the young members of the so-called ‘third generation’ had spent their formative years ‘in the ranks of the party, often finding themselves in various local contexts at odds with the official line, which at times tended towards *conservative* positions’².

This historical landscape set the stage for and shaped the intense political career of Luigi Granelli. A leading figure in *Sinistra di Base* (‘Grassroots Left’) movement, he was a representative of the third, younger generation that was emerging on the national stage. Over the years, he would go on to hold increasingly important roles within the DC and in national government.

A great deal has been written about the history and origins of the Base faction, and significant research has been carried out on some of its key figures, such as Giovanni Marcora and Nicola Pistelli. However, Luigi Granelli still lacks a rigorous scholarly study, or even

Galloni, *Antologia di ‘Iniziativa Democratica’* [Selected Writings from *Iniziativa Democratica*], EBE, Rome, 1973, pp. 166–168. On the generational debate within Christian Democracy during those years, see G. Tassani, *La Terza Generazione. Da Dossetti a De Gasperi tra Stato e rivoluzione* [The Third Generation: From Dossetti to De Gasperi, Between State and Revolution], Ed. Lavoro, Rome, 1988; G. Mantovani, *Gli eredi di De Gasperi. Iniziativa democratica e i giovani al potere* [De Gasperi’s Heirs: The *Iniziativa Democratica* and Young People in Power], Le Monnier, Florence, 1976; and also T. Morlino, ‘Terza generazione’ [Third Generation], in *Per l’azione*, February 1951.

² F. Malgeri, ‘Introduzione’ [Introduction], in L. Dal Falco, *Diario politico di un democristiano* [Political Diary of a Christian Democrat], Istituto Luigi Sturzo, Rubbettino, Rome–Soveria Mannelli 2008, p. 17. The italics are in the original.

a simple biographical overview³.

Such a glaring gap in the historiography cannot be explained solely by the understandable difficulty in accessing primary archival sources, which have only been recovered and made available to scholars in recent years. A better and more convincing explanation emerges if we accept that Luigi Granelli himself was the most outspoken and prolific biographer of his own life. Indeed, over the course of his nearly fifty-year political career, Granelli produced a vast number of articles, essays, reflections, notes, annotations and interventions – more than any other figure within his movement and milieu – and almost all of these were published over the years in the

³ Even today, the following works remain important sources on the Sinistra di Base: Giorgio Rumi, 'La "Base", una nuova "sinistra" a Milano' [The 'Base', a new 'left' in Milan], in G. Rumi (ed.), *Milano cattolica nell'Italia unita* [Catholic Milan in a United Italy], Ned, Milan 1983; G. Galli and P. Facchi, *La sinistra democristiana. Storia e ideologia* [The Christian Democratic Left: History and Ideology], Feltrinelli, Milan, 1962; and G. Baget Bozzo, *Il partito cristiano al potere. La DC da De Gasperi a Dossetti. 1945–1954* [The Christian Party in Power: The DC from De Gasperi to Dossetti, 1945–1954], Vallecchi, Florence, 1974. Of particular interest are the contributions by G. M. Capuani and C. Malacrida, *L'autonomia politica dei cattolici* [The Political Autonomy of Catholics], Interlinea, Novara 2002, and by G. Chiarante, *Tra De Gasperi e Togliatti. Memorie degli anni Cinquanta* [Between De Gasperi and Togliatti: Memories of the 1950s], Carocci editore, Rome, 2006. Also very useful are the anthologies edited by Giovanni Di Capua on the journals published by the faction, including, under a pseudonym, L. Merli, *Antologia de 'La Base'* [La Base: Selected Writings], EBE, Rome 1971, and L. Merli, *Antologia di 'Politica'* [Politica: Selected Writings], 4 vols., EBE, Rome, 1973; and those by Vittorio Gallo, *Antologia di 'Prospettive'* [Prospettive: Selected Writings], EBE, Rome, 1973 and Id., *Antologia di 'Stato Democratico'* [Stato Democratico: Selected Writings], 3 vols., EBE, Rome 1972, as well as the volume by Enrico De Mita, *Cronache della centralità democristiana (1960–1980)* [Chronicles of Christian Democratic Centrality (1960–1980)], EBE, Rome 1982. A biographical overview of Giovanni Marcora is provided by G. Borsa, *Giovanni Marcora. Un politico concreto dalla Resistenza all'Europa* [Giovanni Marcora: A Practical Politician from the Resistance to Europe], Ed. Centro ambrosiano, Milan, 1999. A recent biography has been written by Giovanni Di Capua, *Albertino Marcora. Politico del fare* [Albertino Marcora: Politician of Action], Rubbettino, Rome–Soveria Mannelli, 2007. The author also edited the collection of testimonies *Ribelle e statista*.

numerous journals to which he was a valuable* and indispensable contributor⁴.

This volume stems from a painstaking and, regrettably, necessary selection of writings and speeches, some of which have hitherto remained unpublished, drawn mainly from his private archive. It aims simply to encourage the rediscovery of one of the key figures in Italian politics in the second half of the twentieth century. While it offers a concise overview of his ideas, it leaves the floor to Luigi Granelli himself, once again.

Who, then, was Granelli? A tentative outline of his career path and specific contribution as a 'party man' within the Christian Democracy reveals that this coincides entirely – and almost indistinguishably – with the political proposals put forward by the Sinistra di Base. Indeed, for many years, right from the founding of this faction, Granelli became the main – and undoubtedly the most daring – interpreter of all the Base's positions. He relaunched them in political terms and, above all, solidly grounded them in the cultural foundations developed in the lively debate sparked by his group's

Albertino Marcora [The Rebel Statesman. Albertino Marcora], EBE, Rome, 1984. Immediately after his death, as part of the series 'I quaderni de La Base' [La Base Papers], a special issue was published entitled *Giovanni Marcora. Una lunga milizia per la libertà* [Giovanni Marcora: The Long Fight for Freedom], Centro Studi 'La Base', Milan, 1983. By Luigi Castoldi: *Marcora. Storia di un leader* [Marcora: The Story of a Leader], Ed. Giornalisti Riuniti, Milan, 1986. A particularly important work on Nicola Pistelli is the collection *Scritti politici* [Political Writings], edited by Enrico De Mita, Ed. Politica, Florence, 1967, while an early biography was written by Giovanni Di Capua: *Nicola Pistelli*, Ed. Politica, Florence, 1969. A more recent and more informative work is the excellent volume by G. P. Cappelli, *Nicola Pistelli. La DC dimenticata* [Nicola Pistelli. The Forgotten DC], Morcelliana, Brescia, 1995. More generally on the experience of Christian Democracy, see A. Giovagnoli, *Il partito italiano. La Democrazia Cristiana dal 1942 al 1994* [The Italian Party: Christian Democracy from 1942 to 1994], Laterza, Rome–Bari, 1996, and id., *La cultura democristiana* [Christian Democratic Culture], Laterza, Rome–Bari, 1991

⁴ From 1957 to 1964, Luigi Granelli was also editor of the Milanese Sinistra di Base periodical *Stato Democratico*, of which he had been the principal architect and inspiration, and later editor of the magazines *Il Domani d'Italia* and *Il Confronto*.

influential journals.

Granelli was born into a family of modest means in Lovere, in the province of Bergamo, on 1 March 1929. As a student, he experienced the turbulent two-year period of the Resistance. Although he did not directly participate in the events that would lead to the liberation of Italy, he developed a firm anti-fascist conviction during those years. The armed struggle against the Nazi-Fascist occupying forces, in which some of the founders of the Base⁵ faction had a role, would also become a milestone for Granelli's political activity. Indeed, for the members of the Base, it was imperative and a priority to draw on the experience of the Resistance, which saw the unification of all the political forces representing the masses, called upon for the first time to work together to establish a new democratic state⁶.

In the years that followed, Granelli completed his short course of study, obtaining a vocational school diploma, and began working as a skilled lathe operator at Italsider. His experience in the factory, in close contact with the working-class and trade-union milieu, led him to focus on the problems of labour and sharpened his sensitivity to matters of social justice⁷.

⁵ One need only think of Giovanni Marcora, who, together with Eugenio Cefis, took part in the Resistance in the Upper Novara area with the 'Fratelli Di Dio' partisan group. It was precisely during those years, amid the turbulent events of the war, that the close relationship began between the founders of the Base and Enrico Mattei. The latter, in 1944, had become the DC representative in the General Command of the Voluntary Corps for Freedom.

⁶ See G. Galli, P. Facchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 422–423. According to the authors, for the men of the Base, 'acceptance and glorification of the Resistance became the criterion for judging the democratic nature of a party, with the result of excluding the right'. *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁷ Given his specialist expertise in issues of the labour world, from 1960 to 1967 Granelli served as president of INAPLI, a national public-law body dedicated to training industrial workers. During the same period, he also edited the journal *Qualificazione*, which focused on social issues and vocational training.

By contrast, the Azione Cattolica (Catholic Action) community in Bergamo, which Granelli frequented during his youth, influenced his cultural development by introducing him to the works of Maritain and Mounier. He combined this with self-directed study of the economic thought of Keynes and Beveridge, theorists of state intervention in the economy⁸. His political involvement in the Christian Democracy party thus followed as a natural progression in his career. Employed as a party official on the Bergamo provincial committee of the Christian Democracy (DC), Luigi Granelli was immediately drawn to Giuseppe Dossetti's stances within the party. First and foremost, he supported Dossetti's criticism of De Gasperi's May 1947 decision. This terminated the national unity governments among Socialists, Communists and the DC, which had transposed the successful National Liberation Committees' cooperation model to the administration of the country. Similarly, he shared Dossetti's opposition to the liberal figures De Gasperi had appointed to head the economic ministries.

Granelli's move to the Sinistra di Base, following the dissolution of Dossetti's group, was a natural step. He joined the faction along with many other DC representatives, including Giuseppe Chiarante, Lucio Magri, Leandro Rampa and the provincial secretary, Enzo Zambetti⁹.

Subsequently, Granelli was among the promoters behind the creation of ILSIES (the Lombard Institute for Economic and Social Studies), where he also became a member of the board of directors and its president.

⁸ Some useful information on Granelli's education can be found in Mario Mauri's contribution, *Una biografia autorizzata di Luigi Granelli* [An Authorised Biography of Luigi Granelli], which is now included in the publication *Luigi Granelli: un libro di ricordi* [Luigi Granelli: A Book of Memories], edited by the Lombard politician's family, Edizioni Kansa, Rome, 2009, pp. 7–12.

⁹ See G. Chiarante, *op. cit.*, and by the same author, 'Da Lovere a Roma' [From Lovere to Rome], a contribution to the volume *Luigi Granelli: un libro di ricordi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–28. On the contribution of the 'Bergamo group', see also G. M. Capuani, C. Malacrida, *op. cit.*, p. 37. At that time, Granelli, Chiarante and Magri also

The new faction was founded at the Belgirate meeting on 27 September 1953. This had been convened after the disappointing election results of 7 June, which had revealed the slow decline of the centrist governments. The new faction, as its name suggests, appealed to party's popular, Catholic grassroots. They believed this base had been sacrificed for the sake of anti-communism and therefore needed to be brought back into political participation. Initially, the Sinistra di Base was organised on a loose and heterogeneous federal basis – like a collection of ‘scattered tribes’, as Nicola Pistelli aptly put it. This young Florentine member was inspired by La Pira and Gronchi, and became the leading figure of the new faction in Tuscany – although it retained a significant and distinctive Lombard character¹⁰.

For the Base members, the inevitable crisis of centrism made it both timely and essential to adopt an ‘opening to the left’, namely towards the Italian Socialist Party. Led by Pietro Nenni, that party was beginning to assert its autonomy by breaking free from the influence of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Only through the gradual inclusion of the Socialists in the parliamentary and governmental majority could the popular masses be brought into the country's democratic life on a stable basis. This proposal clearly echoes Dossetti's ideas on the possibility for parties inspired by popular movements to ally with each other.

In support of this demand, the Base members claimed that the Catholic laity needed greater autonomy and independence from ecclesiastical authority in their political action. Granelli championed this principle on numerous occasions, drawing on the ideas of Sturzo and De Gasperi – whom he repeatedly cited in various contexts – to justify his political choices. An unpublished speech discovered among his papers and included here recalled the founder of DC twelve

collaborated on *Per l'azione*, the magazine of the Christian Democratic Youth Movement, edited by Franco Maria Malfatti. Chiarante, Magri and Leidi, who had been expelled from the party for their far-left positions, later joined the PCI.

¹⁰ This is the opinion expressed by Giorgio Rumi in his essay ‘La “Base”, una nuova “sinistra” a Milano’, *op. cit.*

years after his death. There, Granelli acknowledged the historical merit of the leader from Trentino – having found common ground with Sturzo and substantially sharing the Sicilian priest's major statements of principle. According to these, 'the Popular Party did not commit the Church, but committed itself; it put itself at the service of the country with loyalty to the constitution, rejected integralism, raised the Southern question, and gave historical awareness to the Catholics' political movement'¹¹.

Granelli first encountered the ideas of De Gasperi and Sturzo indirectly, through Gabriele De Rosa's works, but later explored them in depth in the original texts. They would become the main sources of inspiration for his political action, as he would later confess¹². Granelli was disappointed by the cautious neo-centrist policy pursued by Amintore Fanfani, who, during his time at the helm of the party, had a highly contentious and somewhat turbulent relationship with the Sinistra di Base¹³. The young Base member, commenting on the outcome of the Christian Democracy Congress

¹¹ Speech on De Gasperi, Archive of the Luigi Sturzo Institute (A.I.S.), Fondo Granelli, (FG), series VIII, subseries 2, b. 22.

¹² G. M. Capuani, C. Malacrida, *op. cit.*, p. 37. The reference to Sturzo and his idea of a party will recur in Base publications, and in particular in Stato Democratico.

¹³ On 8 July 1955, following a controversial political and journalistic affair and after repeated calls for greater compliance, Fanfani expelled Aristide Marchetti from the party. Marchetti, a former partisan, was one of the founders of the journal *La Base*, and editor of the faction's other journal *Prospettive*, which subsequently ceased publication. A detailed account of the entire affair can be found in V. Gallo, *Antologia di 'Prospettive'*, EBE, Rome, 1971. In the same year,

Chiarante was also first suspended and then expelled from the party for his unauthorised participation in the Helsinki Congress of the Partisans of Peace. On these issues, see also the interesting article by A. Ballarin Denti, '*La strategia anticomunista americana e la sinistra DC*' [The American Anti-Communist Strategy and the DC Left], in *Studi Storici*, July–September 2005, pp. 661–710. This work examines the influence exerted by US diplomacy, in particular through the US Ambassador to Italy, Claire Boothe Luce, on Fanfani's attitudes towards the Christian Democratic left.

in Trento in October 1956, admitted that, 'aside from the disputes we had during the Dossetti era', De Gasperi had 'died too soon' for Christian Democracy¹⁴. Unlike Fanfani, the veteran Trentino leader had, according to Granelli, already called for the evolution of the PSI and the broadening of the democratic sphere at the Naples Congress shortly before his death, defending 'the party's secular vocation, in keeping with its Christian inspiration' against integralism. By contrast, Fanfani, who in Granelli's view was by no means De Gasperi's heir, 'deluded himself' by staking everything on an electoral breakthrough. In doing so, he also betrayed the ideal and political vision of the DC as envisaged by Dossetti, reducing it 'to a mixture of integralism and corporatist activism'¹⁵.

Following the outcome of the Trento Congress in October 1956, Granelli was elected to the party's National Council for the first time¹⁶. In the summer of the following year, however, during the DC's National Council in Vallombrosa – at which Fanfani surprisingly expressed his willingness to promote 'honest democratic cooperation' with socialist forces 'independent of communism' – Granelli was unexpectedly chosen to represent the Base faction on the DC's Executive Committee¹⁷.

¹⁴ AILS, FG, series I, cited in E. Versace, *Montini e l'apertura a sinistra. Il falso mito del 'vescovo progressista'* [Montini and the Opening to the Left: The False Myth of the 'Progressive Bishop'], Guerini e Associati, Milan, 2007, p. 119.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Along with him, members of the Base faction – Giovanni Galloni, Nicola Pistelli, Fiorentino Sullo, Leandro Rampa, Ciriaco De Mita, Andrea Negrari and Alessandro Buttè – also entered the National Council, while Camillo Ripamonti became the representative for Lombardy.

¹⁷ Following the withdrawal of Giovanni Galloni, who was sceptical about working with Fanfani as he offered insufficient guarantees of a centre-left political shift, the representatives of the Base met in Florence and appointed the unsuspecting Luigi Granelli, who was informed of his appointment on his return from his honeymoon. Luciano Dal Falco made a scathing comment about Vallombrosa, saying that it would represent 'Fanfani's flipflop to the left'. With his

However, it was 1958 that marked a dramatic turning point in the young Christian Democrat's life story. Granelli stood as a candidate in the spring general election, and found himself at the centre of a 'scandal' with both 'political and doctrinal' implications. Indeed, Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, then Archbishop of Milan, opposed the election of the Base representative in the Milan–Pavia constituency. Montini complained about Granelli's certain 'independent and unchallengeable attitudes' and considered his ideas to carry corrosive and disturbing secularist tendencies that could have disrupted and destabilised the cohesion and unity of the Catholic laity. Above all, the Archbishop of Milan saw it as an inescapable pastoral duty to oppose and counter the autonomist tendencies of the Base. Montini informed the Lombard episcopate about the 'Granelli case' by drafting a detailed memorandum addressed to the Holy Office. In it, he fiercely and emphatically contested the arguments put forward by the Bergamo politician, especially those in *Stato Democratico* that supported the Base's positions on the relationship between morality and politics with an unacceptable reference to the ideas of the Lombard theologian Monsignor Carlo Colombo¹⁸.

Luigi Granelli failed to win a seat in the elections of 25 May 1958. In the years that followed, he decided not to run for Parliament again; he only became a Member of Parliament in 1968, after dedicating himself to pursuing a centre-left policy in Milan's municipal administration as the DC city council group leader. However, both

new position, the secretary would only have achieved 'the aim of destroying *Iniziativa Democratica*'. Even 'his attempt to win over the minorities could have been a triumph for him, had he been able to do it with more grace and skill; instead, he carried it out in conflict with his own people, keeping them in the dark'. L. Dal Falco, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁸ The article in question appeared in the 20 January 1958 issue of *Stato Democratico* under the title 'Il problema va collocato a livello politico' [The problem must be addressed at the political level] and has been reprinted in this collection. For a full account of the whole matter, I would refer the reader to my book *Montini e l'apertura a sinistra*, *op. cit.*

within the party and through his relentless writing and publishing, he continued his campaign for an opening towards the left and the broadening of the country's democratic sphere. At the 1959 Christian Democrat Congress in Florence the Base backed Fanfani, who, this time from a left-wing position, was challenging party secretary Aldo Moro for the leadership of the party. In fact, Moro had been appointed a few months earlier by the Dorotei. There, Granelli set out, without compromise, to dispel the doubts and anxieties of that section of the Catholic world which feared an alliance with the Socialist Party because it would also be binding in terms of ideological values. 'This is not a question,' he stated, 'of making ideological concessions to socialism, which is, and remains, classist. On this point, we have nothing in common with them. We are the first to admit,' added Granelli, 'that should the Socialists ever ask us, in return for resolving some economic problem, to interfere with the education system, the family, or similar institutions, we would refuse to resolve that economic problem.'¹⁹

Despite the Italian episcopate's strong disagreement, the DC succeeded in forming a political alliance with the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) in the early 1960s. This alliance initially took the mild form of 'parallel convergences', with the PSI abstaining from voting against the Fanfani-led governments. Later, this evolved into an 'organic centre-left' coalition, with the Socialists directly participating in ministries led by Moro. Marred by excessive caution, constant mediation and Moro's persistent 'minimalist' approach, the experience of the organic centre-left governments failed to deliver significant reforms. It disappointed many, especially when compared with the work carried out and the laws passed during the previous two-year period led by Fanfani. The Base group, associated with the

¹⁹ Granelli's speech at the Florence Congress, anthologised in this volume under the title indicated by the author in the original draft, 'Favorire le intese tra i partiti per allargare la base democratica dello Stato' [Fostering cross-party agreements to broaden the state's democratic base]. ASIS, FG, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 22.

magazine *Politica* founded by Nicola Pistelli, held a conference in Florence in October 1966. There, Granelli identified among the causes of the centre-left's 'gradual regression' the party's inability to 'leave behind a bureaucratised structure, which lacks any real contact with the transforming society'. However, he also identified a less obvious risk, namely 'rediscovering the banner of struggle in a generational platform – a method that led to the conception of *Iniziativa Democratica*; we would thus', Granelli warned, 'be slipping back into the old habit of conceiving factions in a crudely Leninist sense, as mere instruments for the seizure of power, only to realise, once power has been seized, that the conditions are not in place to exercise it in accordance with clear ideological and political principles'²⁰.

Nevertheless, the third generation was rapidly gaining real power within the party. This became evident at the party leadership's assembly in Sorrento in the autumn of 1965. In a sense, that event can be seen as an important prelude to the San Ginesio generational shift four years later, when the departure of the Doroteo secretary Flaminio Piccoli allowed the party to be taken over by the 'young forty-somethings': Arnaldo Forlani, a supporter of Fanfani, became secretary, while Ciriaco De Mita, of the *Sinistra di Base*, took on the role of deputy secretary²¹.

²⁰ ASIS, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 22. Unpublished paper delivered at the conference organised by the journal *Politica*, anthologised under the title 'Il futuro del centro-sinistra' [The future of the centre-left], assigned by the editor.

²¹ In September 1969, in San Ginesio in the Marche, a conference took place, with Forlani and De Mita among the participants. At the conference, there were calls for a different way of running the party that would give more space to the younger generation. 'This conference, which has also gone down in history as the conference of "forty-somethings" – that is, of the generation that was impatient with the rigid structures often imposed on the party's factions by their long-standing leaders – undoubtedly left more than one mark on the history of DC. This, at least, because of the alliance between figures such as De Mita and Forlani initiated in San Ginesio and then, through various ups and downs, somehow

However, the 'generational pact' that had aligned the Base with the party leadership ended up dividing the faction. While Marcora supported De Mita's path, other members of the group, including Giovanni Galloni and Giovanni Di Capua, expressed their scepticism. Granelli, too, had long since ceased to regard 'the generational approach' as the only way to revitalise the centre-left and renew the party.

Elected as a Member of Parliament in 1968, Granelli continued to contribute to the internal debate within Christian Democracy, campaigning for genuine renewal and greater secularism in the party. Meanwhile, the centre-left formula was wearing thin, floundering amidst the difficulties of the economic crisis and attacks on the state by organised terrorist groups; in its place emerged the less tangible yet highly evocative hypothesis, put forward by Moro, of a 'strategy of engagement' towards the Italian Communist Party. Granelli was one of the most ardent supporters of Moro's line of engagement with the PCI and the policy of national solidarity. Indeed, he served as Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1973 and 1976.

In 1974, the heated controversy and then the disappointing outcome of the abrogative referendum on divorce inflicted the first – and probably one of the most irreparable – wound on the party. Despite his personal misgivings, Granelli had contributed to the referendum campaign to repeal the divorce law, thus supporting Christian Democracy's position. He backed the initiatives of the party refoundation groups, set up in Lombardy by Piero Bassetti²². He also

beyond that experience.' P. L. Castellani, 'La Democrazia Cristiana dal centro-sinistra al delitto Moro' [Christian Democracy from the centre-left to the Moro murder], in F. Malgeri (ed.), *Storia della Democrazia Cristiana* [History of Christian Democracy], 5 vols, Cinque Lune, Rome, 1989, vol. iv, 1962–1978, *Dal Centro Sinistra agli 'Anni di Piombo'* [From the Centre-Left to the 'Years of Lead'], pp. 5–6.

²² There are no historiographical studies of the activities of the refoundation groups, which operated with their own structure within the party from 1974 to 1979 and worked closely with the Catholics in the Democratic League. I therefore

worked to replace Fanfani at the head of the DC²³.

Benigno Zaccagnini, a Moro loyalist, was 'provisionally' elected as new secretary by the National Council, before being emphatically re-elected by thousands of delegates at a fiercely contested party congress (through a direct election procedure that was unusual and risky for the party's unity, and which would therefore be swiftly abandoned). Zaccagnini invited many members of the Sinistra di Base to work alongside him, including Luigi Granelli. The new secretary won back to the DC the support of some of the Catholic Democrats who had controversially left the party following Fanfani's decision on the divorce referendum. Granelli had established a frank and lively dialogue with many of these former members and had taken part in various Lega Democratica initiatives²⁴.

refer to F. De Giorgi's recent contribution, 'La "Repubblica delle coscienze". L'esperienza della Lega Democratica di Scoppola, Gorrieri e Ardigò' [The 'Republic of Consciences': the experience of the Democratic League of Scoppola, Gorrieri and Ardigò], in L. Guerzoni (ed.), *Quando i cattolici non erano moderati. Figure e percorsi del cattolicesimo democratico in Italia* [When Catholics Were Not Moderates: Figures and Paths of Democratic Catholicism in Italy], Il Mulino, Bologna 2009; and E. Versace, *La Democrazia Cristiana tra rinnovamento e rifondazione* [Christian Democracy: Renewal and Refoundation], Proceedings of the conference *Milano tra ricostruzione e globalizzazione. Dalle carte dell'archivio di Piero Bassetti* [Milan Between Reconstruction and Globalisation: From Papers in Piero Bassetti's Archive], University of Milan, forthcoming.

²³ It is interesting to note that, along with Bassetti, Granelli was among the first to propose and support the candidature of the Dorotean Mariano Rumor, who, not being from the party's left wing, could have attracted broader support from all currents.

²⁴ See, in the chapter of the present volume entitled 'Catholic democrats: between renewal and debate', the letter that Granelli sent to the newspaper *Paese Sera*. The Lega Democratica (Democratic League) was founded in Rome on 5 November 1975, during a conference attended by intellectuals, trade union representatives and figures from the left wing of the DC. The new movement aimed to influence the DC and its process of renewal from the outside. Among the founders of the Lega Democratica were the intellectuals Pietro Scoppola and

Zaccagnini, whom a sympathetic public affectionately nicknamed 'honest Zac', had fuelled growing enthusiasm and unbridled optimism that extended beyond him as an individual. However, the tragic outcome of Aldo Moro's kidnapping derailed the party's programme of renewal and its policy of dialogue with the Italian PCI – the latter clearly inspired by Moro – which had characterised the Romagna-born general secretary's five-year tenure as leader.

In the spring of 1978, a dramatic and violent attack on the Republic threatened the very survival of democratic institutions for the first time since the end of the struggle against Nazi-fascism. Granelli – unanimously backed by the entire Sinistra di Base, for which the experience of the Resistance was a key, indispensable ideological reference point – supported, albeit with profound and agonising inner turmoil, the hardline position of the DC leadership.

The indispensable organiser and guiding hand of the Sinistra di Base, Giovanni Marcora, died in the early 1980s. His passing marked an almost symbolic conclusion to the era of great ideological and political struggles that had begun three decades earlier. Ciriaco De Mita, a leading figure in the group, was elected as secretary of the Christian Democrats on 5 May 1982. The 'third generation' assumed the leadership of the party, becoming the country's ruling class. Granelli, too, focused mainly on government work, as he was involved first as Minister for Scientific Research and then as Minister for State Shareholdings.

Years later, in February 1990, recalling the battles he had fought alongside the Base and drawing on some of Moro's reflections, Granelli acknowledged that the DC could not be a leftist party.

Achille Ardigò, the trade unionists Ermanno Macario and Manlio Spandonaro of the CISL, and the Catholic politician Ermanno Gorrieri. Useful information on the Lega Democratica's experience can also be found in the recent volume by M. Carrettieri, M. Marchi and P. Trionfini, *Ermanno Gorrieri (1920–2004). Un cattolico sociale nelle trasformazioni del Novecento* [Ermanno Gorrieri (1920–2004): A Social Catholic in the Transformations of the Twentieth Century], Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009.

However, he also added that Christian Democracy would always have a 'vital need for its left wing' in order to continue being a popular, reformist party aware of the transformation of the country²⁵.

ELIANA VERSACE

²⁵ ASILS, FG, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 27, 'L'idea della Base. Un ricordo di Marcora' [The idea of the Base: remembering Marcora], an article written for *La Discussione* and published on 10 February 1990, later anthologised, under the same title, in the present volume.

*Catholics and Socialists: 'The Problem Must Be Addressed at the Political Level'**

*In this article, published in *Stato Democratico* on 20 January 1958, Luigi Granelli set out the case for greater openness towards the Socialist Party, drawing on the arguments put forward by the theologian Monsignor Carlo Colombo in *Vita e Pensiero*, the journal of the Catholic University of Milan, in September 1953. In that piece, the Lombard priest had commented on the results of the previous June general election, in response to Fr. Antonio Messineo, a Jesuit who was highly critical of the DC and opposed any attempt to establish relations with the Socialists. As recalled in Granelli's anthologised article, Monsignor Carlo Colombo was more open to the possibility of dialogue with the PSI. His words drew a sharp rebuke from the then Substitute at the Secretariat of State, Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini. Montini addressed Fr. Agostino Gemelli, the university's rector, accusing him of carelessness in publishing such a text, and the author, who was asked to rectify and clarify his position with a further piece.*

*Five years later, deeply irritated by the publication of Granelli's article, Monsignor Montini, who in the meantime had become Archbishop of Milan, drew up a memorandum addressed to the Holy Office and to a number of Lombard bishops. The document challenged the young Christian Democrat's statements on doctrinal grounds. Granelli was accused of using 'categories of judgement typical of politics' to deny the Church the ability and legitimacy to intervene in public matters. Theologian Carlo Colombo was himself called upon to refute the claims made by Base members Granelli and Enrico De Mita – the latter having also written in a similar vein on the same issues in *Stato Democratico*. In May 1958,*

* 'Il problema va collocato a livello politico' [The problem must be addressed at the political level], in *Stato Democratico*, no. 6, 20 January 1958

writing in L'Italia, the Catholic daily of the Lombard diocese, the priest emphatically stated the following: 'Anyone who does not accept the authority of the Church when its orders do not align with their own views is setting themselves up as a supreme judge or supreme moral authority. That may be free thought, or it may be consistent with the Protestant principle of private judgement, but it is not Catholicism.'

As I have already noted in a previous article ('Un discorso preliminare e necessario' [A preliminary and necessary discourse] in *Stato Democratico*, vol. 2, no. 5, p. 9), the issue of relations between Catholics and socialists is often approached in a problematic way. There is a tendency to expect 'nothing less than a reconciliation based on principles, i.e. on the abstract ground of cultural analysis and ideology, as a mandatory and preliminary step to any political agreement' between the two groups. In particular, I pointed out in the previous article that, strangely enough, this argument has drawn support from two opposing camps: 'those who mistakenly believe that this path will enable them to secure the necessary conditions for a peaceful experiment in political collaboration; and those who, more realistically, consider the basic principles of the two political forces to be irreconcilable, and therefore seek to justify, a priori and without reckoning with historical reality, their opposition to any settlement between Catholics and socialists.'

My view of this particular way of conceiving the relationship between the two different parties, within the framework of democracy, was already implicitly negative. However, in order to present it more clearly and on a more solid basis, it is necessary to engage in a broader discussion – one that is by no means new within the Catholic world and Christian Democracy. Indeed, the most heated debate around this approach took place in many Catholic and party circles following the controversy that arose in the aftermath of 7 June. This occurred in the form of two papers, one by Fr. Messineo (published in *Civiltà Cattolica* on 4 August 1953) and the other by Fr. Colombo, Professor of Sacred Theology at the Theological Faculty of Milan (published in *Vita e Pensiero* in September 1953). On that

occasion, the well-known Jesuit defended a kind of principled objection to any leftward expansion of political alliances, as this would jeopardise the 'supreme and differentiating principles'. Furthermore, given the resurgence of a certain 'secularism' on the part of the 'small centre parties', he made a veiled appeal to monarchists and to 'right-minded citizens' to enable the formation of an efficient government supported by the right.

Fr. Carlo Colombo put forward an opposing view. He noted that a pact with the right would have serious political and religious repercussions among the less affluent sections of the population. Therefore, he argued, based on sound theological judgement and the historical experience of Austria and Belgium, the possibility of an 'agreement between a Christian Democratic party and a Marxist-inspired Socialist party for the implementation of a common socially-oriented political programme could not be ruled out in Italy either, provided that the Socialist party remains faithful to the democratic method; that is, renounces the establishment of a dictatorship'.

I am not concerned here with the subsequent developments of that controversy, nor do I wish to revisit it merely to dwell on it: I merely wish to use it as a starting point to establish a concrete point of reference for my analysis.

It is clear that, in the aforementioned controversy, Fr. Messineo bases his negative assessment on ideological and principled grounds. These alone, in any case, would rule out the possibility of any alliances between the different ideological forces and would thus strike at the root of democracy's principles of freedom and tolerance. On the other hand, it is equally clear that no lesser adherence to the supreme principles justifies the judgement of permissibility defended by Fr. Colombo. Rather, this author motivates his stance solely by means of specific, contingent historical and political reasons. These two theses are, not by chance, resurfacing today in partial or distorted forms from various quarters. To understand their true meaning, one must first clarify the following: it is precisely their different nature that defuses the conflict and prevents us from making a unilateral choice.

Indeed, it is not impossible to recognise the validity of certain points made by *Civiltà Cattolica*, just as it is not possible to disagree with the observations made by *Vita e Pensiero*. Indeed, Fr. Messineo is right to warn against certain dangerous tendencies towards progressivism, highlighting the incompatibility between the guiding principles of Catholics who act independently in politics and the Marxist or secularist inspiration of modern political or cultural movements. However, claiming to draw directly practical conclusions from this would be arbitrary and incorrect. It would mean ignoring what Don Colombo rightly maintains, namely that, the question of whether or not an alliance between parties is appropriate in a democratic system arises at the political level. Therefore, it can never call into question the fundamental ideological or principled distinction that must also persist between the forces that are led to collaborate at a given point in history. It follows that a Catholic cannot call into question the irreplaceable role of the Church's magisterium when it comes to defending values and principles; but a believer who acts in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Constitution (and who, politically, 'commits himself, his profession, his class, his party, not his Church' – De Gasperi, 20 March 1954, *Edizioni Cinque Lune*) as well as those who hold effective and defined responsibilities in this specific sphere must assess the issue of political alliances according to political criteria.

Clearly, this fundamental principle cannot be eliminated (not even when it comes to the issue of relations between Catholics and socialists in our country) without completely overturning the experience and political history of Italian Catholic democrats, who founded their movement and developed it precisely within this fundamental framework of autonomy and constitutional loyalty. Furthermore, abandoning this necessary distinction of roles and responsibilities today would be tantamount to reviving the old 'quarrel' between the state and the Church. This would painfully reignite a damaging conflict that would once again split the national and the religious consciences of the Italian people.

After all, there is no doubt that all the political choices of Christian Democracy have always rightly invoked this responsible distinction. How else could a collaboration with the Socialists and Communists in the aftermath of the Liberation be justified today? How else could one support a political alliance with social democracy, without offending the principles that inspire Catholics' political action? One cannot ignore the Marxist and positivist theoretical platform. And what of liberalism, whose doctrinal foundations were and remain condemned by the Church? This genuinely political criterion was used in the past to determine alliances, and it is still valid today if it aims, with the consent of those circles chiefly concerned with orthodoxy, to relaunch the four-party coalition. Why should it no longer be legitimate when considering whether to include the PSI (let us say the PSI and not a left-wing bloc dominated by the PCI, because in that case the political assessment itself changes) in a governing majority that does not alter the democratic and constitutional foundations of the state¹?

It is clear, therefore, that in the future too, the criterion for choosing alliances must be the one used in the past, above all by De Gasperi. That is to say, the political criterion of freedom and the active, not merely subordinate, defence of the international solidarity that is inherent to our country; the need for the effective development of democracy; and the urgent demand to transform the state and the existing structures of Italian society, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Republican Constitution and loyally accepted, including by Catholics. The discussion on relations between Catholics and Socialists in Italy – which may take the form of conflict, opposition or collaboration – must therefore be conducted on a strictly political level, without social naivety and without intolerant and unjustified ideological preconceptions.

From what I have written so far, it follows that, in order to make a democratic agreement possible and legitimate, it is not so much the

¹ In the original printed text, the parenthesis is left open.

specific nature of the parties that needs to change. Rather, it is their view of the problems to be addressed and resolved that needs to change. This must happen only within the shared acceptance of the rules of freedom that constitute the inalienable foundation of the Italian state. Those who believe that a rapprochement between Socialists and Catholics is possible only if the former renounce Marxism or the class struggle, or if the latter cease to be Catholic or interclassist – whether they hold this view to promote the alliance or to prevent it – are therefore mistaken. Of course, the PSI is Marxist and classist, and of course the DC is interclassist and has a concept of freedom that goes beyond the economistic view of Marxism or Italian liberalism. However, precisely for this reason, such a coming together cannot take place, either – as Jemolo argues (whose thesis we agree with only insofar as it concerns the futility of certain tactical and instrumental talks) – by having the Socialists pass through the ‘sacred bronze door’, or by aiming, as some Socialists, for a socio-economic alliance with the working-class or left-wing forces of the DC or the Catholic world. In Italy, the problem of relations between Catholics and Socialists arises – not surprisingly – at the political level. It is a problem imposed by our country’s unique history and, therefore, must first and foremost be addressed in the context in which it originated and developed. It may be that my approach is met with an accusation of cynicism or superficial levity, as indeed has happened in the past: cynicism, because it seeks to resolve politically a problem that is not merely political; and levity, because it overlooks the duty to always fight against principles that we consider erroneous. However, both accusations are unfounded and merely reveal a taste for diversion on the part of those who make them. Indeed, I believe that an alliance is never an end in itself and must not undermine our ability to democratically defend our beliefs against those of others. It is precisely because of this confidence in myself that I do not fear confrontation, whether in opposition or in government, with those who hinder our work or those who are willing to work with us, in the interests of the country and of freedom.

Clearly, the aim is to ensure that the prospect of an agreement with the Socialists does not lead our masses astray into misguided positions, and that the whole matter does not end up as a top-down parliamentary exercise. Yet these requirements are not met by ignoring the problems, but rather by confronting them seriously and with commitment on their own terms, relying more on the power of persuasion than on the fleeting success of outright prohibitions.

It is in this spirit that, on another occasion, I will go into the more specifically political side of the issue under consideration.

*Open Letter to the Hon. Nenni**

The 33rd Congress of the Socialist Party took place in Naples from 15 to 18 January 1959. There, the autonomist faction led by the party secretary, Pietro Nenni, emerged clearly victorious. A few days earlier, in the columns of the Milan-based Sinistra di Base magazine Stato Democratico, Luigi Granelli had published an 'Open Letter to the Hon. Nenni'.

In his letter, Granelli urged the Socialist leader not to overlook the implications of the policy of equidistance that his party intended to adopt towards the government and the Communist Party. According to Granelli, genuine autonomy for the PSI would enable Italian society to overcome the stagnation in which it had been left by the opposition between 'frontism' and 'centrism'. Granelli was not satisfied with the 'socialist alternative' politics that Nenni seemed to be referring to. Indeed, such a model could have been achieved in Italy without the Communist Party.

Nevertheless, in Naples, the Socialist Party secretary spoke out harshly against the Christian Democrats. He sharply criticised the Fanfani government and rejected any idea of joining the governing majority or forming a government with the DC and the 'bourgeois parties'. Nenni also accused the Christian Democrats of being subservient to 'conservative, monopolistic and clerical forces'.

At the Socialist Congress, Nenni's autonomist wing prevailed, winning an overwhelming majority over the party's left wing.

Granelli's letter was brought to light again by an article on the Socialist Congress, which appeared in the Milanese Jesuit journal Aggiornamenti Sociali.

* 'Lettera aperta all'on. Nenni' [Open letter to the Hon. Nenni], *Stato Democratico*, no. 22, 5 January 1959.

The article, signed by Fr. Angelo Macchi, noted that, 'with regard to the content of the letter, it should be said that the hierarchy has often expressed its opposition to opening up to the left'. Therefore, Granelli's text contained some 'expressions that were, at the very least, unclear', along with 'an underestimation of the doctrinal aspect'. The reference to Granelli irritated Archbishop Montini, who had on several occasions expressed his firm opposition to any form of collaboration with or 'openness' towards the Socialist Party. Indeed, despite the critical remarks by the author, such a reference could have 'lent legitimacy' to Granelli's views, creating confusion among the Catholic laity. Thus, Montini summoned the journal's editors and also expressed his disappointment to the Vatican Secretariat of State. Following the conclusions of the Socialist Congress, however, the Archbishop of Milan deemed that the open letter to Nenni had dealt Granelli a serious blow.

Hon. Nenni, I am addressing you directly not to join the chorus of those seeking to influence the PSI on the eve of its congress with self-interested and improper advice. My aim is more serious than that. I am a responsible member of a party that opposes socialism on the basis of principle. Without prejudice to our cooperation with the PSDI, my party is currently fighting socialism on the political and parliamentary front. However, I belong to that group of democrats who keep a close watch to the PSI's policies and consider them to be of great importance for the future of Italian democracy. We have long been fighting for a leftward broadening of government alliances and for the active involvement of the popular, working masses and the wider public in the life of the state. In supporting our cause, we are not driven by vague, nebulous social aspirations, nor are we enthused by an uncritical sympathy for socialism (as claimed by those who distort our views in the eyes of the Catholic world in order to better combat them). Rather, we are convinced that the problems bequeathed to us by the liberal class and by fascism do not allow for inaction or a return to the right in disguise. Instead, they demand a serious effort from all political parties that operate in accordance with parliamentary democracy and share a strong desire for renewal. This explains our interest in the PSI congress. There has been no shortage of polemic about your congress. The Communists have attacked it

with particular ferocity.

Even while counting among their loyal friends an eccentric figure like the Hon. Milazzo, with his entourage of monarchists and MSI supporters, they have not hesitated to portray the PSI secretary as the old right-wing social democrat who betrays the working class: that is how far they have gone to defend the 'frontism' that you consider outdated and to reject any reservations about the Soviet Union's power politics. And this is only the beginning of the battle for autonomy. On the other hand, certain conservative circles, which for years have been dreaming of stable governments provided they are not strong enough to erode their privileges, have encouraged the PSI's autonomy in the hope of new splits that would strengthen (yet not too much) an exhausted social democracy. Their aim to recreate the old conservative immobility draped in superficial reformism. Now, however, with the success of the 'autonomists' seemingly at hand, the Communists are abandoning their blackmail in the name of class unity, and conservative circles are setting aside their ministerial enticements.

However, the problems remain, and the PSI's reaffirmation of its autonomy introduces a new element into the Italian political situation. No political party can ignore the implications of the Socialists' tendency to keep an equal distance from both the government and the Communists.

At this point, however, a question arises: now that it has gained full autonomy, can the PSI give the whole of Italian society an evolutionary impetus, helping it to overcome the stagnation caused in recent years by the clash between 'frontism' and 'centrism'? This is not only a matter for the Socialists, but it concerns them too. The PSI is well aware – and often reminds the DC of this – that, in a democratic parliamentary system, intentions alone are not enough to pursue a political agenda; clear choices about alliances are also needed.

Socialists usually answer this question by putting forward the idea of a socialist alternative, but – if Hon. Nenni will allow me – such an answer is abstract from an historical perspective. In Italy, any

governing alternative to the DC cannot do without the Communists. This makes it difficult for the PSI to build relationships with smaller, traditionally secular parties. Furthermore, on a more general level, the alternative approach risks pushing Catholics to the right, reviving a clerical-fascist 'national bloc'. We would end up in the worst-case scenario, and with it, the 'Popular Front'. This would soon lead to the re-emergence of the very divide that the PSI had sought to overcome by asserting its independence.

Whether they like it or not, at this point the Socialists, too, must confront the problem of their relations with the DC and the other democratic forces. Many in the PSI may balk at this problem, as also happens in the DC when the question of relations with the Socialists is raised. Nevertheless, it remains a central and decisive issue.

A polemic against the Communists is not enough to overcome 'frontism' if the sectarian and dogmatic thesis of the alternative condemns the PSI to isolation. The unique historical circumstances of our country also require the Socialists to make clear choices. To overcome the Italian tendencies towards inaction, right-wing reaction, and the 'frontist' alternative, we must gather the forces that have historically been interested in overcoming these tendencies. What are these forces? Day after day, political debate highlights the fact that the PRI and the PSDI cannot survive in conservative immobilism; that the DC would disintegrate, losing its identity, in a right-wing venture; and that the PSI would be reabsorbed into the Communist initiative under the banner of the 'Popular Front'.

But how and when will genuine convergence between these forces be possible?

If we want to solve this problem in a static, pre-established way, then attempting to create this new alignment of forces certainly seems a hopeless endeavour. However, a dynamic perspective on the issue, as a desirable and sought-after outcome pursued with mutual goodwill, changes everything. After all, failing to manage the relations between these forces as soon as possible means risking a disintegration with no prospects in Italy.

Surely France's example should teach us something.

This does not mean that the PSI should support governments which, despite having pushed the Liberals into opposition, perpetuate the shortcomings of the piecemeal reformism that characterised past coalitions. Nor does it mean that the DC should renounce its deeply rooted values of freedom and civilisation, born of its Christian inspiration, in order to come to terms with the Socialists and betray itself; nor that the secular members of the third force should become lackeys serving the alliance between Catholics and Socialists.

This means that solving the country's major issues requires working to bring these forces together. This, with no rush and no preconceptions, while fully respecting the rules of parliamentary democracy, their respective traditions, and the specific role that each political side is called on to play.

Let us start the discussion now. Let us abandon underhanded exchanges and ideological crusades. Let us tackle frankly the issues of the economic structure and full employment, the autonomy of the state and the implementation of the Constitution, and a foreign policy of détente, peace and security for all. Let us discuss thoroughly, realistically and without double-dealing, the issues of structural reform needed to build a truly democratic state in Italy. If each political force has the courage to define its position openly on this ground, and can make consistent choices, then these discussions will mature in a serious and informed way, for the benefit of the nation's own conscience, too.

Only then will the centre-left parties be able to appreciate the contribution of the socialist working masses, and even the PSI will have to come to a real understanding of the DC, its independent and anti-fascist traditions, and the popular and democratic forces within the Catholic movement that fight the 'clerical-fascist' temptation no less than the socialists fight 'frontism'.

However, none of this can happen by magic.

Honourable Nenni, so many Italians who believe in democracy are looking to the PSI in Naples just as they are looking to the DC in

Florence. They hope that our parties will loyally abandon any mere show of sociability and any dogmatic sectarianism in order to promote, in Parliament and across the country, a coalition of forces capable of defeating stagnation, a return to the right, and the 'frontist' venture.

We must not disappoint these hopes and start preparing for tomorrow today.

*Fostering Cross-Party Agreements to Broaden the State's Democratic Base**

On 23 October 1959, the seventh national congress of the Christian Democracy was launched in Florence. Its theme was, 'Further supporting the democratic state: A united party confident in the soundness of its programme'. The DC leader was Aldo Moro. He had taken over from Amintore Fanfani as party secretary the previous March, following the Dorotean split and the fragmentation of Iniziativa Democratica. The congress, held at the Theatre La Pergola, was attended by 703 delegates and was immediately marked by the confrontation between Moro and Fanfani. In effect, the candidates vying for the secretariat were the incumbent Secretary, Moro – around whom the Dorotean faction had coalesced, with a significant contribution from Andreotti's supporters – and Fanfani. The latter was returning to the scene at the head of his newly formed faction, Nuove Cronache. His 'breaking through to the left' policy was aimed at genuinely involving the popular masses in the life of the state. Fanfani's proposal won the support of the party's left-wing members, including the Base group and the Rinnovamento trade unionists. Eventually, a decisive contribution from Andreotti's supporters won Moro his re-election. However, despite pursuing a 'clear desire for unity', Moro's approach was by then focused on an actual social perspective to enable a genuine broadening of the democratic space in the country. This meant paying close attention to developments taking place within the Socialist Party.

In carefully reading the congress' proceedings, one gets the clear

* Proceedings of the 7th National Congress of Christian Democracy (edited by C. Danè), DC-SPES, Cinque Lune, Rome 1961.

feeling that our Party is going through one of the most difficult periods in its internal history. The fact that the political problems facing the Party are serious and crucial for the future of our country further strengthens that feeling. I say this before getting into the substance of the political issues, not to soften what I will say with my usual straightforwardness, but to remind everyone of the following: if the DC wants to regain a united line in its political commitment to serving the country, we must overcome our divisions (since political truth is never on one side alone). We must rediscover the internal method of free, dispassionate discussion that enables reasoning and the power of ideas to truly unite the Party. I say this because it would be unfair of me to believe that the incidents that occurred during our congress proceedings were due solely to imprudence or intemperance, which are, after all, normal at political congresses. It would be unfair because not just individual temperaments are exacerbating the disagreements, but also the fact that, for too long, there has been a lack of genuine political debate within the DC. I will not be any less harsh than others in our judgement of certain events that have occurred and of those responsible for them. However, I will base my judgement on a political argument and not on suspicion of individuals. On the contrary, criticising and believing that changing a few individuals would suffice to change a policy, will not help to overcome the Party's crisis. Rather, it would contribute to its disintegration, as it is criticism based on people and personalities. Having said that, I believe we have the right not to keep quiet about anything we think, not to take sides, but to contribute our ideas and direction to the internal debate.

First of all, we need clarity within the Party. We cannot and must not draw a veil over the past, because the more frank we are, the more we will be able to give our debate constructive substance. If this is the tone to be adopted, then allow me (partly because my speech is addressed to both wings of the former *Iniziativa Democratica*) to reiterate my premise. In my judgements there is no room for any suspicion about individuals, nor any mistrust. Rather, my desire to

judge the facts, the programmes, and the approaches aims to clarify the stances within the DC. These have been exacerbated not only by groups within the Party but also by external groups, whose actions have cast elements of suspicion and disunity over both individuals and approaches. We must be frank and loyal, because the task of the Congress is to lead the Party out of its divisions, in search of the truth and the right political direction.

Yesterday, Rumor claimed that nothing has changed in our Party's affairs of late. Allow me to disagree. In fact, if that were the case, after approving the Segni Government, the National Council would have had to reject Fanfani's resignation as Political Secretary. This would have demonstrated unequivocally that there was nothing new in the Party's policy. They did not wish to make this gesture, not as a renunciation of legitimate criticism, but as a recognition of substantial continuity with the line previously adopted.

So, we should be grateful to the Hon. Piccoli for the courageous clarity of his speech. But we should also remind him that the flaws in character and methods must be tackled when the person displaying those flaws is in power, and not once they have been removed from power. When we were the victims of these methods, people tried to explain and justify them as an expression of the personal character of the then Party Secretary. In any case, when Fanfani adopted a political line that was in the Party's interest, we showed that we had put the wrongs we had suffered behind us, and we supported him!

We must therefore set aside talk about people's temperaments and their methods, and make an effort to understand why our Party has fallen into a crisis of this kind, how it can emerge from it, and how it should tackle the problems whose solution the country has been waiting for some time, but can wait no longer. Hence the need to bring the debate back to a political level and identify the real causes of the DC's problems. In my view, these problems lie in the absence of a political line. We must rediscover it not by siding with one person or the other, but by seeking to develop our own political line based on our country's problems. Once we frame the problem in these

terms, the debate about formulas, programmes, people, and methods becomes less dramatic. We will also be able to rediscover that spirit of unity that is absolutely essential for successfully waging our political battle. Therefore, the starting point is not this or that incident, but our Party's political commitments.

Many men are present here who were among the leading figures of the Popular Party: Piccioni, Tupini, Merlin... These men paved the way for the emergence of the Christian Democracy. I ask these men: is it true or not that Catholics entered the political life of our country in open opposition to a liberal state that did not recognise all the rights of the individual, that stifled intermediate bodies, and that prevented the working classes from developing their energies and meeting their needs? If the DC were to be reduced to a party that seeks only to form governments that can actually govern, forgetting that its historic task is not to govern for the sake of governing but to govern in order to transform the state – because this is what our tradition and our political mission demand – then it would fall short of its commitment; then it would reduce a far broader issue to a mere quest for votes and support. This problem is so relevant, because such a strategic direction puts the moral and political prestige of the DC at stake. At a recent seminar in Milan, Professor Balladore Pallieri warned that, in the court of history, the DC would not be judged on whether or not it rebuilt houses, paved roads or restored public order. Rather, it would be judged on its ability to truly break away from the liberal conception of the state and the economy, and on how far it can create a new reality – not merely to garner support, but to demonstrate at every moment the extent of its political and civic commitment. Let us therefore examine our consciences and ask ourselves – not least because the theme of our congress prompts this reflection – whether a democratic state truly exists in Italy. Is this state a reality? Are there structures within the state that differ from those we inherited from the liberal ruling class and from Fascism, which had established a system founded not on our principles but, on the contrary, on their outright negation? If we answer in the

negative, it is not out of maximalism (those who know me know that I am no maximalist), but to recall the reasons for our political commitment.

We must understand that the fight against communism – which remains the gravest threat to our country – cannot be waged, as some of our so-called ‘centre-left’ friends claim, purely on the basis of economic demands or the distribution of wealth. This way, we would inevitably end up with a paternalistic state that would play into the hands of the PCI. We must wage that fight on the grounds of freedom, democracy and the creation of a genuinely democratic state. Communism was able to develop within the old liberal state, and if those structures remain in place, it will continue to thrive. We would end up being responsible for a political failure not due to our ideas or our principles, but to that historical legacy which, once placed upon our shoulders, we have preserved and maintained.

Building a democratic state, and then broadening support for it, means acting in accordance with the concrete course of action I am about to set out. First and foremost, we must have faith in the ability of the working classes and the labour movement to win democracy for themselves. I hope I will not be mistaken for a conservative if I say that I would be more optimistic about the future of our country on the day when Fiat in Turin paid lower wages but granted greater freedom to workers’ organisations. Indeed, when there is the opportunity to develop trade union activity free from any form of discrimination, it is also possible to secure higher wages. The working class is not merely the downtrodden waiting for a few crumbs, but a force that can play a part in building a new order, a new system.

At the Provincial Congress in Milan, I stated very clearly that building a democratic state means returning to the spirit of the Republican Constitution – to the spirit rather than the letter, because we must not adopt a stance of constitutionalist claim-making. Rather, we must understand that economic development itself, and the development of democracy in our country, depend on the practical reality of the constitutional order. If we were to conduct a survey

among our local administrators, we would get the clear impression that, in order to create an efficient and autonomous administrative class, we need to proceed in earnest with decentralisation. We need to have genuine trust in the administrative class, and we therefore need to streamline those centralised bureaucratic structures that, rather than empowering intermediate bodies, force democracy to depend entirely on central government and to operate entirely within the absolute power of the state. We therefore need to pursue a political line that is based on, and constantly guided by, the implementation of the Constitution, in order to replace – albeit with a necessarily gradual approach – the liberal state we have inherited with a democratic, organic state that strengthens intermediate bodies. After all, this is not a new idea because the Italian Popular Party was founded precisely on this principle.

However, to build this state, alongside expanding the sphere of freedom, we also need to solve the economic problems that afflict our country. Hon. Rumor made a genuinely interesting statement about the need to view the Vanoni Plan first as a Party plan and then as a tool of government; it is a pity that such an idea only occurred to Hon. Rumor now that he is a minister in the government in office, and not when he was Deputy Secretary of the Party... The fact is, the Vanoni Plan cannot be just a list of government measures; rather, it must first and foremost be a commitment by the DC to recognise that the problems of agricultural backwardness, unemployment, poverty, and the need for industrialisation and the technological renewal of existing industries are all interlinked. It is therefore important for the DC to have, including from an economic perspective, a unified vision of these problems. From this a commitment to pursue an economic policy that genuinely aims to remedy the imbalances and shortcomings of our system can emerge.

However, a danger lies there, too. I have heard a great deal of criticism at this congress: that unemployment persists, that imbalances continue to exist, that the proposals in the Vanoni Plan, while still valid, have not materialised... But pointing out these

shortcomings is not enough. We need to examine the reasons why these phenomena have occurred in our country. It is not as if we have only learned today that these problems exist: at the Naples congress, Sen. Vanoni had already expressed the DC's intention to tackle them seriously. So, today, instead of saying that we need to solve the unemployment problem, boost our economy, and so on, we need to convince ourselves that it is the Party's job to examine the reasons why the forecasts made in our country have not been followed by concrete and consistent results. What we need is not a diagnosis, but concrete economic policy measures, and for words to finally be followed by action. This would make the debate less simplistic, less populist, but also more decisive in terms of actually solving our problems. And we need to do this calmly.

Why wasn't the Vanoni Plan implemented? It would take a long time to explain, but I'll give you an example. The Vanoni Plan was not implemented because it was not some kind of economic development forecast left to the automatic workings of market forces. Rather, it was a courageous economic policy decision, made in a climate of sacrifice, towards which we needed to mobilise not only the Government, but all the political parties, all the trade unions, and all the positive energies that exist in our country. More than a specific model of economic policy, the Vanoni Plan was a civic ideal to which we needed to rally all the active forces of our society. So, my dear friends, if the Vanoni Plan represents this ideal, and if we truly want to implement it, we do not need the repeated relaunches and the five-year wait for the Saraceno Committee's reports to discover that the results differ from the forecasts. We need the courage to turn the framework into a genuine plan – not in a collectivist sense, but in the sense of a coherent programme for our economic policy – so that we can show private entrepreneurs that the state, above all, does not waste energy or let opportunities slip by, but instead directs and organises everything with a view not only to budgetary stability, but also to solving our country's economic problems. Only by demonstrating this will we be able to speak clearly

to private entrepreneurs.

We also need the courage to say that turning the scheme into a plan means bringing order to government policy. At the very same DC Lombardy conference I have already mentioned, distinguished scholars warned of the danger that – given Italy's severe shortage of experts and people capable of making a concrete scientific contribution to economic policy – research or coordination committees for implementing the Vanoni Plan would be set up in every ministry. Indeed, we have 'The Vanoni Plan for Agriculture' or 'The Vanoni Plan for the Regional Plans'. While these are all interesting initiatives, none of them is 'The Vanoni Plan'. The Vanoni Plan was not inspired by the idea of compartmentalising problems, but by the idea of tackling problems within an overall, organic vision. This requires centralising – not powers, but the tools for coordinating – the Government's entire economic policy. That is why, in addition to transforming the Vanoni scheme into a plan, we are also calling for the Ministry of the Budget to be given effective coordination responsibilities in shaping economic policy.

We must not forget that, if the results do not match the forecasts as regards bringing unemployed workers back into employment, it is because – as we can see for ourselves – there has been a great deal of investment in the public works sector and in other sectors that are not directly productive (one wonders if it is because these sectors are more susceptible to certain forms of speculation). These investments do not create ongoing employment opportunities. In fact, once the houses have been built and the public works have been completed, that sector comes to an end and does not create opportunities for increased income and employment. Therefore, the government bodies must monitor matters carefully and set the state budget on a more rational basis. That is why turning the outline into a plan does not mean a propaganda-driven relaunch; rather, it means revising our economic policy in the terms required by the Vanoni Plan, so that we can systematically measure our actions against the reality of the country.

But let me move on and get to the political part, which is what interests me most. So, if our task is to build a democratic state, to pursue policies that solve our economic problems, and to truly involve the working classes in the life of our country, then with this drive for renewal and transformation, another, more important question arises: how do we achieve these things? How can we make it possible to pursue policies that genuinely transform the structures of our country? And how can we make a policy of economic development effective? This is where, my friends, the discussion about the right begins. Some people in our party say: these young people are obsessed with rejecting fascist votes; they are afraid that, at some point, a few votes could change the DC's stance; they are afraid of states of emergency, of votes from the right that do not demand anything in return. We need to be careful, because this is precisely the point: the right does not need any showy concessions; it is content to keep the DC in a state of powerlessness, unable to be itself. The Right's ultimate aim is to reduce the DC to a kind of administrator – albeit an enlightened one – of their liberal state, which they have entrusted us with managing. They would like the DC to be not a political party but merely an electoral movement, and for it to forget its traditions.

Instead, we must firmly reject the pressures that the right is putting on us. What concerns us is not the few votes that the right may be willing to give us at a particular stage in the parliamentary process; what concerns us is that some friends among us are convinced that the DC's ideals can be achieved without a clear break with those circles that are tied to the past. The Right may support us on some government measures, on some bills, but it is clear that they are at odds with the DC's historical perspective, its civic mission, its duties to the people, and its democratic commitments. Let us therefore recall what Ravajoli said at the Naples congress (not the one that saw the success of *Iniziativa Democratica*, but the other one, during the Piccioni leadership). He invited us to be careful, because the right in our country is like a kind of cogwheel: once you put a

finger in, it takes your hand, then your arm, and you can no longer free yourself. So, it is clear that when we call for shutting the door on the right, we are not just talking about rejecting a few votes or refusing 'gratuitous' parliamentary support. Above all, we are calling for a moral and political stance from the DC as a whole. The party must be convinced that this is not the path to our future, but a dead end to us if we wish to remain true to our commitments.

But that is not enough. The right wing is a hard topic, but there is something even harder: the state of necessity. A mindset is spreading among us that, out of necessity, the DC has to do things it does not believe in, things that are at odds with its commitments and ideals. What a dangerous attitude, my friends, justifying a debased form of opportunism! We cannot give in to determinism; a state of necessity can never be accepted if it means betraying ourselves. So far, the state of necessity has justified the formation of the government, and we ourselves have acknowledged this; we have never held back from expressing our disagreement with this formula of government. And I believe we should acknowledge this, just as we should acknowledge the validity of Mr Sullo's criticisms and the consistency of his stance. President Segni, Hon. Sullo's refusal to be part of your government was not an act of disrespect or distrust towards you. Rather, it stemmed from the clear and considered conviction that, with this formula, you cannot pursue any effective and concrete policy. Here, too, I am not criticising individuals. I am convinced (I may be wrong, but this must be proven) that, until it has the votes and support of all Christian Democrats, a Christian Democrat government will not be able to act or implement its programmes. Therefore, I do not believe that this government, with the support of the right, can achieve what it sets out to do, when we ourselves, within our Party, do not agree on the formula.

We therefore need to move away from a state of necessity. If I may say so, Hon. Moro, I greatly admired your speech. I was even moved by certain parts of it, as I felt that it was a bit of a return to the origins, to the true characteristics of Christian Democracy. In

what you said, I recognised not only a cultural breadth that we had lost in the Party for some time, but also an idealistic drive, a drive that evoked a true Christian Democracy that wants to be itself. Therefore, if what the Political Secretary said in his speech is true, if this is to be the true Christian Democracy, then all of this will be possible not through the politics of the state of necessity, but above all by drawing on our ideals and our traditions, and by courageously facing up to our responsibilities in Parliament and across the country.

So then, they ask us, what do you want? Tell us what solution you're proposing, tell us what sort of government you'd like to see, tell us how you intend to get out of this situation. These are the questions many of our friends are asking.

And I will tell you, friends, what we want, because we have always been in the habit of saying things as they are, as we really think, even if we are in the minority.

First of all, friends, why is it that calls for a parliamentary vote count are only made when we propose reviving a centre-left policy? It has been said that a left-wing single-party government would not have a majority. However, the facts show that not even a right-wing single-party government can be mathematically certain of a majority! Hon. Scelba supports a return to the quadripartite formula, which is a perfectly respectable position within Christian Democracy. But it cannot be said in good conscience that, as things stand, there are any concrete political conditions for implementing this formula. In reality, dear friends, if we swap politics for accounting, there are no concrete political possibilities in Parliament, whatever the formula. However, parties are never static entities; we need to set them in motion, and then new situations will arise. This is what I am advocating. And it is here that there arises a differentiation – rather than disagreement – from other centre-left groups. It is here that the problem arises of finding the political forces that will enable us to keep our commitments.

Dear friends, there is one thing that worries me at this point. Christian Democracy (as Piccioni could confirm on behalf of all of

us) is a party with a strong parliamentary tradition. It is aware that in our country, the way to solve problems, the way to reach agreements and understandings between parties, is through Parliament. Dear friends, today there is a danger of a crisis in our institutions. I believe that Hon. Gui was wrong when he claimed, in the run-up to the congress, that the Christian Democrats have their own programme and that therefore, whatever political force supports us in Parliament, it would only serve to allow the implementation of our programme. That may be true, but at that point, my friends, we would cast a heavy shadow over Parliament, because in Parliament, political currents defend their own particular interests through their presence, and we cannot consider Saragat to be the same as Michelini, or La Malfa to be the same as Covelli, with all due respect to all of them. We want every party in Parliament and in our democratic institutions to represent itself, its interests, its traditions and its ideas. We refuse to believe that Christian Democrats could fall into the *trasformismo* of those who believe that any ally is a good ally as long as they hold power. This goes against a correct interpretation of the parliamentary method; it goes against the need to strengthen our institutions and to genuinely broaden the democratic base of our country.

So, how can we broaden this base? This brings us to the issue of the Socialists. I would like to remind my friend Scalfaro, who criticised me yesterday during this debate, that I talked about the problem of the Socialists even when I could have foreseen that keeping quiet about it would have made it easier to gain support within Christian Democracy. Please, my friends, discuss, criticise, tear what I say about the Socialists apart; but do it for what I said, not for what you want to prove I said. There has never been the slightest hint of ideological compromise or infatuation with socialism on my part, and when I consider collaborating with other parties, I do so not because I lack confidence in myself, but precisely because this self-confidence gives me the strength and the ability to collaborate with others, without losing anything of my character or my principles. Show me that my stance on the Socialists is misguided; tell me that it

does not find support in our country; but do not resort to internal discrimination, or to smear campaigns and trials of intent.

During the Naples Congress, when *Iniziativa Democratica* was united and keen to push through reforms, Giovanni Gronchi, a leading figure in the DC who has since risen to the highest office of the state, told his colleagues: 'We all agree on the reforms, but who you want to carry them out with? What parliamentary alliances would allow our country to achieve the balance needed to resolve not only economic and social problems but also to consolidate guarantees of freedom? What political forces can achieve all of this?' All the invectives now reserved for us accusing us of lack of self-confidence were directed against Gronchi at that time. And yet, the problem has resurfaced, and we are drawing the attention of the entire Party to it. The discussion about the Socialists is not a discussion of immediate alliances or of ad hoc arrangements on specific issues. The problem of the PSI is a problem rooted in the history of our country; it is a problem of political perspectives that cannot be ignored.

The Communists are obstructing any autonomist course pursued by the PSI because, my friends, the Communist Party's policy is not to increase its own support: for a long time now, the Communists have been content with even fewer votes, but they want to have more allies. In Sicily, the Communists had people vote for Milazzo; on the mainland, the Communists are willing to make any sacrifice, but they want Christian Democracy to end up in the arms of the right – they want all the democratic or socialist-inspired parties to be in opposition, because only then will the conditions be created for the Popular Front alternative. Today, the aim of the fight against the Communist Party must be to isolate it, not just to reduce its vote share.

Dear friends, this is not a question of making ideological concessions to socialism, which is, and remains, classist. On this point, we have nothing in common with them. We are the first to admit that should the Socialists ever ask us, in return for resolving some economic problem, to interfere with the education system, the

family, or similar institutions, we would refuse to resolve that economic problem. So, then, how should the socialist question be approached? In a dynamic, polemical way, but without ruling out from the outset the possibility of agreement and collaboration. De Gasperi never asked La Malfa to go to Mass in the morning; nor did he ask Saragat to renounce his party's Marxist inspiration. However, he always asked them to respect democracy and freedom. That approach is still valid: and if it is valid for the Republicans and the Social Democrats, it must also be valid for the Socialists. The day when the conditions are in place in our country to truly bring into the life of the state not merely some leadership group, but that section of the working class which, centred around the Socialist Party, is currently fighting for freedom and progress – on that day, we would have genuinely broadened the democratic foundations of the state with parliamentary means, the democratic means on which our constitutional system is based.

Here is how we see the problem of the socialists. My dear friends, there is no better opportunity for us than this to put the Socialists to the test. When the elections come around, is it better for us to go to the polls tied to the right and with a Socialist Party that can hide its indecision behind the convenient excuse of the DC's decline? Or should we instead adopt a proactive stance and take the initiative to see whether the Socialist Party is capable of overcoming its crisis, winning its autonomy, and leading its masses to reconciliation with the democratic state? And if the outcome of this test is negative, we can go to the polls and ask the country not so much for an absolute majority as to deny its vote to those left-wing forces that have not embraced a policy of renewal and development.

I wanted to highlight only the most important points of our policy platform and the decisions we need to make in relation to the other political forces. Ultimately, these points on the development of the DC's line bring us back to the question of the Party. As I said at the start, we need to make an effort to overcome the dangerous divide that is straining our relations: on the one hand, there are those

who believe that the DC can continue to pursue a policy anchored in necessity; on the other, there are those who think that the DC's policy should remain faithful to certain programmes and be courageously innovative, while forgetting to fully address the question of political forces and the means to implement this policy. Only by moving beyond these two positions will the DC be strong enough to overcome its crisis. I am asking for clear political positions in our Party's internal debates. I have set out our reasons: we oppose this government not out of disrespect for President Segni, but because we know that this arrangement could put the DC in a position of weakness in the fight against communism. We are fighting for a political line that will once again bring the DC into contact with the secular and democratic parties, and that will tackle the issue of socialism in order to isolate the conservative right on the one hand and the communist Popular Front on the other. These positions are clear and unambiguous, and even though they represent a minority view, they may perhaps be useful to the Party's cause. We are not asking for anything more at this Congress. We have no ambitions for power, and we would not even ask for votes, if it were not to give greater weight to our ideas and to those who share them. However, we want everyone to know that we are not a maximalist, naïve or impatient left, driven solely by social aspirations. Today, perhaps with greater intransigence, we want what the entire Party will one day have to want. We are not asking for electoral systems that will enable us to amass personal fortunes. Instead, we are asking the group that wins this Congress, whoever it may be, for freedom for us, for everyone – enough freedom for our ideas to be put at the service of the Party. Our hope is that, beyond any personalism, the DC will be able to rediscover its united conscience and its anti-fascist, anti-moderate, and democratic traditions. We hope it will take a vigorous political initiative for the country, leaving behind the right's *trasformismo* and communism's Popular Front alternative. We hope it will create the conditions for civilised competition between all the parties that, together with the DC, are willing to lead Italy along the path of democratic progress.

*The Times Call for a New Politics**

The year 1961 began with the contested formation of the 'difficult administrations': for the first time, with a genuine, direct collaboration, Christian Democrats and Socialists governed together at the municipality level. The following March, at the 34th Congress of the PSI, the party's secretary, Pietro Nenni, called for 'dialogue with the Catholics' aimed at overcoming the artificial barriers that had divided the Catholic and socialist constituencies. The party's reiterated autonomist line under Nenni accelerated the move towards a centre-left alliance. Against this backdrop, the DC party secretary, Aldo Moro, promoted a historical and cultural initiative on the ideological roots of Christian Democracy.

The conference was held in San Pellegrino, in the province of Bergamo, from 13 to 16 September 1961. Its aim was to renew the party's image by offering a comprehensive historical reflection on the role of Catholics in politics. The meeting was held on the eve of the significant turning point that the Christian Democracy was about to make at the next national congress. This was convened in Naples the following January and intended to ratify the centre-left political choice.

In addition to the party's main leaders, the San Pellegrino conference was attended by numerous Catholic intellectuals and scholars, including the historian Gabriele De Rosa, the economist Pasquale Saraceno, and the sociologist Achille Ardigò. Ardigò's speech aroused particular interest among many participants, including Granelli, and fuelled the debate on the imminent formation of the centre-left. In his contribution on 'Social classes and political synthesis', the sociologist

* *Il Convegno di San Pellegrino [San Pellegrino Conference], Proceedings of the 1st National Study Conference, San Pellegrino Terme (13–16 September 1961), Cinque Lune, Rome, 1962.*

from Emilia-Romagna grounded his analysis in the changes under way in Catholic circles following the election of Pope John xxiii. He repeatedly invoked the encyclical Mater et Magistra. He saw in centre-left politics the synthesis of the two traditions within the party led by De Gasperi and Dossetti, respectively.

From an economic standpoint, Pasquale Saraceno's speech 'State and economy' took up the lines laid down in the 1950s by Ezio Vanoni. He suggested planning as a method for orienting and steering the new political course.

By contrast, the historian Gabriele De Rosa examined the role of 'Catholics in the unified Italian state', from their opposition to the liberal state to the dominant position they assumed in the country's government with Christian Democracy.

The other contributions were the following: Guido Gonella on 'Christianity and democratic freedoms'; Feliciano Benvenuti on 'The individual, intermediate communities and the state'; Dino Del Bo on 'Political parties in the democratic state'; Franco Maria Malfatti on 'Christian Democracy's policy statements from its re-establishment to the present day'; Luigi Gui on 'Christian Democracy's legislative and governmental activities from the Constituent Assembly to the present day'; and Giovanni Battista Scaglia on 'Christian Democracy in Italian politics'.

This conference is a significant event for the internal affairs of Christian Democracy, but there is a temptation running through it that we must resist: the temptation to interpret its excellent speeches and the many intelligent and ingenious things that have been said, as a set of cultural, scientific and purely intellectual contributions intended to enrich a debate, which is undoubtedly positive for our party. For too long, in fact, within Christian Democracy, we have possibly restricted our internal political debate to a matter of formulae, contingent issues, and political or parliamentary tactics. So, obviously, when the dialogue moves to a higher, more challenging level, we all note this with satisfaction. The temptation I referred to is not about the appreciation of this atmosphere at our conference. It is about the risk of forgetting that, first and foremost, we are a political party. Everything discussed here, and everything that we hope will be the subject of ongoing debate at various levels within the party, must be closely linked to the specific role of a large

democratic and popular party that plays a decisive part in national life. The DC is judged on what it does as well as on what it says. Consequently, it must draw, from theoretical and cultural analysis, the elements that will increasingly shape its political action.

The aim of my speech is precisely to highlight these elements in some of the resolutions presented. Prof. De Rosa's presentation clearly outlined a historical and political picture of this kind: Italian Catholics, first in opposition to the liberal state and then, through the Popular Party, had succeeded in establishing a very strong and incisive political and ideological position, including in terms of playing an active role in national life. However, the historical situation gradually reversed, and Catholics ceased to be a force of opposition and protest, and assumed, through Christian Democracy, a dominant role in political leadership. Hence the risk that the movement's distinctive, programmatic and ideological contours will become increasingly blurred, clumsy, and less defined. This limitation is particularly evident in the current situation. Undoubtedly, the historical experience of our political movement and the battles fought uncompromisingly by the Popular Party have contributed to the accumulation of a significant ideological heritage. The most perceptive members of the younger generation have learned the lesson of Catholics' democratic participation in the life of the country and have embraced the valuable teachings of Sturzo and De Gasperi. However, they cannot fail to feel the weight of that historic shift that has left us today in a markedly reversed political position. Today, we belong to a party that cannot support the need for a genuine strengthening of local autonomy simply because Luigi Sturzo, in Bologna in 1919, stated that local autonomy was the only effective remedy against the centralism of the liberal class and a cornerstone of our pluralistic conception of society and the state. In the current historical context, and in line with our current political commitment – which is no longer the expression of the protest of a movement outside the state, but the fulfilment of a duty to transform, in the light of our own beliefs, the traditional structures of Italian society – we

must find a concrete way to revitalise a fundamentally valid tradition without making the mistake of repeating it mechanically. This should be the meaning and the underlying objective of our study conference. There are two versions of our conference, and both are wrong. The first version, which is maximalist, seems to view our conference as a kind of ideological constituent assembly. No one can fail to see the danger of this view: our party's Christian inspiration is something indispensable and vital, but it also transcends the political and historical moment. It is something that goes beyond economic, political and social systems themselves. We cannot turn ideology into a prefabricated model, confined within the narrow boundaries of politics or the social sciences, which belongs to other cultures and to other ways of understanding life and historical development. More accurately, we should speak of political ideology, implicitly acknowledging its autonomy unfolding from permanently valid principles, within the context of specific historical situations. We should not mistake levels of direct responsibility, which, while not separate, are certainly distinct. Therefore, no 'ideological constituent assembly' exists here in the absolutist, anti-democratic sense that some are trying to give to this term. On the other hand, the second view is also unacceptable: that of a minimalism which sees our conference as an opportunity for clever disquisitions while, at the same time, allowing DC politics to continue along its old tracks. The times call for a new politics – a more courageous form of politics. It is therefore essential that this conference – even if only through a discourse that goes beyond specific and short-term issues – produces a commitment to define Christian Democracy more clearly. Only on this basis will our party be able to address the issue of political alliances with greater confidence. This is the way to overcome the concerns of those who fear that, in the parliamentary relationships between parties and in the interactions between differing political views, democracy will be transformed because it is unable to stand, even in the context of political and parliamentary cooperation. We need to discuss and explore in depth the fundamental issues of

national life, and to clarify the terms of our conception of society and the state. This way we may better define the party's politics, and enrich our doctrinal heritage without, however, ignoring the significance it has in terms of practical action. If I may make a historical reference in this regard, I would say that we should bear in mind the positions taken within the Italian Catholic political movement by Giuseppe Toniolo, on the one hand, and Luigi Sturzo, on the other. Nobody can deny that Giuseppe Toniolo made an original contribution to enriching our doctrine of society and developing a highly coherent and precise conception of social life. However, as De Gasperi pointed out in the preface to a volume by Vistalli, all these valuable developments failed to make an impact on national life. In fact, for historical reasons, the logical step from theoretical construction to political interpretation – and therefore to direct action by a strong popular party capable of asserting its ideas and programmes within parliamentary democracy – was missing. It would be extremely detrimental to reduce this conference to a kind of inventory of what exists at the cultural, scientific and doctrinal levels, both outside and within the party, across the broad spectrum of our political movement. Let us take stock, but at the same time, let us remember that if Luigi Sturzo, in the early years of the century, had limited himself to taking stock of what existed at that time within the Catholic political movement, the Popular Party would never have come into being. Moreover, the political development of Italian society would have taken place outside of us and, most likely, against us. We therefore need to take stock, but with the aim of clearly selecting those experiences that are compatible with the popular function and the innovative political commitment of Christian Democracy. In other words, we need to move beyond pure politicism and the nominalism of formulae, and instead absorb everything of vital importance that is being developed in scientific research, in the cultural debate, and in theoretical frameworks, in order to revitalise the Christian Democrats' political action.

From this point of view, the approach my friend Ardigò has taken

in his speech is undoubtedly positive, although I still have some reservations. I will express them frankly here – not to level criticism, but to make a constructive contribution. Ardigò has undoubtedly made a commendable effort to update the party's thinking. He recalled some of the core values of the Sturzo experience, and placed these values within the context of the contemporary problems facing Italian society. My friend Ardigò is certainly right in saying that Luigi Sturzo's experience—the political struggle of the Popular Party – essentially came to a halt on the threshold of modern industrial development and remained tied to a political interpretation of the emancipatory needs of the rural, peasant world, which aspired to have its freedoms recognised and its place within the state secured. He is right also with regard to the political significance of his statement, because those were the key issues of that historical period. At that time, Luigi Sturzo was waging an uncompromising political battle in defence of freedom, at a moment when the very class divisions between Giolitti and Turati had begun to diminish and when the latter seemed convinced that the 'happy decade' of the Giolitti era would inevitably lead to full industrial development, from which, almost by magic, a conscious proletariat would emerge, capable of bringing about the advent of socialism in our country. At that time, the 'leader' [in English in the original text] of the Partito Popolare had no other way of asserting an original identity for his political movement than by interpreting the Southern peasant protests, criticising the corrupt practices of the ruling class, denouncing the centralist and bureaucratic limitations of the liberal state, and moving beyond the positivist reformism that had enabled Giolitti to co-opt the socialist movement into his own politics. In doing so, Luigi Sturzo rejected the idea of reducing the political development of Italian society to a purely economic matter of wealth and prosperity. Rather, he addressed the issue of the country's democratic progress in terms of freedom, the advancement of the working classes, and the establishment of new civil institutions.

Responding to Ardigò's invitation, we face the problems of our

time and realise that they call for a new and original commitment from us, a commitment able to grasp the meaning of the transformations under way.

Perhaps our friend Ardigò did not have time to recall that, alongside Dossetti, men like Grandi and Vanoni also gave our political movement an impetus in this direction. These illustrious friends also sought, often amid general incomprehension, to steer the Christian Democracy party towards a modern, progressive stance on the issues of economic development and the evolution of social classes. If we critically synthesise the teachings of Grandi, Dossetti and Vanoni, we can not only understand the stage of development of Italian society, but also grasp its limitations in a sphere that is not solely economic.

The industrial feature of Italy's economic development and the rapid change in our material living conditions show that this significant phenomenon is disrupting the very social classes through the use of modern technologies. The Christian Democracy party would risk being left out of this unstoppable process if it continued to pursue policies aimed at specific groups, at the middle classes. We must deal with today's society in a different way and take into account that the very sociological base of political parties is changing, fundamentally altering the political relationship itself. All of this is right; all of this is true. In tackling this set of problems, which are urgent in many respects, we must guard against the illusion that we can achieve the different kind of society we desire by rationalising economic expansion, better organising industrial development and involving workers in the management of businesses; or by pursuing policies that distribute wealth and reduce inequalities and imbalances. In tackling the problems posed by the dynamics of an economy expanding due to the very strength of the system, we risk falling within the confines of neocapitalism. This reduces everything to the positivist illusion that, by regulating, controlling, and improving the process of economic expansion, we can build a more modern, more democratic and freer society. Furthermore, neo-capitalist theorists

forget that, in Italy, there is something that prevents the very rationalisation of economic development according to modern criteria. And this ‘something’ is the structure of the state, the legal framework, and the political situation within which Italian society has been organised since the time of unification. This set of factors can only deliver to our country a form of prosperity based on paternalism and the denial of freedom. As long as these structures remain in place, we are forced, with no alternative, to compete with large private monopolies through public power centres that are largely beyond democratic control; we have to use forms of public intervention, implemented in a climate of protection and corporatism, to pursue the objectives of modern economic planning. With these tools, we may indeed achieve economic prosperity and develop our production capacity. However, undoubtedly the state would remain as it is with no progress towards citizens’ self-awareness, political and civil improvement, the establishment of self-government, or the development of a new administrative mindset. This is why, in my view, the discourse initiated by Ardigò – which is key with regard to the problems of economic development and their immediate repercussions – organically merges with the insightful speech by Prof. Saraceno. He went beyond the usual Vanoni-style discourse on the development model, and addressed the issue of planning. This way, in fact, Prof. Saraceno also raised the question of the tools, the creation of new legal institutions, and the establishment of new decision-making powers at the level of local autonomies. All of this is not so much because the periphery is protesting against the centralising state, but because a modern planning policy requires new administrative structures. I shall not dwell on these observations, but they undoubtedly filled a gap so far unaddressed by many economists who see nothing beyond the economic sphere. Prof. Saraceno’s call reminds Catholic democrats of taking the chance to rebuild the very structures of the Italian state on an increasingly democratic basis and with broad popular participation by acting at the economic level. A fair distribution of the benefits of economic development –provided

there is the will and the necessary political consistency – allows for beginning to resolve long-standing problems. These are relating to social mores, political methods, and administrative practices, always sidelined by a certain radical progressivism that is accustomed to equating the progress of the economy with that of society as a whole. Catholic democrats cannot be satisfied with advocating the need for the economic unification of the country, following the 19th-century political unification. Rather, we must harness everything that encourages the political class to find solutions in the economic sphere and support the path towards prosperity. We need to concretely revise, transform and modify our state and administrative structures. The opportunities offered by the favourable economic situation enables us to overcome certain geographical and sectoral imbalances. However, we also need to resolve the fundamental problem of the state, otherwise the following political synthesis will be nothing more than a matter of prosperity. We can also play a role in shaping the new classes through new organisational structures, and we can prevent the Christian Democracy party from losing more electoral strength than necessary. However, if we do not place the policy of freedom alongside the policy of economic development and, therefore, do not courageously embark on reform of the Italian state in accordance with the constitutional principles, we still risk losing our battle. In fact, other political movements are, in terms of their culture and doctrine, more attuned than we are to the achievements of affluent societies.

The various components of the Christian Democrats' commitment today are the following: harnessing all entrepreneurial energy and giving public intervention a clear purpose, in opposition to the absurd dichotomy that everything public is progressive and everything private is conservative; democratic control in every area of national life; regional organisation, not so much as a division of power but as a rediscovery of new roles for local authorities; and the planning policy advocated by Prof. Saraceno. Some people say that, by working in this way, we are adopting the perspective of a third

way. We can accept this definition, provided it is not a form of agnosticism that allows us to do neither what the free-marketeers want nor what the collectivists want, but rather to end up on the third way by doing a bit of everything. For us, at least, the third way does not mean doing nothing or not doing what others would do; rather, it means doing something new. The third way risks becoming a new Azionista model if it is not accompanied by the ability to tackle the major problems we have highlighted at their root.

At this point, one final observation arises. Prof. Saraceno's explicit support for a planning policy has elicited far less reaction than one might have expected. There is now a habit of no longer being frightened by words, as long as words do not change the course of events, because then even words would begin to become dangerous. At the Naples Congress in 1954, people were starting to talk publicly about a 'scheme', although in private conversations, Vanoni made no secret of his desire to achieve a 'plan'. Then we moved from the scheme to programming, and now we have arrived at the concept of a planning policy, which is a very important concept. If we look at the substance of things, a planning policy – provided it is not inspired by collectivist ideas – is the modern tool for addressing the fundamental problems of Italian society in a comprehensive way. Prof. Saraceno rightly pointed out the absurdity of the idea, for example, of developing the Italian economy without first addressing the problems of education, vocational training, and scientific research. And let us not forget that it is not just a question of resources. Indeed, today, the issue of education is being put on the back burner, partly because it is easier to spend billions on motorways, to everyone's satisfaction, than on education, where sensitive political disagreements arise. Hence, a plan that is not a dead letter, but that translates Christian Democracy's commitment on key national issues into political, concrete terms is not about theorising an ideologically reassuring 'third way' in the face of the dichotomy between socialism and liberalism. Rather, it is about choosing between different interests and prioritising public spending according

to a clear hierarchy of priorities. All of this can only lead to a different and conflicting political stance among the various parties in Parliament and in government. At this point, the essence of the political problem reveals itself. Nowadays, a planning policy means, first and foremost, carrying out a review of the policies we have pursued so far, in terms of evolution rather than self-harm. In the aftermath of the Resistance, democratic governments made the decision to rebuild the market economy system in Italy. It is therefore clear that certain changes and certain interventions could only be carried out once the system had achieved a sustained rate of growth. Therefore, just because certain things were not done in the past does not mean they should not be done today. Today's emerging planning policy is a historically mature necessity. It is the opposite of a cliché that is also spreading among our circles, namely the cliché of the 'long term'. Planning policy is accepted, and the development of the various, independent sectoral plans continues. Everyone holds and accepts discussions on programming, as long as they do not change anything about traditional policy. Planning means setting priorities, excluding certain types of spending, and focusing investment on specific sectors: can all this happen without provoking reactions or controversy? Clearly not. That is why, in Italy, a planning policy presupposes the rejection of the idea that 'time will sort everything out', as was the case during Giolitti's 'happy decade'. Planning must concretely reverse the trend of certain sectoral policies that we have continued to pursue since the end of the war. I would like to briefly highlight just one aspect that demonstrates the gravity of the situation and the need for large-scale, global action. If, over the next few years, migration from the South to the North continues at the rate we have seen in recent years, and the traditional policy for the South continues without any calm self-criticism, we risk the following: an overpopulated North, with all the problems that arise in large urban centres, and a South that, to use a fitting phrase Prof. Saraceno once used on another occasion, will be reduced to a sort of graveyard of public works that are useless even for the purpose of creating the

fundamental elements of economic recovery in underdeveloped areas. Today, we need to rethink our South policy, to see what needs to be changed. This does not mean engaging in self-harm; rather, it means tackling the problems of underdevelopment within the framework of a rigorous planning policy, making the fundamental choices in terms of public investment that are necessary to industrialise the South and complete the phase of infrastructure projects, even if this goes against the interests of certain private monopolies.

Among the many points that have been raised, it would suffice for the Christian Democrats, mindful of their role as a political party, to select two in order to position themselves for future elections. First, the Italian economy needs to develop without relying on the market's automatic mechanisms, but through the choices required by a rigorous planning policy. Second, the state structure shall change, as provided for in the Constitution, to prevent Catholics – who emerged on the political scene as tenacious advocates of autonomy – from ending in the pitfall of the stifling old systems' centralism. If we were to make an effort to build the Christian Democrats' policy on the basis of these two fundamental commitments, there is no doubt that we would be able to move beyond Sturzo's legacy. We would not forget its origin. On the contrary, we would apply Sturzo's valid insights to the problems of our time and to the historical duty of our party. We are the core of the democratic ruling class, and cannot longer limit ourselves to interpreting the protest impulse of the classes excluded from political power. We must take that impulse into account in practical terms.

These issues must be the subject of internal political debate within the party outside this forum. Christian Democracy's internal problems should also be considered in relation to these issues. There is a risk that, at the next national congress, the conflict between the various groups will once again manifest itself over secondary and marginal issues; there is a risk that the factions, instead of being a vehicle for political thought, will be reduced to fighting each other

purely for internal power; there is a risk that we will confine ourselves to wishfully calling for a planned policy and the building of a democratic state in Italy without making the necessary parliamentary choices among the available political forces to give that aspiration concrete form.

Put in these terms, the issue of broadening the democratic area and reaching an agreement with the PSI does not slip into ideological confusion, or – worse still – into the progressive illusion of a mythical, fix-it-all Catholic-socialist society. Rather, it reflects the maturity of a political coming-together between those forces in Italy with their peculiar contribution to solving the most important problems. Such an approach to the internal debate allows for gradually moving beyond the traditional notion of internal currents. However, for this to happen, we need to ask ourselves: is the party, within its structures, ready to take on a commitment of this kind? In the days of Dossettismo, Giuseppe Dossetti readily conveyed to us the strength of his ideals, indicating in absolute terms the future prospects of Italian politics. However, the current situation, with all its complex problems, is such that it almost always leaves us perplexed, and shows that there is always something to study, to explore in depth, to research. This is extremely positive, because political experience is also gained through a sound method of enquiry. However, having abandoned its easy dogmatic frameworks, is Christian Democracy now able to serve as an instrument for the ongoing search for political truth?

Something has started to be done, such as the study conferences; but where are the journals in which we can continue to discuss the underlying issues? How is research organised within the party? Where are the resources for systematically studying and analysing the national situation and the party's tasks? How is internal political power divided within the Christian Democrats? What is the point of the compromise between the factions that share the central offices, if it is solely to balance their respective influences over party members? How are individual qualities identified within the party?

How can we encourage the active involvement of those young academics who, having just left university, are forced to be absorbed into the research offices of major public or private power centres and are cut off from any political experience? When have we ever approached the issue of the party in terms of its leadership? Sure enough, the Commission for the reform of the Statute, which Sen. Piccioni chairs with such passion, will not be able to solve these problems. The fundamental problem facing the Christian Democrats is that of creating structures suitable for the ongoing research and development of a coherent democratic policy, thereby preventing the party from living off the positions of the past and ensuring that it can rely on continuous creative effort. And even if the party were ready to undertake these tasks in terms of its structure, its rules and the selection of its leadership, there would still remain the problem of consistently translating its policy at parliamentary and governmental level. By its very nature, the party must translate its commitments into concrete action in Parliament, in its dialogue with other parties, and in its political relations, avoiding the appearance of being pushed by others and, on the contrary, making its own political choices in complete independence. Is it possible to achieve these desirable outcomes without making significant changes of direction? We do not think so. There are many things that need to change; it is far from enough to adapt without making changes in relation to all these problems! A study conference is not a party congress, nor is it a meeting of the national council or of the party leadership, so it would be inappropriate to expect concrete solutions from it. However, it is understandable that certain questions have arisen here, if only to provide a boost, free from short-term concerns, to those working to make Christian Democracy the democratic, popular party that Italy needs for a future characterised not only by prosperity, but above all by freedom and social progress.

*A New Direction for Christian Democracy**

Between 30 October and 3 November 1965, a national assembly of the Christian Democracy party was held in Sorrento. According to the leadership's plans – the party secretary, Mariano Rumor, was supported by a unified executive committee that included representatives from all factions – the assembly was intended to address the party's situation with a view to relaunching it on the national political stage.

The conference was introduced by a wide-ranging and detailed address by Deputy Secretary Arnaldo Forlani. He offered many starting points for the contributions that followed, including Luigi Granelli's. Forlani linked the issue of institutional reforms to that of a more general renewal of the role of political parties, which needed to once again adequately represent the country's social concerns. Furthermore, for the Christian Democrats, the Deputy Secretary pointed to the path of 'mediation' with society and with a Catholic world in turmoil.

The conference gave space also to a debate on centre-left policy. This might have found fresh perspectives in the imminent unification of the Socialist forces. It was the Sinistra di Base, with Giovanni Galloni, that urged the party to pay greater attention to this event of historic significance. For Granelli, the Sorrento assembly could 'truly mark the start of a new and highly innovative phase in the life of the party'.¹ However, the Sorrento meeting highlighted, in particular, the

* Direzione nazionale DC, *Assemblea Nazionale della Democrazia Cristiana* [National Assembly of Christian Democracy], 6 vols., Cinque Lune, Rome, 1967.

¹ ASILS, Fondo Granelli, series I, b. 6, *Relazione di Granelli al convegno dell'Alta Italia di «Forze Nuove»* [Granelli's Presentation to the 'Forze Nuove' Northern Italy Conference], 'Punti Fermi della sinistra DC per l'Assemblea di Sorrento' [The DC Left's Key Points for the Sorrento Assembly].

growing role that this 'third generation' of Catholic figures was coming to assume within the party. This was no longer only cultural and intellectual, but also explicitly political, as they were fully turning into the party's leadership

Dear friends,

In my opinion, it is impossible to envisage the political and organisational revitalisation of the party – which is the main purpose of our assembly – without being fully aware of the country's real situation, its most pressing and dramatic problems, and the way Italian democracy is developing. In any case, our past experience clearly shows that, since the Congress of Naples in 1954 – that is, since the first 'conspiracy of the barons', to our friend Sullo's terms – all attempts at organisational revitalisation within the party have had limited success, precisely because there has been a lack of that cultural and political vision of the role of the Christian Democracy Party. This is the essential prerequisite for any effort to strengthen and relaunch it.

The facts also support this argument. There is no doubt that the way in which centre-left politics – now shared by the vast majority of the party – is being put into practice requires of Christian Democracy, more than a change of line, a stronger role in prompting and pressing for a programme in relation to what the coalition government is doing.

It is utterly pointless to continue making astute diagnoses of the ongoing transformations, especially at a time when they are slowing down alarmingly, if these diagnoses serve no purpose other than to congratulate ourselves on the superiority of our conceptions of freedom, pluralism and human dignity. Instead, we should be asking ourselves why there is still such a wide gap between our ideas and the reality in which we operate, after more than twenty years of the democratic exercise of power in Italy.

The issue is that popular sections of society are growing sceptical about our ability to deliver, rather than about our fundamental ideas. Thence, the party must undertake a courageous examination of conscience in order to rediscover its role as a leading force in

directing, rather than merely undergoing, the transformations of society, and in reshaping the state and its structures in line with the system of values it stands for.

So, if we do not want to slide into the misleading outlook of an efficiency drive devoid of ideal aims, then a preliminary step is to firmly reaffirm the party's historical nature and function.

First of all, there are some ideas that need to be rejected. For example, in an interesting interview published in *Corriere della Sera*, and one that is, for the most part, convincing, the journalist Pietro Ottone appeared to have his friend Taviani say that anti-communism is the Christian Democrats' sole reason for being and that the party would be entirely useless if the Communist Party did not exist in Italy. Only this reason would explain our unity.

It would be tempting to pursue the polemic on this point. We will simply note that this is the same old attempt to use Catholics and their party as a purely anonymous, conservative electoral bloc – an attempt that, from the outset, the Popular Party first and then the Christian Democrats have always strongly opposed.

Linked to this distortion of historical reality is the attempt to force the Christian Democracy party to evolve towards models that have taken hold in other countries. I would like to reassure my friend Andreotti. We have nothing against the German Christian Democracy Party – whose merits we do not deny. We simply want to defend the heritage and tradition of the Italian Christian Democracy party, which are profoundly different from the models being invoked. This is because of its deep-rooted popular origins – just as the history of our country is different.

What we stand for is Luigi Sturzo's conception of the party, the Resistance, the Constitution, and working with democratic and socialist forces rather than right-wing forces.

In Italy, there are those who envisage a future that, unfortunately, beguiles the friends of Il Mulino: a future in which political struggle is organised around two large, moderate movements. The first, the Catholic movement, would hollow out the right by using religion as

an electoral banner. The other, the social-democratic movement – more secularist than Marxist – would hollow out the left, so that parliamentary democracy once again becomes, as in the old Enlightenment dream, the realm of manoeuvres, of leadership combinations, of power compromises, and of *trasformismo*.

This view should also be rejected because the Christian Democracy party is, above all, a party with its own ideas, its own autonomous political position, and its own programmes. It therefore has a specific, original role to play in Italian society, working towards renewal and transformation. This role is precisely the opposite of a mechanical counterweight to the positions of others, in conservative terms, which some people are trying to make them take on for the sake of a socialist unification that is also conceived in a transformist way.

If we want the Christian Democracy party to avoid becoming an electoral movement, more akin to the German model than to its own traditions; if, in other words, we do not want it to be confined to merely influencing the work of others, then it is necessary to move beyond – within the party, even before in government and in Parliament – a role of mere oversight and moderate restraint.

On the basis of its own ideas and traditions, the Christian Democracy party must once again take on a clearly and consciously popular, reforming role. It must do so to engage in dialogue on this basis with Italian society and with the democratic and socialist forces, and to pursue a transformative debate with the liberal and communist opposition.

From this perspective, the party can never fully identify with the governing arrangements, not even with the centre-left one, which nevertheless represents the most dignified choice of alliance. Instead, it must consistently remain in a more dynamic and demanding position than the politics pursued in collaboration with other parties.

If we accept this premise, which we have always upheld, then we can clearly see the tasks that fall to the party in relation to society, the state and the international situation. From this perspective we can

draw sound guidance for changing our structures, our methods and our internal life in a way that corresponds to the role of direction, guidance and action that we are called upon to fulfil in Parliament and in the country.

From this perspective, even certain concerns about government action, due to the contradictory way in which the centre-left policy is being implemented, can be addressed – not through the old system of conspiracies and personal attacks to replace the Prime Minister or a minister (which, moreover, is always possible and, when genuinely justified, offers all the constitutionally proper means to strengthen or even change a government with the approval of Parliament) – but through a sustained initiative by the Christian Democracy Party that rises above individuals and is capable of influencing the work of government as a whole, at any moment.

However, to do this we need full awareness of the country's real situation. From this comes constructive criticism that can spur the necessary revisions. In this respect, the serious economic and social situation that we are experiencing, and the heavy climate of stagnation that unfortunately continues, are particularly telling.

As a popular and democratic party, we absolutely must not forget the following: some of us are concerned about the future consequences of an affluent society – as if the serious and persistent imbalances that still severely afflict Italian society had already been overcome. However, unemployment is rising, investment is falling, and idle resources are increasing. At the same time, our economy's competitiveness in the markets in which we are currently well placed is declining. This gives rise to well-founded concerns about the future.

Faced with this situation, which could overwhelm even the centre-left's reformist ambitions, can the party stand by as a spectator, or as an apologist for 'necessity' in the face of a counter-cyclical policy which, despite its good intentions, is failing to overcome stagnation and seems to be waiting for recovery to come from a new – and unrepeatable – economic miracle? Can the party

passively accept the headlong rush, favoured even by some socialist figures, of those who think they can solve every problem in the future through the myth of planning that is not only smooth-running but even endlessly deferrable, as they wait for better times?

Our party must firmly oppose all of this. This is a key priority. If the DC does not want to lose touch with the reality of the country and if it wants to remain true to its principles, then it cannot shirk the obligation, through its own initiative, to shape an economic policy that transcends and overcomes the current economic climate, and is directed towards longer-term objectives.

Our fundamental objectives are not only those relating to the defence of the conditions of a market economy, leaving the task of solving problems to the clash of interests alone, but above all – as Forlani reminded us, quoting De Gasperi and Vanoni at the 1954 Naples Congress – those of full employment, the protection of labour, the overcoming of geographical and sectoral imbalances, and the structural transformation of the Italian economic system. These are clearly objectives that, even before any practical government action, require a clearer definition and a precise direction from the party. Economic planning, which cannot be conceived in isolation from cyclical policy measures, is a test of the DC's capacity to provide impetus, as well as of the centre-left coalition. Whether the Governor of the Bank of Italy likes it or not, the DC cannot fail to be at the forefront in calling for the implementation of the bills awaiting approval, from the town planning bill to the bill on public limited companies, in discussing their content, and in linking them to a broader plan for reform and modernisation of the country.

Without the DC taking direct responsibility for all these issues, it is an illusion to think we can change the course of events, clarify the meaning of our politics to voters, or prevent transformations, when they occur, from adding new and more dramatic imbalances to old ones. This widens the gap between the political class and the living reality of Italian society.

However, alongside the request for the party to clarify its stance

on economic policy and planning, we cannot fail to add the major issue of state reform. Rightly, this has been debated in earnest by this assembly. This issue is, in fact, central to our political vision and is closely linked to economic problems, if only in terms of the instruments of public action.

We are aware – having raised these issues on numerous occasions within the party – of the complexity and urgency of the State's problems. They range from its powerlessness to the lack of adequate tools to achieve its aims, and include the high costs and the absorption of too many precious resources in relation to the results delivered by many traditional public bodies. However, to us, it seems excessive to place the blame for this situation entirely on others. Of course, other political forces bear significant responsibility, especially if we look at our national history, but we also need to frankly acknowledge that it was precisely on this ground, in the field of state reform more than any other, that we should have shown – and should still show – in deeds rather than in words, a more coherent pluralist commitment, a livelier democratic awareness, and a more determined drive for reform.

Based on our traditions, it is we who, more than anyone else, have an obligation to build an articulated, pluralist democratic state in Italy. This should be in collaboration with other genuinely democratic political forces like ours, which, in some cases, reveal centralist and technocratic tendencies – albeit for social purposes. If this is the case, after a long period in government, there is no point in lamenting about the problems of bureaucratic centralism, the slow and worrying devaluation of Parliament, the power vacuums in the executive, or the inadequate oversight of public activity. Instead of giving pointless lectures to local administrators, we should, before it is too late, resume, with courage, a political and governmental initiative to make concrete changes to the bureaucratic and centralising state inherited from the liberal and fascist eras.

From this perspective, the centre-left government, with its substantial parliamentary majority, is enabling a constructive thaw in

constitutional politics. This has been blocked by objective obstacles for too long. It is therefore possible to responsibly implement those institutions that can help the state overcome its crisis of efficiency and its still-narrow margins of popular support.

However, the cornerstone of this policy does not lie in marginal remedies.

The solution lies in the resolute implementation of a regional system that does not create additional layers of bureaucracy. Rather, it breaks down centralisation, fits into a well-structured system of autonomy, and initiates a broader process of state reform, as well as real, direct public participation in the life of the institutions.

In the wake of this fundamental reform, the following also find their proper place: the re-evaluation of Parliament; the streamlining and improved organisation of legislative work; the strengthening of the executive and of the scrutiny function of the governing majority itself; the reform of public administration; the differentiation of the roles of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate; and the introduction of the referendum.

All these reforms, which realistically span multiple parliamentary terms, are therefore brought together within an organic and unified perspective for overcoming the crisis of the post-Risorgimento unitary state through its effective transformation along functional and democratic lines.

That is why, if we want to be practical – as required by our duty as the party with the greatest responsibility for governing the country – we need to set this package of reforms in motion with courage and, above all, start them from the right point.

This is the party's second key point. As a party, the Christian Democracy must publicly commit to passing the laws implementing the system of regional government within the current parliamentary term. In part, this is to dispel any suspicion of a tendency to systematically postpone such measures. Consequently, they must take the initiative to review and revise, in the manner outlined above, the bills drawn up by the Fanfani government and reintroduced by the

current government. In our view, these are largely inadequate in terms of the need to make these new institutions the foundation for a general reform of the state, rather than pointless and costly duplicates of the old, much-criticised centralism.

At this point, we should turn to foreign policy issues, which the party has too often neglected. Given their importance, these need to be taken seriously so that they too become part of the party's conscious self-definition. The task is made easier by the fact that, on this issue, I fully agree with the speech that my friend De Poli gave yesterday, and I can refer to it to express my views. Suffice it for me to recall the interest in major international issues, in defending the supreme value of peace, in promoting the method of negotiation to resolve disputes between peoples, in providing more than just economic aid to developing countries, and in building a political and democratic Europe that is not based solely on market integration. All this not only enables us to formulate a valid response to issues that are also vital for the domestic situation, but also concretely opens the door to a broadening of the party's outlook, reaffirms an important part of our doctrine, establishes extremely useful links and exchanges of national experience, and – in short – also raises the tone of our internal debates.

The brief reference to the country's real problems, to ways of overcoming the current crisis of the state, and to the need for a better understanding of the international situation is not so much intended to assess individual issues. Such a task must be addressed elsewhere. Rather, in close adherence to reality, it once again raises the issue of the party's specific function and goals, and enables us to address our internal issues with greater awareness.

While asserting its own role, the party must work together with other political forces to re-evaluate the whole party system. Through its ideas and actions, it has to overcome apathy, scepticism and the disconnect between the party system and civil society. This will create the conditions – including the psychological ones – for a constructive overcoming of the disenchantment polemic against partitocracy.

Public opinion needs to rediscover the usefulness of political parties, to see them open to taking on board the new currents emerging from society, and to assess their capacity not so much in terms of gaining and managing power, but in terms of the practical construction of new democratic systems. In such a climate, it becomes legitimate and possible, for example, to address and resolve the issue of public funding for political parties. This can no longer be postponed if we want to preserve the autonomy of the political process itself and combat risky and compromising practices. In any event, it must be linked to the obligation to publish party accounts and could be accompanied by at least a minimum of regulation – which is also possible without jeopardising freedom of association – of the procedures for nominating candidates, within the framework of electoral legislation. This, while remaining proportional, should introduce a national constituency to compensate for the excessive rigidity of the system.

Leaving these problems for others to raise would mean that we would end enduring them passively. But even solving them could dangerously become a further source of division between the political class and civil society – a new pretext for anti-politics and anti-system campaigns, with all the negative consequences that are not hard to foresee.

This brings us to the issues that directly affect the party. The question that arises at this point is the following: given the political commitments mentioned, all of which are crucial for the future of democracy in Italy, does the Christian Democracy Party have enough ideals and convictions, moral resolve, democratic structures, means of engagement, internal debate, and leadership?

Clearly, we are not referring to a discussion of principles or to a lack of goodwill. The former are beyond question; indeed, they highlight our idleness and our delayed action. The latter is, however, very much present, particularly on the periphery, amongst leaders, administrators and parliamentarians.

We are referring to the party's concrete situation, as it has taken

shape over these years, and to its inadequacy – something for which everyone bears responsibility – when set against the demanding tasks it faces with ever greater urgency. This became clear once it embarked on a centre-left policy through parliamentary combinations and, on the level of substance, discovered its own shortcomings on the fundamental issues of that policy.

On this point, there is no point in deluding ourselves: the answer is largely negative. After all, this General Assembly was convened precisely to identify the causes of the party's dysfunctions, the reasons for its stagnation and internal rigidity, and the remedies needed to set the DC on a new course that will enable it to relaunch its decisive role with vigour, imagination and a renewed spirit.

Here too, there is no point in waiting for salvation from outside, shifting the blame onto others, or pointing fingers at one another. Rather, we need to make a genuine, unflinching effort to face up to reality without pretence and to move beyond organisational, social, and political structures that no longer reflect the challenges we face and that are the main reason for our lack of ideological and political productivity.

What internal conditions would allow the DC, drawing on its own ideals, to develop clear political positions on the issues we have recalled, so as to act as a driving force and source of inspiration for the centre-left coalition and to broaden its support among the country's citizens?

We are not concerned here with the details, which should be examined in greater depth in the committees, the most appropriate setting. Nonetheless, a few general points are essential.

The first issue is that of legal certainty within the party. We need to improve the integrity of the membership process by publicising its procedures as widely as possible, introducing the corrective measure of linking membership to electoral votes. This means restoring to party membership its role in recruiting new members and broadening political participation. We need to limit its increasingly detrimental role as an exclusive tool for controlling internal power. The ethics

committee needs to be overhauled, removing its subordination to political majorities, ensuring an objective administration of internal justice, binding procedures and timeframes for judgments, making it compulsory to publish decisions – in a word, guaranteeing the objectivity and prestige of these means of protecting members' rights in internal disputes. We need to explore new ways to ensure that the administration and control of financial resources, election campaign expenditure, the mechanisms for nominations, and participation in party structures – in matters unrelated to the political line, where respect for difference or dissent is essential – are genuinely open to everyone. In fact, in this area, equality among Christian Democrats, and the ban on any discriminatory practice, must be total.

This delicate issue is at the very root of the party's insularity, since it is the lack of legal certainty, and the climate of suspicion and privilege, that often lead the new social classes and young people to become sceptical and disengaged from political participation.

The second point is greater internal democracy. By this I mean democracy for all, not for oligarchic groups that are protective of their own roles; democracy that breaks with intolerance and the culture of cronyism and is firmly anchored in the free exchange of ideas, in the possibility of turnover in the leadership, and in relationships of great respect and cooperation between the party and local administrators, between the party and MPs, and between the party and its representatives holding public office.

This framework also includes the issue of preventing the accumulation of posts. Roles filled by administrative appointment should be time-limited to no more than two consecutive terms. Incompatibility rules should be strictly observed. Members should also be able to move more freely and frequently between different roles within the party and in the performance of its external duties.

We cannot claim to be open to the outside world, to draw on valuable talent, or to improve our leadership in the name of genuine, lived pluralism, if in practice we continue to be the party of officials, administrators, MPs and career ministers, who cling on tenaciously

despite changes in the Christian Democracy's policies, programmes and commitments. We need to return to the idea of politics as a service, as growth from the bottom up, and as the valuing of all worthwhile energies, wherever they may be found. We shall do away with the tendency to co-opt people, to divide power between groups, and to use government for clientelistic purposes or purely for the sake of internal balance.

Still on the subject of internal democracy, the most sensitive issue is that of electoral systems, which in turn is linked to the role of internal factions.

There is now widespread criticism of inward-looking, personalist or power-oriented currents that create a system of stifling oligarchies, just as there is broad agreement on the value of currents of thought that keep internal debate alive, encourage research and study, and safeguard the necessary development of political theses against dangerous inertia.

We have no hesitation in saying that the proportional representation system, with its closed lists and pre-established list order, needs to be radically reformed. However, this in no way justifies a return to a majoritarian system, which has shown similar, if not worse, flaws; nor can it suggest the shortcut of presidential solutions, which, in practice, would not solve any problems. Our objections are not technical. It is the political motivations behind these arguments that concern us and that we reject.

It is claimed that the only way to form a majority within the party is to resort to an electoral system, and that in order to give prestige to a 'leader' it is necessary to detach that investiture from political choices. We have a well-founded suspicion that group partisanship, personalistic tendencies, and the desire for exclusive power still prevail over reason, over the rules of internal democracy, and over the principle that Christian Democrats should be treated as equals, including when it comes to the duty to give political substance to their investiture for roles of leadership and guidance.

A recent example comes from the multiple opportunities to form

broad, authoritative majorities, while fully respecting the role of minorities since the Rome Congress. This has not been achieved, to the point that the congress debate has paradoxically failed even to produce a document valid for the whole party. The reason is the refusal to choose a broader alignment beyond factional logic, thereby demonstrating that proportional representation has been accepted by many as more of a technical device than a tool capable of creating new, different internal relations.

The desire to dissolve old groupings and to create opportunities for new, open convergences is certainly acceptable, and we too are willing to cooperate if there is a clear move in this direction, without ulterior motives. However, the example must first come from those with the greatest responsibilities and from the will – political and methodological – to create the conditions for this process to take place, not in order to all get along, but on the basis of a clear and unambiguous definition of the party's commitments in relation to the policy line established by the congresses.

That is why, in our view, the extension of proportional representation, with the corrections mentioned, can demonstrate that the exclusivist spirit has been unequivocally overcome and that different theses can be compared without limitation. For beyond these positions, through mutual commitment, it becomes possible to resolve properly, in political terms, the issue of forming legitimate, clear majorities that respect the role of today's minorities, who may become tomorrow's majority.

Then there is the issue of the party's functional and organisational structures. Here, too, the changes need to be radical, but – above all – they need to be inspired by an overall plan for reform.

Within the party, too, we need to overcome the corrosive effects of centralism, bureaucratic routine, and the devaluation of decision-making bodies. The large number of central offices must give way to a few qualified, functional working sectors, while the local structure must be strengthened as much as possible, with an organisation that reflects changes in society and our pluralist vision. In addition, better

tools for research, debate, study, and a presence in the press and the mass media must be developed.

In this context, the reform and strengthening of the regional committees takes on decisive importance and can serve as concrete evidence of our commitment to establishing the Regional Authority. These committees must be democratically elected by provincial congresses or by a regional congress, so that they have the prestige, the mandate, and the representativeness necessary to set the Christian Democracy's regional policy in motion, with appropriate decision-making powers and powers of initiative.

Here, too, there is no need to go into detail. Those who wish to learn my views can read a proposal for reform of the regional committees that I am to submit to the Commission. In essence, we need a clear resolve – not to make minor adjustments to the existing organisational structures, but to change them fundamentally at every level – as a concrete sign of the party's openness and its desire for renewal, so that it can effectively achieve its objectives of political presence and leadership.

In conclusion, achieving genuine rule of law, establishing a new internal democracy, and transforming our organisational structures represent a set of concrete objectives. Together with the determination to restore Christian Democracy's role as a source of initiative and impetus in addressing the country's problems, in reforming the state, and in making a more careful assessment of the international situation, these can truly open up a new course in the party's life.

However, launching this new phase requires precise, coherent decisions. We know this is not the place to take them. But the National Council – and, if that is not enough, the Congress, whether ordinary or extraordinary – can and must be the place to establish, as soon as possible, whether the hopes raised by the National Assembly can become reality.

As far as we are concerned, we will not fail to rise to the challenge of demonstrating responsibility, clarity and a willingness to move

beyond traditional patterns. It may, however, be worth noting that, at least for us, the prerequisite for all this is the willingness that everyone – and, in our view, the party secretary first and foremost – must demonstrate to close a chapter of our internal experience and, with all the necessary courage, to open a genuinely new one. If we are to believe the assessments we have made – and there is no reason to doubt them *a priori* – we must overcome an internal situation that crystallises every position, produces only balances of power, and forces the party into conformity and inaction at a time when its greatest test should be one of imagination and initiative. The good of unity, which we all want to defend, is absolutely not at stake. To strengthen it, it could even be laid down in the party statutes that all governing bodies, from the central leadership to the section committees, are elected by limited vote – not to be confused with the executive bodies, which should concern majorities alone – so as to guarantee, at all times and without any power bargaining, the qualified presence of minorities as such at every level. More simply, it is a matter of returning to free debate between a majority that governs the party on the basis of a political line and one or more minorities that, without any confusion of executive responsibilities, exercise their role of stimulus and scrutiny. With this in mind, let us also implement, and promptly, the balanced and controlled disarmament of the party's factions. But for the process to begin, we must be aware that we need to leave the enchanted castle of a unanimity without political definition, organisational drive or an authentic will to reform. All this serves only to give everyone a scrap of power, a shred of ideological dignity, and a false and prefabricated role, while forcing everyone into a system in which we are at once responsible and victims, and which essentially prevents Christian Democracy from finding the strength to rise to the challenge of its duties towards the country, towards the democratic state, towards its own ideals.

We know that, in any event, our duty is to continue to serve the party. We will do so in an honest and loyal spirit of cooperation if the hoped-for conditions come about. But if they do not, we will not fail

to carry out – as we have in the past – our role of stimulus and of struggle. In fact, we know that it is still necessary to prepare the ground so that what is not yet possible today can at least become possible tomorrow. And this is not out of a misplaced factional spirit, which is a marginal matter, destined to pass. This is for the sake of Christian Democracy, which stands above each of us and which, if it is to develop, needs the dialectic of ideas more than power deals.

It would be a real pity if, from the stimulating picture painted by the Hon. Forlani in his report, and from the rich and lively debate, the National Assembly – and, above all, the conclusions drawn from it by the party's political secretary – were unable to provide for directions. These should point at concrete operational choices to change the Christian Democracy party, both in its internal life and in its actions in Parliament and in the country. It would be another missed opportunity, and disappointment in the provinces could even be fatal: one can only hope for the opposite, in the interests of the party and of Italian democracy.

*The Figure of De Gasperi**

Luigi Granelli spoke in Grado to commemorate Alcide De Gasperi twelve years after his death. His speech – drafted for the occasion and preserved unpublished among the papers of his archive – traces the entire personal and political life of the Trentino statesman.

*In June 1957, on the occasion of the motion of confidence in the single-party government led by the Christian Democrat Adone Zoli – which depended on the decisive support of an Italian Social Movement vote – Granelli, in the columns of *Il Popolo Lombardo*, justified his decision to enter into dialogue with the Socialist Party by invoking De Gasperi. The Trentino politician, ‘with the Aventine Secession before fascism, and with his “no” to the Sturzo operation’, had clearly shown Catholics how to safeguard the country’s democratic character. And, to find a way out of the crisis in centrist politics, Granelli once again cited the example of the founder of Christian Democracy, quoting his famous description of the DC as ‘a centrist party moving towards the left’.*

Dear friends,

I gladly accepted the invitation to join you today to outline – within the bounds of a meaningful and concise commemoration – the legacy that Alcide De Gasperi has left among us all, not only through personal interactions, but also through his political work in our country. I believe it is the duty of all Christian Democrats, and in particular of the younger generations of Christian Democrats, to reflect seriously and with an open mind on the experience of the

* ASHS, Fondo Granelli, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 22.

leaders and mentors who have gone before us in the course of political life and historical events.

I am happy to join you here and offer my modest contribution to recalling the political, cultural, moral and historical figure of Alcide De Gasperi, and to remember the most significant milestones of his work. Not least because I believe we are all convinced that, twelve years after his death, in a small gathering such as this, the point is not to engage in rhetoric or eulogising; it is truly to honour the memory of that experience with a commitment to carry forward – within the limits set by our country's changed historical circumstances – the great lessons and the significance of his great work.

After all, we want to be in tune with the great figure we are commemorating this evening. We are aware – especially those who had the honour and good fortune to know him personally – that, in his political career, Alcide De Gasperi shied away from rhetorical and merely eulogistic attitudes. Instead, in keeping with his direct, sometimes harsh, but always frank and sincere nature, he was committed to an objective assessment of historical facts and personal experiences.

I believe that nothing would be more at odds with De Gasperi's personality, his character, and the lessons he left us than reducing the commemoration of his work to a purely hagiographic celebration. That would leave in our hearts and consciences not the commitment to continue, but only the formal satisfaction of having discharged an obligatory rite.

This would, I believe, be the worst possible way for us to commemorate De Gasperi. Instead – and drawing precisely on his teachings – we should highlight his qualities as a man, assess the importance of his work, examine the teachings he has left us and, above all, understand the weight of the responsibility that his legacy has left on the shoulders of the Christian Democratic leadership, so that we may carry forward with consistency and clarity a historical vision that, in my view, remains as valid as ever.

So, if this is our aim, if our intention – or at least our attempt to

do so – is not only to paint a portrait of a great figure, but also to use that as an opportunity for self-reflection to determine what each of us must do to ensure that this journey into the past, this connection with traditions, remains a living, productive and constructive one, how can we begin? Where can we anchor our opening recollection?

Twelve years after Alcide De Gasperi's death, I believe the point of departure for a talk about him should, above all, be a human one – a reminder that struck me particularly at the time of his death. I learned of De Gasperi's death just as I was returning from a break in the Dolomites.

And I remember that, from the moment I heard the news until I got back to my flat in Milan, everyone I met was shaken by the event. The country had almost shuddered. It felt that, at that moment, it had not only lost a prominent figure, a man who had given so much in service to the nation, but that it had also lost almost a point of reference, a figure who, as well as having served the country, was still helping to shape its future. And the question I asked myself then, and which I am asking myself now, at the very start of our commemoration, is precisely this. In political life, it is often the case that men of great responsibility who die or disappear at the height of their success receive a fitting tribute from the people. However, De Gasperi's case was different, and it was particularly significant. Alcide De Gasperi did not die at the height of his political career; he did not die at the height of his personal success. On the contrary, if we look at the reality of the situation, stripping it of any particular circumstances, we have to recognise that De Gasperi's death occurred at a time when his political decline could be considered to have begun. After leaving the government in 1953, following the EDC crisis, De Gasperi could be considered to be in the decline of his political career and, in any case, not riding a wave of success, which brings with it many popular tributes but, very often, also tributes of a formal kind.

Why, despite the partial decline in his political fortunes, was De Gasperi able to arouse so much emotion, so much concern, and such

a popular outpouring after his death, as we have not seen with the passing of other, equally capable, politicians?

To answer this question, we have to say that De Gasperi's abilities were also evident at a time when his political star was not, as people often say, at its brightest. Indeed, it is worth rediscovering, from the outset, one of De Gasperi's particular qualities – a quality that the political class is perhaps generally lacking in, and which it would be important to reappraise: namely, his ability to maintain, with frankness, clarity, in plain words and without ulterior motives, a direct human connection with the national community, with the popular conscience, with people's problems, and with the responsibilities of politics. In other words, his ability to identify so closely with the problems of national life put him in constant contact with the people, regardless of whether political fortunes were favourable or not.

And this is an important factor, because the strength that Alcide De Gasperi had – as we shall see – in some particularly difficult political moments, when it came to making risky choices, the strength that enabled De Gasperi to make those choices, lay in his ability to interpret the country's consciousness, to be connected to something living. He did not see politics as a mere balance of forms and forces, but as a service to the national consciousness, as a link to the country's popular consciousness.

This is precisely the first lesson that emerges from his legacy: understanding democratic life as, in every case, service to the people, service to the national conscience and service to the state.

Someone, somewhat maliciously, reminded me of the magazine *Candido*. After stepping down from government – overwhelmed by the crisis he found himself in after a long career in politics – De Gasperi did not consider retiring to private life. Instead he channelled his energy, his work and his commitment to the party as political secretary. Precisely then, at the Naples congress, he left behind the finest testament to his political career. At the time, *Candido* sought to poke fun at De Gasperi's move from government to party responsibilities; and someone – I don't remember whether it was

Guareschi or someone else – tried to portray all of De Gasperi's subsequent actions, as the party's political secretary, as mere attempts to weaken his successor in government and regain power.

No judgement could be further from the truth, because one need only look at the records, the documents, and the manner in which Alcide De Gasperi returned to party politics to realise that his intention was not to become Prime Minister again, as sometimes happens in the vagaries of politics. Rather, De Gasperi had understood that the crisis of centrism was a crisis of such magnitude that it was necessary to seek, through the parties, the conditions within the country for the political evolution that was needed.

His actions were therefore not those of someone who leaves government for the party to provoke a crisis, but of someone who, having understood the reasons for the government crisis, returns to the party with youthful vigour, despite the frailty that comes with age. He returned to the party to serve the cause of democratic progress and to create the conditions for the sound development of Italian democracy. Likewise, his famous description of the Pella government as a 'friendly' government did not sound like an attack on the individual or the formula. Rather, it was meant to prevent a regressive trend from being grafted on to a generic formula of day-to-day administration, which would have halted an evolution that De Gasperi considered important in national life.

If we look into the adversities that had so embittered him in recent years, we must acknowledge that his strengths as a man were accompanied by an awareness of a broader historical purpose, rather than by peripheral issues of power or personal ambition. So these qualities of character, his ability to engage with the nation and its problems, and his underlying strategic vision – even when certain choices were dramatic: breaking the tripartite coalition, choosing the Atlantic Pact, choosing the republic, and making the difficult transition from one system to another – gave the country a sense of security. In political life, the guarantee De Gasperi offered was precisely his awareness that he was pursuing a higher historical

purpose and that he always kept in mind the underlying conditions of Italian political life.

Thus, in addition to his personal qualities, which we have already mentioned, we must also consider the political and historical lessons contained in his work. However, before we move on to an analytical examination of the most significant of these lessons, I would like to recall a few facts that help to explain the development of his personality and his awareness of the nation's political and historical challenges. In other words, I am referring to the young De Gasperi, who had not yet achieved personal success; to the De Gasperi who did not yet have to his credit the restoration of Italian democracy, the post-war reconstruction, the breaking up of the tripartite coalition, or bringing Italy into an international context befitting its civilisation; to the De Gasperi who was entering the world of politics. For perhaps in those less well-known moments, with no personal success yet, we can already see the emergence of his great political figure. During the key phases of the events in which he was involved, De Gasperi already had the ability to provide guidance, to demonstrate clear political opinions, and to show far-sighted vision.

And I am not referring so much to the very young De Gasperi, who fought for the University and tried to defend Italy's interests in the Austrian Parliament – despite the slanderous accusations that would later be levelled against him. Rather, I mean the De Gasperi who, nurtured in the school of Christian social teaching, faced the problem of putting those principles into practice. Indeed, these principles seemed very rich in our texts but were so poor in concrete historical testimony.

I mean the De Gasperi who, not by chance, was drawn to the historical and political phenomenon of the birth of the Catholic political movement, with Luigi Sturzo as its great theorist and early champion.

De Gasperi naturally gravitated towards the Catholic democratic political movement precisely because he had realised – whilst grappling with his intellectual development, guided by Christian

social principles – that Catholics must not only uphold certain fundamental principles. They also had to confront the historical challenge of how to translate those principles into political and institutional reality, after a long period in which Catholics had been in opposition, alienated from the state and living, to a certain extent, apart from the most vital issues facing Italian society.

It was De Gasperi who moved closer to the Popular Party; it was De Gasperi who, in immediate agreement with Sturzo, broadly shared its key statements of principle, such as those made at the Bologna Congress. According to these statements, the Popular Party did not commit the Church, but committed itself; it was a party that placed itself at the service of the country with constitutional loyalty, rejected integralism, addressed the problems of the South, and gave the Catholic political movement a national historical consciousness.

From the outset, De Gasperi held prominent positions and roles, which gave him a sense of the importance of that commitment and, above all, of the need not to remain on the sidelines of the great political contest, content merely to contemplate principles rather than take concrete action in their service. Later, towards the end of his career, in the preface he wrote for Vistalli's biography of Toniolo, De Gasperi would reveal that he had asked himself precisely this question. He wondered: why, from Toniolo onwards, despite all the theoretical achievements, all the efforts of intellectual development, and all the statements of principle that abounded in the schools of Christian sociology in our country, was Toniolo's work so lacking in practical results, so lacking in historical substance in the life of Italy? He goes on to say: 'It was absent and unproductive, not for lack of principles, but because Catholics' detachment from national political life sterilised those principles. A political movement was needed to bring Catholics out of their political absenteeism, to engage them in the concrete realities of constitutional experience, and to make them a representative force for the best interests of the Italian people, which were not being represented by the old liberal class.'

So, the very idea of a party – a political movement rooted in

society, brimming with initiatives and principles, but grounded in reality and historical developments – makes De Gasperi already one of the protagonists of those early events and battles. We can already see the seed of the future statesman and political leader of the Christian Democracy – aware that this responsibility weighs on the shoulders and consciences of Italian Catholics.

I believe it is essentially thanks to this early phase of awareness and this historical experience that, after the Fascist tyranny, we were able to make mature and responsible democrats available to the country. It is easy to say this now, when it is widely accepted and undisputed that Catholics are a major popular political force in Italy, accepted not only by the masses but also by circles outside the Catholic world that have traditionally been hostile to Catholics. But think back to those times. Perhaps there are some friends here who can recall the dramatic years of 1919, 1922 and 1924. These were the years, in other words, when the system established by the liberal political class was crumbling, and the one hundred MPs of the PPI bore a great responsibility on their shoulders. We must remember those events. The rise of Fascism even led to the instrumental use of certain issues close to Catholics' hearts, to attack the Popular Party and prevent Catholics from having a political presence in Italy.

It is worth recalling how Mussolini exploited the Roman Question. He tried to show that the unresolved issue between the state and the Church depended on the cumbersome presence of a Catholic political party that served only to further the ambitions of Sturzo or De Gasperi. He was then chairman of the parliamentary group, and therefore needed to be removed. And let us not forget that, at that time, many Catholics gave in and accepted the illusion that Fascism, with its authority, its order, and its resolution of the Roman Question, could offer a solution to the country's problems. Instead, the men we honour today chose the path of exile. They did not bow to Fascism, and they sacrificed their family ties and their professional futures; but through their heroism, they preserved the historical legacy that we enjoy today. In fact, without the heroism of

those men in 1919, 1922 and 1924, the Christian Democrats would not have had a legitimate place in Italian democracy in 1945. Nowadays, therefore, we must remember not only the successful aspects of De Gasperi's politics, but also the painful years leading up to militant anti-Fascism, the ability to sacrifice one's feelings, to end up, as De Gasperi did, first in prison and then, ousted and in obscurity, as a librarian in the Vatican, in order to hold high the banner of uncompromising opposition to Fascism, of clarity and loyalty to the principles of democracy, and of a willingness to serve the country.

So, from his youth onwards, we see in De Gasperi not a man who fails to make choices, or who prefers tactics to taking responsibility, but a man who, drawing on his experience in Trentino, gradually identifies with the history of the Catholic political movement, makes Luigi Sturzo's ideas his own, and becomes a leader of the Popular Party – not through luck or success, but through hardship, struggle, battle, sacrifice and tough trials. And so he combines the strengthening of his temperament and character with a great gift for moral consistency and for grasping the conceptual link between what one thinks and what one does.

De Gasperi's political and historical character, shaped during such difficult years, enabled us, in the aftermath of the Resistance, to play a decisive role in our country. This role has its roots in the heroism of that period. However, beyond Alcide De Gasperi's example as a young man and the events that shaped him, I believe that, as far as his later work is concerned, it would be futile to attempt a detailed reconstruction of the political events that underpinned his historical experience. Instead, I think it would be more fruitful, in the context of our commemoration, to recall some of the valuable lessons he left us through the country's political history. The first lesson, which remains valid today, echoes, in a way, the concerns De Gasperi had during the Fascist period, when he was thinking about reviving the democratic tradition and rebuilding a political movement of Catholics in our country.

Indeed, De Gasperi was particularly active and tenacious during the Resistance, in the years leading up to the Liberation. He re-established contact with former anti-fascist activists, with old friends from the Popular Party who had been scattered, and with political figures from other groups with different ideological leanings. That is, as soon as De Gasperi saw the possibility of a return to democratic life in our country, he devoted himself to it, and conceptually developed the conviction he had reached at the start of his political career: the need not only to return to political life after the defeat of fascism, but to return to it with the appropriate means to overcome the fundamental crisis of the Italian state.

Indeed, there is a substantial difference between the way in which Alcide De Gasperi re-entered post-war politics compared to other equally illustrious political figures of the pre-Fascist era. The latter returned as prominent figures whose views were expected to be heeded on account of their past merits and their previous positions; but they did not set out to play an active, new role in Italian democratic life.

De Gasperi returned to political life and reconnected with his party friends, his colleagues, and other figures in the country's democratic political class. But he went further. He devoted his first and most important efforts to rebuilding a political party. He was aware that traditional ways of doing politics had had their day. The situation in the country dictated that, among the main popular forces, the Catholic one in particular constituted the backbone of the country and that, to do this, it needed to create a party structure, power and organisation.

Even though I was very young at the time, I have a vivid memory of the lively discussions that took place about this.

Many of Alcide De Gasperi's friends, who had shared his pre-Fascist experiences, were generally inclined to revive the glorious name – which, after all, it had well deserved – of the Popular Party.

However, even then, De Gasperi showed a forward-looking attitude, a concern that other colleagues did not share: namely, the

concern that if the new party of Italian Catholic democrats were to be revived as the Popular Party, it might mobilise the old guard who had known its previous experience, but might remain an unfamiliar reality to the cadres of *Azione Cattolica*, to the young people emerging from the Resistance, and to those who had not known the anti-Fascism of 1922. These groups needed to be mobilised on an equal footing in political participation. Otherwise, the risk was that of an elitist and top-down party, as perhaps had been the case with the Popular Party, which, not coincidentally, succumbed to the wave of fascism. Rather, it needed to be a large mass party capable of incorporating experience, tradition, aspirations, tendencies, and the youthful drive of those coming out of the Resistance and of the cadres emerging from *Azione Cattolica*.

This is a typical example of synthesis in De Gasperi's political stance. He was always focused on valuing historical experience and never forgetting what had been achieved in the past. However, at the same time, he was open to the future, understanding new developments, and capable of looking beyond what was merely a return to a pre-Fascist conception of political activity. Sure enough, after Sturzo, De Gasperi was the most prominent successor to the tradition of the Catholic political party in Italy. De Gasperi's speeches, writings and political positions offer statements of principle that show him carrying forward Luigi Sturzo's insights into the formation and the conceptual, practical and political shaping of the Catholic party of Italy. Who could forget De Gasperi's polemics against the Civic Committees' attempts to become a parapolitical organisation? Who could forget De Gasperi's unwavering, continuous insistence that the party was not the Church, that the party had its own responsibilities, its own autonomy – limited to the political sphere – while, for other activities, he supported a pluralism of Catholic initiatives, reiterating that these spheres must absolutely not be confused? Who can forget his resolute stance at the time of the Roman operation, improperly referred to as the 'Sturzo operation'? There, an equivocal, populist grouping attempted to

replace the Christian Democracy party's political list in order to take control of the city council of Rome. In all these actions, we do not see De Gasperi reacting capriciously, defending, I would say, his own particular point of view. Rather, De Gasperi, as a democratic Catholic, defended Luigi Sturzo's legacy: the need for, and the awareness that, Italian Catholics cannot do politics as a purely electoral movement; that Catholics cannot exploit Catholic votes in parliament, as was possible in Giolitti's time; and that Catholics must maintain, as their practical and theoretical achievement, a modern democratic party – with its own structure, statute, responsibilities, and therefore ability to draw on the principles inspired by the Magisterium of the Church – but capable to responsibly and independently unfurl, at the historical level, its operational skills and its initiative in the face of concrete problems.

After the war, De Gasperi acted, above all, as a Catholic democrat who defended the idea of the party above individuals, circumstances and marginal controversies. He did not embrace integralism or religion for political ends, but took on the universal mission of Christianity and mobilised the civic and political conscience of Catholics around the concrete problems of our country. This is so true, that we must state very clearly today the following: if by any chance we were to return one day to the formula of the Catholic electoral movement, rather than the Catholic democratic political party, we would then be betraying De Gasperi's political legacy. Instead, he taught us to responsibly defend the political party per se, which, moreover, enables us to feel on an equal footing with other political forces and thus to act with autonomy and freedom.

So, De Gasperi left us a legacy, a lesson: the figure of the Catholic democrat, a man who understood the importance of the political party vis-à-vis the state, a man who did not want to misuse his faith to erect barriers or create artificial divisions, but who looked to politics and the state as a realm of tolerance, coexistence, and Christian humanism, rather than one of closed ideologies or bitter struggles for power or the distribution of power. This is the

conception of the political party that we can, and must, still describe as modern and open today.

However, alongside his legacy as a Christian Democrat, De Gasperi left us another lesson that we must remember – especially here, where he lived through particularly difficult times. We must remember him as an earnest patriot. His love for his country shied away from gladiatorial, rhetorical or demagogic posturing. He cultivated a sense of tolerance and respect for ethnic minorities. He understood that, although the homeland represents a moral bond that unites a country's citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs or political ideology, the era of nationalism was over; and that rhetoric, glorification and exasperation are not the means to defend the homeland. Defence is achieved by earnestly safeguarding the integrity of borders and, at the same time, paving the way for cooperation, respect and tolerance with other countries in order to achieve better coexistence in the international order.

Just recently, I had the opportunity to listen to the recording of De Gasperi's speech in Paris during the discussion on the peace treaty: what dignity in defence of the national interest! In his relations with the United States during those difficult years, he showed such seriousness, such dignity, and such foresight. And how deeply concerned he was when he defended the Gorizia issue – and you were right to recall those actions and attitudes in your publications. When in dire straits, he never lost his bearings. He never gave in to the temptation to present himself, in words, as a defender of the national interest in order to make a good impression on Italian citizens. He always carried out his patriotic duty with great composure, with great seriousness, and with a constructive aim. This befits the democratic conscience of a statesman, in spite of the nationalist tradition of the many demagogues who have often exploited nationalism for personal gain or, worse, to incite base instincts.

Right here in Grado (I noticed you mentioned this in your document), De Gasperi had more than a few concerns about the way the issue of the Free Territory of Trieste was developing

during the Pella government.

Following President Pella's famous speech at the Campidoglio, De Gasperi described the Pella government as 'friendly'. This precisely demonstrates De Gasperi's concern that an issue of paramount importance to Italian identity should be addressed appropriately, without fuelling nationalist agitation. Indeed, turning patriotic sentiment into exasperation could lead to misfortune or tensions between peoples. The Christian Democrat figure of De Gasperi, therefore, witnesses for the democratic patriot who was aware of the need to defend the country's real interests. Such a patriot, however, was averse to rhetoric and to combative, unnecessarily demagogic attitudes. He felt the suffering of his fellow citizens, and was therefore able to enjoy the prestige abroad that enabled Italy to recover from the post-war decline. For today we know that Italy enjoys prestige on the international stage; we know that our Foreign Minister served as President of the UN General Assembly; and we know that there is no international forum in which Italy is not regarded as a civilised, modern country. However, we owe this to De Gasperi's great ability to defend the national interest in a democratic, open and dignified way, thereby gradually winning over allies and, consequently, respect and trust in the international community.

In addition to the Catholic democrat and the patriot, let me mention here, in line with what I said a moment ago, above all, the pro-European figure. Anyone who followed De Gasperi in his final moments knows that, after the decline of a certain form of democratic cooperation within the country, his greatest pain was caused by the collapse of the EDC. Alcide De Gasperi was a man with parliamentary experience, a democrat, a statesman, a man who at certain times, especially when the tripartite coalition broke down and the situation on the streets was quite tense and there was pressure for the army and police to intervene, opposed the use of force, demonstrating once again a great sense of restraint and a great sense of responsibility. It seems contradictory and strange that such a

statesman, shaped by this democratic, parliamentary experience and averse to the use of force to assert the authority of the state, would have had the idea of pursuing European unification through the unification of armies. It may seem like a contradiction, but it was not. Indeed, De Gasperi knew that the first obstacle to overcome, in order to prevent the resurgence of nationalism in the various countries, was precisely to pool the most dangerous instrument.

De Gasperi knew that the armies are the elements most at odds with a Community policy rather than a nationalist one. The EDC was the first step to bringing the armies together, paving the way for a European unification that was not merely a unification of markets, but a genuine political one. What upset De Gasperi was not so much the collapse of a treaty or a pact, as the abandonment of the method of political negotiation, which alone could give the European Community a truly political meaning.

De Gasperi envisioned safeguarding the global balance beyond the old balances of power. 'And if we do want peace,' De Gasperi said and wrote, 'then we must realise that the way out of the power blocs lies in building a dignified Europe, linked internationally with the West, but capable of playing its own role – political as well as economic and social'. We need to remember this, because today there is a tendency to see European unification as an inevitable mechanism, as if, through a series of economic expediciencies – bringing together businesses and integrating markets – a political Europe were to spring up as if by magic, as if from a magician's hat.

De Gasperi taught us that this is not the way forward, and, in any case, it is easy to demonstrate. It is no coincidence that, in the years when the drive for economic integration of European markets was at its strongest, the Gaullist phenomenon breathed new life into nationalism. The creation of Europe cannot take the shortcut of pooling resources for mutual economic benefit; rather, it must involve a blending of traditions, civilisation, and the interests of the people. In other words, it must follow a political path. We shall acknowledge that the most vibrant and foundational moments in

post-war European history are those when Adenauer, Schumann and De Gasperi met to negotiate, to work, to build – not a Europe of agricultural products or a Europe of large economic monopolies, but a democratic Europe, the people's Europe of tomorrow. This is a Europe capable of playing a role in the balance of world's great powers, while also looking towards the countries of the Third World.

Today the European cause has too little heart, too little participation. A rigorous, meticulous, pedantic calculation of the advantages and disadvantages of each agreement dominates. De Gasperi, by contrast, taught us to be pro-Europeans not only for the benefits that may come from integrating the economies of different countries, but with faith, with will, with conviction, and with the awareness that international equilibrium requires a Europe not of divided, nationalist countries aspiring to power, but united by a shared democratic ideal.

So, De Gasperi was a Catholic democrat, a patriot, a committed European and, ultimately, a great statesman of our country. This politician, more than anyone else, managed to overcome what had been, for so many years in the last century, the harshest accusation levelled at Catholics when they were excluded from political life. The main charge made against us, from the left, from the right, by liberals and by socialists, was that we Catholics were incapable of being citizens. At the time, in the polemics, it was said: 'You are Catholics, so you are linked to the Vatican; you are linked to a foreign power, so you cannot be full citizens.' You will never be autonomous; you will never be able to assume autonomous responsibilities within the state. Throughout the controversies of the last century, a key accusation levelled at Catholics was that they were second-class citizens, that they lacked an understanding of the state, of institutions, of the law, and of constitutional guarantees in the modern concept of democracy. Hence, De Gasperi can be seen as the political figure who, more than any other, achieved the historic miracle of fully integrating Catholics into the life of the state and establishing them as full participants. Catholics are not a sect, a corporate body, or a

group of interests. They are a democratic political force capable of safeguarding the interests of all citizens, including non-Catholics and those with a different political outlook, a different ideology, or a different religious faith.

Let me add something on this very point. Even we – the younger generations who at times argued with Alcide De Gasperi on certain issues – in retrospect, must acknowledge that perhaps we did not understand the foresight, the maturity and the seriousness of the political insight that Alcide De Gasperi demonstrated in the political decisions he made. These decisions would enable Catholics to overcome the historic Guelph–Ghibelline divide. I remember, after 18 April, when we no longer needed parliamentary alliances because the people had given us a great show of strength, the battle that De Gasperi fought against certain external pressures, to remain faithful to the principles of tolerance and cooperation between the Catholic Democrats and the Liberal, Social Democratic, and Republican parties. These represent the smaller parties of the secular tradition which, if you look at them in a nineteenth-century context, can also be described as parties of the anti-clerical tradition. Many criticised De Gasperi for his political alliance with the heirs of the anti-clerical tradition, even though the monarchists were available, and there were even members of the MSI who made a profession of religious faith. We all remember De Gasperi's response to objections of this kind: when we are dealing with the state, what unites us is not our religious beliefs, but our shared vision of democracy, our shared vision of freedom, and the awareness that, in our country, if we want to withstand the dangers of both the right and the left, we must make the state not anyone's domain, but the home within which, regardless of ideological differences, all the healthiest currents of our national tradition must have equal rights, equal opportunities for participation, and an equal spirit of cooperation. De Gasperi understood the importance of not turning Catholics into Guelphs who separate themselves from the Ghibellines, thereby laying the foundations for the disintegration of the state. Rather it was a matter of making

Catholic democrats the pre-eminent politicians, whose historical duty is to create the conditions for coexistence, freedom, and cooperation in our country. This would achieve not only civil peace at the level of the state, but also the conditions for religious peace in our country. These are the conditions for the very dissemination of our ideas and our faith. De Gasperi's position was therefore fully in line with Catholic doctrine on the state. It does not ask the state for protection, but for the freedom to be itself. It does not ask the state for exclusivity, but for respect for the law and the common good. In other words, it asks the state only for the safeguards that enable the human person to be free to express their personality, and it entrusts to conscience and thought the task of giving these safeguards a living, vital content.

With his far-sighted vision of collaboration between Christian Democrats, Liberals, Social Democrats and others, De Gasperi achieved a great historic feat. He led the smaller parties of the secular and liberal tradition to understand that Catholics should be respected as a major, tolerant and democratic political force, and not as a sect seeking to take over the state in order to use it and build it in their own image and likeness. De Gasperi taught us to see collaboration between parties not merely as a means of dividing power or as a purely practical way of combining agendas to achieve certain goals, but also as a pact of civilisation: the ability to go beyond our own one-sided judgement in the interests of the country and of democracy. We must not let this lesson from Alcide De Gasperi be forgotten. Perhaps it was on this point that De Gasperi clashed with some of the younger generations within the Christian Democrats, particularly at the Congress of Venice, when Dossetti – and we along with him – advocated a return to a single-party government. We believed that this would enable more effective structural reform in the life of the nation. Most likely, the aspirations that underpinned Dossettism and our youthful struggles were genuine and necessary. Likewise, it is still necessary today in Italy – with the centre-left area – to revitalise political action at government and parliamentary level,

to make it more dynamic, more impactful, and more in line with the interests of the people. However, we were wrong at the time to ask De Gasperi to achieve this result through an integralist approach. This would have meant rejecting the principle of collaboration, would have pushed Catholics back into their historic enclosure, and would have created the conditions for the crisis in Italian democracy.

Nevertheless, the patience, tenacity and loyalty with which the clash between De Gasperi and Dossetti was conducted within the party remain an example to be emulated and kept in mind. Who does not remember the major controversies and the great battles between Dossetti and De Gasperi, and who does not also remember the great esteem that remained between the two men? Their disagreement was over ideas and not over anything else; their willingness and ability to understand one another despite differing opinions meant that, after the Congress of Venice, De Gasperi always sought to create the conditions in which Dossetti and the current he represented were not excluded from the life of the party, but rather constituted its lifeblood – this, without yielding an inch on his strategic plan. De Gasperi had a keen sense of the need for clarity in the causes he defended, and he was willing to accept unpopularity in defending them. However, he also possessed the awareness, the style, and the dignity to give the circulation of ideas and the clash over political opinions the meaning of growth, dialectic, and the enrichment of the political movement.

Dear friends, beyond the facts, which are of little interest per se, these are the virtues and lessons that De Gasperi left us from his political life. As a Catholic democrat, a committed pro-European, a patriot with a clear sense of responsibility, and a far-sighted statesman he brought forth a set of beliefs and a set of views that were clearly the result of his long political experience. These gave him the strength, in difficult moments, to make his choices.

I still remember – this may be seen as a digression, but it is significant – the moment when De Gasperi broke up the tripartite coalition. It was an extremely difficult decision. Certainly, it was necessary at that time to put an end to a double-dealing that was

undermining the state's standing at the executive level. The current CLN-style power arrangement was essentially a popular front. The Communists favoured it but it was at odds with the parliamentary democracy, which requires debate and accountability for decisions. It was necessary to break it. However, the hard part depended on the fact that, at that time, the right could have used the break-up of the tripartite coalition to shift Italian democracy to the right, to repudiate the values of the Resistance, and thus, through the break-up of the tripartite coalition, to create the conditions for a regression in Italian democracy. And I remember – because at that time we were in contact with the late Mattei – that when De Gasperi broke up the tripartite coalition, he called Mattei and asked him to organise large demonstrations of Christian partisans across the country. In fact, the public needed to understand that the breakdown of the tripartite coalition did not mean a break with the Resistance, a break with the ideals of freedom, or a move to the right. Rather, it was a break driven by the desire to ensure, on a democratic basis, the continuity of the ideals and aspirations of the Resistance. De Gasperi had the strength to project even that decision, which was objectively difficult, towards the future, rather than reducing it to a petty parliamentary manoeuvre or a petty balance of party power. He had the strength never to allow the Communists to unilaterally interpret or represent certain fundamental aspirations that democrats also share. This is De Gasperi's defining characteristic, his reality, and his historical and political legacy.

I will devote my concluding reflections to the crisis that followed 1953.

Just as in life, so too in politics, people are by no means immune to faults, shortcomings and accountability. Most likely, just as De Gasperi had convinced himself that the EDC could be the tool with which to force the issue and reach the democratic Europe of tomorrow, so too, with the 1953 electoral law, he may have convinced himself that, through an electoral instrument, he could preserve the country's political balance that had already shown itself

to be frayed under the pressure of accountability.

So came the crisis of 1953, the impossibility of forming a government, and the manner of the downfall: De Gasperi, aware that he was about to be voted out of office, insisted on forming a government anyway; he went to Parliament and suffered the humiliation of being voted out. Following the bitterness of those days, there was a desire to return to the party, along with the realisation that political equilibrium could not be saved through the electoral law. A different political balance had to be found, and therefore work had to be done within the party to create the conditions for that. Not surprisingly, from the time De Gasperi turned back to the party with this plan, he no longer aligned his political activity with that of Einaudi and Pella, as he had done for so long. Rather, he moved closer to the late Vanoni. When the Vanoni plan was launched at the Naples Congress, it bore two names: De Gasperi and Vanoni. They had realised that, in view of the effort required to move the Italian political situation to the left, it was necessary to create a platform that was not only programmatic but also civic and human.

Of course, De Gasperi was not without his share of responsibility, shortcomings and mistakes in his political career. But he was also the target of unjustified attacks, which I believe we must reject as we bring to a close this brief yet heartfelt and sincere commemoration of the great statesman from Trentino.

After 1953, De Gasperi came under harsh criticism from two main quarters. The first came from Togliatti, who wrote a series of articles on the De Gasperi experience, using a method that should certainly be rejected, because it sought to undermine Alcide De Gasperi's political work by denigrating him as a person. In those three articles, Togliatti argued, above all, that De Gasperi had never been an anti-fascist, or rather that he had been a special kind of anti-fascist by chance. He also claimed that one of De Gasperi's faults had been to restore capitalism and to be a man at the service of major conservative interests by breaking up the tripartite coalition.

Alongside Togliatti's criticism, and in a fairly obvious contradiction, there was also the ungenerous attack by the right-wing press, specifically the *Corriere della Sera*, which for a long time had praised De Gasperi when he ensured political stability. The newspaper accused him of not having understood that, before 1953, it was necessary to form an alliance with the right and thereby combat communism. Therefore, the newspaper held De Gasperi responsible for not having sided with the right and not having brought about a rollback of Italian democracy.

With regard to the first criticism by Togliatti, we must say straight away that it is unfounded even from a historical point of view. Of course, De Gasperi's anti-fascism had nothing to do with the militant anti-fascism of the Marxists. We need to be objective on this point and acknowledge it. However, De Gasperi's anti-fascism was rooted in human values, in the values of civilisation and freedom. It was tied to the values of pluralism, autonomy and the person. It was not, as Marxist anti-fascism was, tied to a dogmatic judgement of society and therefore to a class reaction, to an explanation of the anti-fascist phenomenon in class terms. If Togliatti's argument were true, then there would be no anti-fascist other than the communist: everything else would be a special kind of anti-fascism. But reality shows that this is not true, because – if we examine the concrete acts – we see that Alcide De Gasperi was not only a militant anti-fascist, and suffered persecution under fascism, but was also a theoretical anti-fascist. De Gasperi's anti-fascism was theoretical because, when he defended the democratic state, the parliamentary method, pluralism and local autonomy, he ideologically opposed dictatorship, the ethical state, and the single party system with a vision that was also theoretical. It was, of course, a vision of democracy, not a class-based reaction to the phenomenon of fascism.

As for the accusation that De Gasperi was a restorer of capitalism, it is difficult to understand why, in the exercise of his political work, he did not seek the cooperation of the leading forces of capitalism. Is it possible to see De Gasperi as the restorer of

capitalism when he rejected collaboration with the MSI, rejected collaboration with the monarchists, rejected the national united front, rejected a drift to the right, chose agrarian reform, chose the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, chose a pro-European policy?

Of course, to the extent that De Gasperi rebuilt the state, he also rebuilt the bureaucracy and the Italian economy as we had inherited it. He inevitably left certain shadows and certain forms of resistance implicit, and left certain problems unresolved. In short, the legacy of his historical experience was incomplete. However, it is ungenerous and unfair to attribute to a single person a political project and responsibilities that belong to a hundred years of national history and struggle of a people becoming democratic and transforming its institutions – certainly not over the course of a decade, but over many more years of work and experience. There were limits in this respect, limits which – just as they do not justify Togliatti's attack – do not justify the attack from the right either. This was also ungenerous, ignoble and unjust, as was the attack by Guareschi, which even sought to strike at De Gasperi's moral character.

De Gasperi was never inclined to demagoguery or to drifting to the left, but he always defended the principles he considered most important: stability, democracy, and the need to move forward, side by side, on the road of progress and freedom.

From this point of view, and as a final thought, we have to say that – taking into account De Gasperi's historical experience, attitudes, actions, virtues and qualities – there is still a knot to be untangled, an important one that has weighed heavily on Christian Democracy and on Italian democracy: the tragic, dramatic misunderstanding that divided De Gasperi from Dossetti during the most significant years of the post-war period. For now, I do not intend to refer to the marginal episode of his clash with Dossetti when, at a certain point in the party's political life, their views diverged.

Beyond the individuals involved, we must acknowledge a fact. De Gasperi opposed his strategic, political and democratic vision of

tolerance and collaboration to Dossetti, who pursued an integralist line. This way, he carried out a fundamental historical act: he prevented the younger generations from falling into the dead end of integralism. While we should consider this superiority of De Gasperi's political vision to be extremely positive, we must also acknowledge that, in his confrontation with De Gasperi, Dossetti was not merely pursuing the ambition of changing political strategy or the desire to somehow influence De Gasperi's vision. In line with the aspirations of the younger generations, Dossetti also pursued the aim of giving Christian Democracy a closer connection with the will of the nation, a more resolutely reformist approach, a more dynamic capacity to bring about change, and a more distinct ideological identity in transforming society.

I believe that Christian Democracy had much to lose in that conflict. It was a conflict between people but also a conflict between attitudes that are still widespread, and which will need to be reconciled in the future. Younger generations need to understand that De Gasperi's teachings are worth preserving in terms of his political method, his respect for tolerance, and his commitment to the fundamental values of democracy. However, this legacy must be infused with a content that may shape it – content for transformation, for momentum, and for the renewal of society. In fact, perhaps the final fragmentation and weakening of De Gasperi's politics was precisely due to the fact that, at times, it was reduced to the mere preservation of a formula of political collaboration between parties.

So, if we really want to bring this commemoration to a close in a way that goes beyond mere words, we have to acknowledge that, if there is a bond that unites us to Alcide De Gasperi's political work, it is not one that involves automatically and mechanically continuing his teachings, as if the world had not changed.

De Gasperi's daughter, who wrote one of his biographies, described him as a lonely man. But why was De Gasperi lonely? De Gasperi was a lonely man because he knew how to withdraw into himself at the most critical moments, and he knew how to make

decisions. He knew how to be a child of his time, he knew how to make decisions in response to the concrete problems before him – in other words, he knew how to carry out his political mission as a mission of responsibility, a mission of choice, and a mission of understanding the historical period.

In this respect, De Gasperi taught us to be people of our time by facing reality head-on. So, to preserve De Gasperi's political legacy, we really need to carry forward, as he taught us, the sense of the nation, as he wanted it, his conception of the party, his sense of the state, and his international vision of the problems. But at the same time, we need to enrich this De Gasperian experience with the broader context of the aspirations present in Italian society.

We must carry forward his vision of a great, united Christian Democracy so that it can be free; free so that it can stay in touch with the country and be a party at the forefront of the nation's social progress; stay in touch with the country so that, together with others, in collaboration with others, it can advance the cause of democracy and make Italian democracy a tool at the service of a more peaceful order among nations.

Today, rather than the practical aspects of De Gasperi's political experience, it is this moral lifeblood of his teaching that we must draw on. Even if, as is inevitable, the formal occasions for commemorations and acts of remembrance gradually diminish over time, we must ensure that, each in our own way and all together, we recall Alcide De Gasperi's teaching and political legacy every day, in the service of democracy and freedom. This act of remembrance does not call only for speeches; it calls for the continuity of a struggle, in which we must all play a part, to affirm a strong and free Christian Democracy, in the service of the country and of peace in the world.

*The Future of the Centre-Left**

*On 22 October 1966, a conference was held in Florence, organised by the magazine *Politica*, which had been founded in 1955 on the initiative of Nicola Pistelli, the founder and driving force behind the Florentine Sinistra di Base. The *Politica* event had been convened on the very eve of the socialist unification that would be officially confirmed the following week, on 30 October, with the creation of the Unified Socialist Party (PSU), resulting from the merger of the PSI and the PSDI. The Florence event was led by the left wing of the Christian Democrats and was aimed at all those members of the party who had helped to form the centre-left. The aim of the event was therefore to revive that political agenda, which, according to the organisers, had been weakened by an overly bland and moderate approach and thus seemed to have betrayed the original hopes of those who, from the outset, had fought for the Socialists to play a direct role in governing the country.*

*The Florence rally, which aimed to revitalise the centre-left on a new basis in light of the various stirrings affecting Italian politics and society as a whole, attracted not only members of the Sinistra di Base movement, who turned out in large numbers, but also representatives of the *Forze Nuove* trade union faction, which, for the purposes of the congress, had been part of the Sinistra di Base since 1964 as a single group. Speakers also included members of the Fanfani–Forlani Nuove Cronache group, such as Franco Maria Malfatti, Clelio Darida, and Corrado Corghi. On that occasion, two figures returned to the political forefront: Giorgio Bo, the former Minister for State Holdings, who had been very close to Mattei, and Giovanni Gronchi, the former President of the Republic, who brought*

* ASIS, Fondo Granelli, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 22.

the conference to a close to general acclaim. Benigno Zaccagnini, leader of the Christian Democrat MPs and a close associate of Prime Minister Aldo Moro, also took part in the event and was among those who received the warmest applause. He urged those present to renew their commitment to their ideals. The Florence meeting raised some concerns among those who had perceived it as almost a challenge by the organisers and participants to the official line of the Christian Democrats, as pursued by General Secretary Mariano Rumor and the Doroteo leadership group. Even Pietro Nenni, the socialist leader who had been appointed president of the new unified party, did not welcome the Politica initiative. He saw the Christian Democrat left as having 'two erroneous, more or less conscious, outlooks: a recurrent integralist element, and a populist element that deluded itself into thinking it could outflank the Socialist Party on the left'. From that point on, the relationship between the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrat left – which defended itself by accusing the PSI of disappointing inaction – began to deteriorate more and more noticeably.

The piece by Granelli reproduced here, which was discovered in his archive, has never been published before.

The importance and value of this conference lie in the fact that it does not confine itself to closed factions. Rather, it represents a broad base that reflects a wide range of experiences and offers a broad panorama of ideas and cultural and political orientations. This allows us to recognise the crisis affecting the Christian Democratic left and fosters a healthy awareness of the situation.

Therefore, precisely because of the broad remit chosen for the conference, we must make an effort to show mutual tolerance and modesty, avoiding a preachy attitude that seeks to change reality solely from the outside. On the contrary, we must ask ourselves what role we are called upon to play so that Italian society, and within it the DC, may become richer, more vibrant and more fully articulated in their democratic development. For example, there has been talk of the faint echoes that the Second Vatican Council has had within the DC. But we cannot ignore how little impact the Council has had even in the Catholic world, and it is clear what weight a more sensitive, more vibrant and more culturally mature Catholic world could carry within the DC.

The fundamental question we need to ask ourselves is not whether we should remain within the Party or act outside it, nor whether we should be part of the majority or move into opposition.

The challenge is to give our campaign a clear direction and precise substance.

This is a difficult, wide-ranging challenge. First of all, we need to recognise what is happening in our civil society. The fact is that the Christian Democratic left fell into crisis when it turned in on itself, without trying to understand the problems that were unfolding in concrete political reality and in the profound transformation of Italian society.

First of all, there is the issue of political forces. It has been said that, in the past, the Christian Democrat left deserves credit for raising the issue of political forces, while forgetting to raise the issue of the centre-left's policies. However, this is not correct. Moreover, we cannot claim that reaching the centre-left is our sole victory, as this outcome could also be, in whole or in part, the result of the tendencies of *trasformismo* that have always been present in our national tradition and that were forced by necessity to adopt the new formula.

We must therefore return to the discussion of political forces, but not within the narrow framework of defending the centre-left formula. This is where a new discussion opens up on socialist unification.

There is a first way of looking at socialist unification that could serve as a dangerous alibi: namely, the view that tends to see such unification in terms of the danger of creating a generic social-democratic force on the left that would inevitably relegate the DC to right-wing positions.

Another negative attitude is one that sees unification as a purely prefabricated power alternative, and ascribes to it no capacity for renewal. This is the danger that seems to concern Malfatti. He chooses the wrong remedy, however, if, in order to counter it, he theorises the hegemony of the DC, which, as a matter of principle,

rules out cooperation with strong parties and allows it only with parties in a minority or subordinate position.

This assessment, too, amounts to a headlong rush: the real problem is not simply the division of power between forces that could genuinely strive for cooperation and renewal. If we take the shortcuts of piecemeal reformism, if we allow the bureaucratic and centralised framework of the unitary state to survive, it is inevitable that the political struggle will be reduced to a level of clientelism and backroom patronage, as it was in De Pretis' time.

Of course, this lack of political ability to give proper priority to substantive reforms such as regional reform also affects the Socialists, who, in the areas for which they are responsible, seem to prefer sector-specific, technocratic reforms and the advantages that centralisation offers.

Thus, as in other periods of Italian history, we see a convergence of power between conservatives and would-be reformers. Unwilling or unable to carry out structural reforms due to political incompetence, they then ask the country to grant them more power, for the sole purpose of occupying the state apparatus. No one can fail to see a more blatant failure of centre-left politics.

At this point, the question arises of the responsibilities of the Christian-Democratic left: are we ready to centre our political action on a clear call for far-reaching, defining reforms, and to draw every consequence from such a choice? Are our people in government also prepared to draw practical consequences, including for their continued participation in the executive, if certain essential priorities are not fixed?

If the left wing of the Christian Democrats does not take the path of a coherent struggle, requiring not only speeches but concrete actions of this kind, there is no point in blaming the Doroteans or Moro; we must instead look to our internal crisis – our lack of courage, ideas and concrete proposals – to explain some of the shortcomings of the present political situation.

Of course, in doing all this, we need to beware of maximalism,

but also of an all-out apologism that risks overwhelming not only the left but the whole of the DC.

Today, the Christian Democrat left must open a vigorous and coherent political and programme-based debate, aimed at safeguarding the party's overall guiding role. To do so, it must begin an open debate with everyone, rejecting the all-too-familiar methods of private, personal conversations or arrangements in the sharing-out of internal power.

The events that unfolded at this conference, which saw the absence of many qualified friends who were barred from participating by anachronistic vetoes, show just how much political will is lacking within the party, and how there is now a need for a sustained, provocative initiative. This must be conducted in full view and focused on specific issues, to break that oligarchic spirit that turns everything into leadership manoeuvres and prevents the DC, with the contribution of its best people, from pursuing a more open policy.

Today, the main self-criticism the Christian Democrats' left needs to make concerns its ability to address the party's problems seriously. Unfortunately, these remain at the point where the De Gasperi-Dossetti clash left them. If the centre-left is undergoing a gradual decline, it is because there is no party capable of fulfilling its role: instead, there is a party closed in on itself, which no courage to leaving behind a bureaucratised structure detached from our transforming society. And we all need to be convinced, both inside and outside the party, that no one will hand us an open DC on a plate, but that we will have to win it through our own struggles and sacrifices.

This is particularly true of those study groups and cultural centres that perhaps convince themselves the situation can change quickly, without a stronger commitment on their part – whether through direct or indirect action, but always with cultural and political means.

Finally, this conference could leave itself open to a dangerous temptation: that of once again taking up the banner of struggle around a generational platform, which was the method that led to the creation of *Iniziativa Democratica*. We would thus be reverting to the

old habit of conceiving of political currents in a crudely Leninist sense, as mere instruments for the conquest of power for power's sake, only to realise, once it has been won, that the conditions are not in place to exercise it in accordance with clear ideological and political principles.

Some people say that the generational route is the only way forward because the creation of the centre-left has effectively hollowed out the DC left. This argument is false: the diagnosis we have made makes it clear that there is no shortage of opportunities for struggle.

If we do not want to squander these opportunities, we must first renew our moral commitment, steering clear of facile idealism or complacent tactical manoeuvring. That is, we must remember the lesson of nonconformism and conceptual rigour that Nicola Pistelli left us, and move forward in a difficult but essential struggle: to restore the Christian Democratic left to the role it once played and can still play, in the face of the regression of centre-left politics and socialist unification, and to make valuable new contributions and provide direction to the struggle for democracy in Italy.

*Italian Catholics in a New Era of Christianity**

In the spring of 1967, between 28 and 30 April, a cultural conference was held in Lucca. It was organised by the leadership of the Christian Democracy party on the theme: 'Italian Catholics in a New Era of Christianity'. Supported by the party's secretary, Mariano Rumor, the initiative was prompted by an open letter addressed 'To Catholics Active in Politics and Culture' and signed by five intellectuals from those fields: Gabriele De Rosa, Sergio Cotta, Vittore Branca, Vittorino Veronese and Cornelio Fabro. With this gesture, the signatories hoped to restore the Christian inspiration to politics. This would be drawn from the tradition of Murri, Sturzo and De Gasperi, which seemed to have been eroded by the day-to-day exercise of power.

The conference also provided a much-needed opportunity for debate and reflection on the party's role and inspiration within a rapidly changing social context, particularly in light of the new developments emerging from the Second Vatican Council.

*Among the main talks, Gabriele De Rosa's paper focused on the need for the Christian Democracy Party to maintain a connection with contemporary society. Sergio Cotta addressed the meaning of Christian engagement in politics in light of the Church's magisterium, referring to Paul VI's recent encyclical, *Populorum progressio*. With surprising foresight, Cotta also provided an interesting contribution to the debate when he identified and outlined the contours and risks associated with the rise of the new 'technological society', in which, for*

* *I cattolici nei tempi nuovi della cristianità* (a cura di G. Rossini) [Catholics in a New Era of Christianity (ed. G. Rossini)], Proceedings of the Study Conference (Lucca, 28–30 April 1967), Cinque Lune, Rome, 1967.

the first time, it was the scientific spirit – and not abstract ideology – that was shaping the world, thereby challenging the conscience of believers.

At the conference, in his speech, the Prime Minister, Aldo Moro, who led a stable centre-left coalition, defined the deeper meaning of ‘dialogue’ as he understood and proposed it: ‘an encounter between people who are different yet kindred – those with whom one may also disagree but with whom one collaborates and builds a future together’.

La Rivista Trimestrale (No. 21, Spring 1967), edited by Franco Rodano and Claudio Napoleoni, published in full the two talks delivered at the conference by Augusto del Noce and Luigi Granelli, and acknowledged that the Lucca initiative’s main merit was that it had ‘revealed the suffering, or, if you prefer, the objective diagnosis [...] of the crisis – by then open and undeniable – of Christian Democracy insofar as it was a Catholic party’.

Unity around the DC must be the result
of informed political and policy choices.

1. The value and limitations of the conference. 2. The horizons opened up by the Council. 3. The issue of political unity among Catholics. 4. The development of democracy to mitigate the dangers of a technological society. 5. The prospect of pluralism.

1. - As is well known, the approach to this conference has been the subject of heated debate. This also merits some clarification, not least because, in this case, staying out of the debate is not an option. There can be no doubt about the value of a debate between Catholics who, although they share a common religious heritage, have different cultural and political experiences. If anything, the concern is that the dialogue should be genuine, free from manipulation and false simplifications, and it is to this constructive concern that the doubts and controversies preceding the conference should be traced back.

Let us put aside the impression created by the swift acceptance within the party of the plea made by our friends chairing the conference, whose cultural commitment and personal integrity we have always admired, so as not to invite the suspicion – which, ultimately, is justified – of malicious, judgemental criticism. In any

case, it is a positive development that criticisms, which for some time now have been voiced from various quarters outside the party, are now being received without resentment and in a spirit of mutual understanding.

If, as we hope, all of this is a reassuring sign of a genuine willingness to enter into dialogue, then the aim of the conference – which marks the start of a process of conceptual and political reappraisal – can only be one of maximum openness and absolute respect for areas of autonomy that cannot be subsumed into a party logic which, by its nature, is limited and confined to practical choices that are not shared by everyone.

In our view, the somewhat ambiguous wording of the topics of the two reports does not serve this purpose. Although they refer to a new era of Christianity, they imply that Catholics, as such, have political experience and responsibility in a forum which, given its Christian Democratic nature, cannot and must not claim to represent Catholics exclusively in a political party. Nor is the absence of a more committed introductory speech with an explicit Christian Democratic orientation helpful, even though the conference was open to dialogue and debate. Such a speech certainly cannot be replaced by the more markedly political speeches of others, nor by the final conclusions of the political secretary, which, on the contrary, are unlikely to avoid being interpreted as an attempt to exploit the conference. It would have been better to reverse the approach, as we have suggested on various occasions, in order to provide clearer confirmation of the new spirit that should drive the initiative of a conference that opens rather than closes a dialogue, that looks to the future, and that seeks an ideal exchange of views, with the participants acting independently and respecting dissent – even radical dissent – as concrete evidence of pluralism. However, these concerns and criticisms do not undermine the fundamentally positive idea behind the conference. On the contrary, they aim to highlight the value of breaking down barriers and initiating an open dialogue among Catholics who feel a strong call for religious, cultural and political renewal, a call that

emerged from the Council in response to the dramatic problems facing the modern world in the current historical period. It is precisely to the development of this dialogue that we intend to make a frank and calm critical contribution, free from nominalism and simplistic frameworks, while also demonstrating our willingness to understand the concerns of others as part of a shared effort of inquiry and deeper understanding.

2 - An initial clarification is needed. Our debate is taking place within the context of the compelling and thought-provoking issues raised by the Council. New and challenging horizons are opening up for Catholics in terms of their spiritual life, their practical witness, and their action in the modern world, with the aim of protecting it from the dangers of conservative selfishness and fleeting progress. It would be a mistake to reduce the scope of an appeal of such richness and breadth – which once again demonstrates the Church’s foresight – to modest, instrumental ends of a political or party-political nature. It would make no sense to imagine, as an outcome of the Council, a progressive party driven by a misguided spirit of crusade, as if implicitly to justify, in earlier periods, the existence of a conservative or moderate party. Similarly, those who, having favoured clerical conformism over the defence of the principle of autonomy in difficult times, now seem to see the Council as merely affirming greater autonomy are mistaken. Perhaps they do so to justify a rather easy pragmatism that allows the party to act according to need rather than in line with clear ideals.

We must be on guard against these simplistic post-conciliar positions. The temptation to use the Church, even for noble ends, does not disappear with the Council and may even grow if Catholics are not safeguarded from such dangers through deeper theological education.

Similarly, the tendency to view party autonomy as a progressive detachment from a demanding set of moral values and obligations, and instead to drift in practice towards generic forms of political

humanism, risks resurfacing in an even more troubling way under the pressure of historical circumstances. This is particularly true where Catholics bear specific responsibilities in the exercise of power, as it may pave the way for a separatist and secularist vision of political commitment that has nothing to do with the proper recognition of autonomy.

Instead, through the Council, the Church's Magisterium calls us to walk the path of witness in the world, a path that is rich in spirituality, imbued with a spirit of truth, anchored in robust moral principles, and oriented towards a transcendent plan of salvation. All of this sets limits, underscoring the relativity of temporal achievements, of social and political systems, of the forms of economic life, and of party struggles. At the same time, however, it places a duty on Catholics to maintain a coherent presence, achieved in autonomy and professed with faith, in order to bring the 'People of God', as described in the conciliar texts, closer to the truth – not only through words but also through the example of a historical endeavour expressed in positive terms, as a work of human construction, as Prof. Cotta rightly stated in his report.

No longer, therefore, is there a crusading spirit aimed at the fundamentalist conquest of the world in the name of a misleading outward appearance of Christian life, nor a shirking of responsibilities in pursuit of the ultimately selfish goal of individual salvation, accompanied by sterile intellectual pride. In my view, this gives rise to a spiritual call for a new and different commitment by Catholics in relation to culture, politics and active witness, pursued independently and within communities of purpose, in all areas of human life. From this arises the need for a genuine pluralism within Christian life, one that avoids any stifling politicisation, allows for a greater richness of personal contributions, and frees Catholics from the isolation of the so-called 'Constantinian era'. This opens them up to dialogue, understanding, tolerance and cooperation – including with non-believers – in order to build a temporal order that is fundamentally imbued with authentic values of freedom, morality and justice.

It is within this far-reaching set of issues that our debate – limited and circumscribed by its very nature – must be situated. We must keep referring to that broader perspective, so as to avoid descending into a series of recriminations, devoid of humility and rife with presumption, over our greater or lesser political and cultural adherence to the teachings of the Council.

3 - For us, therefore, the purpose of this concise reference to the complex and wide-ranging issues raised by the Council is to prevent us from becoming confined to a narrow, purely instrumental perspective when addressing, more specifically, those political issues on which – by virtue of our vocation and experience – we have a duty to express our opinion with complete sincerity. There is no point in denying it: the most pressing issue is that of the political unity of Catholics. According to some, this is the main sticking point to be resolved after the Council in order to usher in a phase of renewed dynamism within Italian Catholicism.

We believe that a polemic on principle on this point is unproductive. There is no doubt that, from a doctrinal point of view, the idea that all Catholics should be united in one party on the basis of a shared religious belief is not tenable. For us, this principle has been recognised for a long time, at least since Sturzo, and now – after the Council – it should be recognised by everyone, including those who, in the past, did not hesitate to appeal to religious sentiment for electoral purposes.

However, it is the situation as it stands that needs to be examined.

De Rosa is right when he points out that, historically, there has never been political unity among Catholics in Italy, even since some of them formed a party. This is confirmed by an analysis of all the party's concrete decisions, from its opposition to Fascism to the Resistance, from its republican commitment to the agrarian reform, and from De Gasperi's collaboration with the laity to its opening to the Left. These decisions were always taken in a climate of lively debate within the broad spectrum of Italian Catholics and, often, in

a spirit of distrust and criticism of the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself. However, this does not rule out the fact that, in practice, a complex electoral reality has developed around the party, partly as a result of external interventions, which, no doubt unconsciously, derives the motivations for its choices more from general needs for order or from vague religious sentiments than from a genuine political awareness of adherence to the party's aims and programmes. If we then add that, for the same reasons of limited political maturity and limited theological training, the confusion between the sacred and the profane, between the state and the Church, and between party militancy and social or apostolic activity, remains deeply rooted – not least because of the unique history of our country and the tangible links that exist between the various institutions – we cannot but admit that, in practice, and therefore beyond the dispute over principle, this kind of defensive and crude unity has harmful consequences in both the religious and the political spheres.

Indeed, many people attribute the lack of a more intense religious revival to the identification of Catholicism with Christian Democrat political practice, which, among other things, can alienate from the Church those who are in conflict with the party and remove large sections of the population from the influence of the clergy and the lay apostolate. On the other hand, it is well known that, politically, the desire to maintain a broad electoral base frequently leads the party leadership to adopt ambiguous and ambivalent stances, to water down its policies, to avoid making choices, and to gradually reduce itself to a moderate power bloc, despite its origins as a policy-driven party, which are proudly asserted in historical accounts.

Not by chance, De Rosa observed that, in the days of the Popular Party, autonomy and independence were more pronounced. From the DC onwards, however – and quite apart from De Rosa's analysis, which is less sharp when dealing with this period – this feeling is less clearly evident and is accompanied, at the very least, by contradictory episodes.

It is therefore undeniable that the unity of Catholics, as it exists

in Italy today, can act as an obstacle to the religious revival called for by the Council, even if it is not the sole cause, as Gozzini pointed out in his contribution. It can also act as a hindrance to a substantive, secular political struggle by Catholic democrats organised as a party.

So, how can we overcome this situation? Certainly not through a debate on principles. As we have already said, this can only end in the predictable reaffirmation that the idea of Catholics being united in a single party as believers is untenable.

Our impression is that what appears confusing is, in fact, the product of precise historical reasons, since the cultural and religious backwardness of Italian Catholicism is a pre-existing factor that conditions its very political unity and action. So this confusion needs to be resolved and eradicated within a historical context, that is, by eliminating the causes that have led to the current situation. Hence the need to define precise objectives according to the various vocations and to address practical issues – not merely those of preaching – which span a number of levels.

Those who think they can simply wipe the slate clean of the web of misunderstandings that bind contemporary Italian Catholicism together religiously, culturally and politically are falling into an unforgivable Enlightenment-era fallacy.

Among the solutions currently being proposed to untie the knot of an ambiguous and unproductive political unity of Catholics, the first is self-dissolution – breaking ranks. Putting aside the fact that it is hard to identify an authority with real powers to order, in a way that would satisfy the proponents of this argument, the dissolution of a substantial political organisation and the heritage accumulated over decades, it is worth asking what the consequences of such a step would be.

Could there perhaps be, as an immediate consequence, a sudden and beneficial religious awakening that would certainly outweigh the fleeting political fortunes of a political party?

I really doubt it. Aside from the political vacuum that would be created in the country, with obvious risks to our free democratic

institutions, and the not inconsiderable moral dilemmas for politicians – to which the Hon. Forlani rightly alluded – there would certainly be a scramble among all the other parties to win over the available Catholic votes. We would return to the atmosphere of the ‘Gentiloni pact’, as a recent editorial in the journal *Relazioni Sociali* pointed out. The race to offer greater guarantees of religious loyalty, if not forms of resurgent clericalism, would pave the way for a new and even more pernicious form of political exploitation. This would aim, on the one hand, to swallow up Catholics scattered across various parties and, on the other, to pursue concordat-like arrangements that would, in any case, compromise the Church in its inevitable relationship with the new regime.

On this assumption, in our view, the religious benefits, which are the primary objective, would be few; and the political benefits would be even fewer, both for Catholics involved in politics and for Italian democracy.

There is, moreover, another approach: that of allowing for a plurality of forms of political expression among Italian Catholics. This perspective is undoubtedly more realistic. In principle, nothing prevents the birth of a plurality of political parties and their organisation of Catholics on the basis of different programmes. On this basis, it is clearly not possible to expect an appointment from above or a mandate to replace the worn-out horses with fresher but no less ambiguous ones. A party that intends to operate within the democratic arena cannot be created by magic or through childish Machiavellian calculations. Such a party must carve out a genuine place for itself in society, propose a role that is valid at the national level rather than merely representing the interests of a particular group or social class. It must explicitly earn credible and constructive legitimacy in the political arena. Is all this possible?

Catholics who feel they need to act in this way, in opposition to Christian Democracy itself, have every right to do so. If they had the courage not to sit idly by waiting for the appointed hour, but were willing to face the inevitable personal and collective risks, they would

undoubtedly help resolve the situation far more effectively than by delivering wishful, moralistic sermons against a misleading sense of unity.

But even then, what would the consequences be? Would a number of Catholic parties, competing with one another, perhaps eliminate the risk of exploiting the Church's teachings for their own ends, thereby causing yet another – and even more serious – confusion between the sacred and the secular, between religion and politics?

So, then, what would be the benefits of a religious revival or a different kind of Catholic politics in Italian society? From a religious point of view, political involvement, whether in the form of individual participation or through multiple parties, would merely take a different form. Then, it would be necessary to seek, on other levels – which are not precluded even in the current situation – the impetus for a revival of moral and religious values. From a political point of view, the fragmentation of both individuals and parties would lead to the defence of narrow, sectoral interests and, in any case, to subordination to other political forces. These would effectively assume the 'leadership' [in English in the original text] of national life, in an unnatural reversal of the nation's history over the last 50 years.

So, should things remain as they are? There are many people, including some of us, who use the lack of alternatives as a pretext to perpetuate an ambiguous situation that is becoming increasingly unacceptable. I am not among them. My conviction is that we must, as soon as possible, set out on a path towards overcoming this ambiguous unity among Catholics, which is causing damage in both the religious and political spheres. But to do this, we need to act decisively in several areas.

First of all, we must act in the field of religion. We all are responsible for the delay in reaping the fruits of the Council in Italy, because we are all children of the Church. Our duty as believers is to contribute wholeheartedly to that religious revival which, in our view,

must be a primary objective for Italian Catholics. We must do everything that helps bring us closer to this goal. Let us not hide our faults as believers, when it comes to the problems of religious life, behind the alibi of the existence of a Catholic party.

This may include liturgical renewal, theological preparation, mysticism, the lay apostolate, civic witness, campaigns to raise moral standards, or criticism of the 'Catholic opposition' to Christian Democracy in a religious sense – if necessary – as Gozzini suggested. The aim is to achieve, through a conscious shared commitment, that religious maturation of Italian Catholicism, the lack of which is one of the main causes of cultural poverty and the lack of political clarity.

Secondly, we have to act in the cultural sphere. The Christian Democracy party certainly cannot ignore cultural issues even though it must reject a purely political view of them. But beyond the DC, Catholics who know how to act earnestly and in harmony with the spirit of the Council must – and are partly already doing so – occupy a wide space for an autonomous pluralism, through initiatives of research, study and reflection on the most important aspects of our society and our times. Those who, by virtue of a different vocation, do not feel the burden of political conditioning have a duty to be forward-looking, strongly critical and stimulating. They must be more open to dialogue and debate, so as to bear concrete witness to a vibrant and constructive cultural presence that plays such a significant role in the civic and political development of Catholics and of Italian society.

Finally, we are called to action in the political sphere. We have already discussed the tendency to exploit the current unity as a source of strength and a form of legitimacy derived from multiple factors, and the risks this poses in terms of altering the very concept of a political party based on a programme. We need to reverse this trend, which leads to the unity of interests, to moderation, and to the mere defence of acquired power. This way we shall re-establish the conditions for genuine political unity by means of a clear, unambiguous programme for reforming society and the state. Such a

unity is not for all Catholics, but for those who accept the democratic method and the objectives set by the party. It goes without saying that a party must then seek the widest possible support for its actions. However, it is clear that such actions also serve to foster political maturity and to demystify a false, metapolitical unity. Almirante is right: political unity is no longer a given – if it ever was. Rather, it is a goal to be achieved independently, using the weapons of politics alone. Therefore, the issue of unity concerns the Christian Democrats, and them alone. It affects their programme of action and requires a commitment to rally support ‘on the basis of a reasoned consensus’. This, in turn, lets Catholics as such to be free and autonomous in their choice. If the principles of political clarity and autonomy are accepted, it may also affect others indirectly. And this responsibility – on the part of others – concerns just one point: that of refraining from demanding, from outside, that the Christian Democrats lobby for sectors and interest groups, based on a conception of unity that has largely been superseded, especially since the Second Vatican Council.

This is not the place to go into this last point in detail. What is certain is that, in order to achieve this objective, the Christian Democracy party needs a wide-ranging process of reassessment.

This should apply to its internal workings, its ideas and programmes, its leadership, the way it conceives its relationship with the state and with institutions in general, and its determined efforts to build the model of an open party in an evolving pluralist society. In this regard, the second part of De Rosa’s report contains some ideas which, despite being general and vague – such as those relating to moderation and the conditions for a modern development policy – deserve careful consideration.

4 - As a matter of relevance and urgency, after the question of unity, or at least of how to understand it rightly, the substance of our political action in building a new temporal order follows next. The conciliar texts are explicit on this point. ‘They are mistaken,’ they say,

‘those who, knowing that in this world we have no permanent citizenship but seek the one to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that it is precisely their faith that obliges them to fulfil these duties, each according to their vocation.’

Therefore, a thorough analysis of the current situation and its problems should guide our political action to transform the present situation, both domestically and internationally. The major issues of comprehensive and structural reform of the state, of new mechanisms of economic development, of greater institutional pluralism in society, and of the defence of peace through concrete actions as a primary condition for the development of the international order must cease to be the subject of verbal exercises and become the yardstick for consistent and incisive operational decisions. It is not appropriate, not least due to time constraints, to go into the individual aspects of this political programme here. What is important, instead, is to reflect on the motivations rooted in ideals behind this effort at renewal.

As has been said many times, the aim is to free people and social classes from all forms of slavery, to bring historical development under rational control, and to ensure coexistence and cooperation between all people of goodwill in order to achieve, using all available resources, a higher level of civilisation: the integral humanism referred to in ‘*Populorum progressio*’.

In this regard, Prof. Cotta’s report contains many interesting points; but I feel it is my duty to highlight certain risks.

I agree that prosperity, economic reformism and consumer culture do not represent the answer to Marxism, nor the answer to humankind’s yearning for freedom. I also agree that we are living in a time that marks the end of abstract, pre-packaged ideologies derived from the nineteenth century. However, it should be remembered that, while all this is true at a philosophical level, or more modestly in terms of the history of ideas, it is still slow to materialise at the historical level of the real movement of people, organised forces, and

economic and political systems. In my view, we are going through a troubled period of transition that, rather than ideological disarmament, requires tough struggles, dialogue and confrontation, as well as the presence of authoritative figures, in order to be steered in the right direction.

It can be extremely dangerous to invent new myths out of thin air. I do not believe that technological civilisation, with all its fascinating wealth of scientific discoveries and its means of freeing humanity from its malaise, can represent a way out of the present turmoil – the inevitable destination of a world that has freed itself from ideologies. The concept of a technological civilisation is no less mystifying than that of a civilisation of well-being.

Let me be clear: I do not reject the immense possibilities that technological progress offers people in pursuing worldly ends, nor the contribution it can make to challenging closed and ideologically-driven models of human society. However, I believe that, in the absence of clear conditions for participation, genuine democracy and true freedom, technological civilisation could become a further force that enslaves humanity rather than liberating it. Let us ask ourselves a realistic question. Indeed, who, if not the large economic groups, those who hold power within states, and the richest and most advanced countries, can actually make use of technological progress, which requires significant resources, organisational capabilities, and agreements among oligarchic and powerful groups? Clearly, all of this carries the tremendous risk that those who already hold power will extend their dominion in order to preserve their ideological model or way of life, to the detriment of the weakest sections of society, the least developed countries, and those people and social classes that seek freedom – not merely emancipation from basic necessities, rationality and efficiency.

Therefore, in my view, the issue of democracy in its various historical phases – which, at its core, is the issue of freedom and the democratisation of power – underlies and shapes even the most elevated, least despotic use of technological advances.

And this observation leads to another. In the final section of Cotta's report, we can discern the risk of a new form of integralism, no longer linked to a clearly defined ideology, but permeated by an abstract view of history. After the Council, Catholics have been led to adopt a more appropriate stance than in the past with regard to the goal of transcendent salvation, and to derive from this the duty to spiritually enlighten humanity, with a proper understanding of the relative nature of the temporal order. I have already mentioned the duty, clearly shared by Cotta as well, to actively contribute to building this temporal order. However, in my view, this is not enough. Other people, with their own ideas and their own histories, are active in the world, and they too will shape its future development. An issue of dialogue, encounter, and mutual collaboration emerges. We need to facilitate a process of revising their respective ideologies and to build, with the contribution of all people of good will, a new human reality.

We cannot take for granted the demise of Marxism and the political movements inspired by it, nor can we consider the tradition of practical liberalism – which has come to encompass many of us as well – to be outdated. In short, we need to come to terms with the modern world and its political expressions. We should distil these expressions and help them grow, rather than taking refuge in a new form of integralism that turns its back on reality.

As Prime Minister Moro pointed out, the need for unrestricted dialogue, for exchange and collaboration between different forces – which is, after all, the method of political democracy – presupposes and requires more than an ideological disarmament in the direction of a more or less historicised pragmatism. It requires a profound revision of traditional ideologies that, at the same time, makes room for a value system that preserves the power of an ideal orientation for politics and for concrete action. And this, I repeat, is not only to give ourselves a clearer historical sense of our presence in the world, but also to help others – without any desire to wage an ideological crusade – to carry out their own ideological revision, spurred on by the example of others. To give just one example, perhaps the slowness

with which a beneficial process of revisionism is developing within Italian communism is also due, at least in part, to our inability to play a stimulating role in this regard?

This also applies to other areas, and there is no doubt that the sharp decline in the hopes raised by the centre-left, and its reduction to a narrow focus on sectoral reformism and a mere sharing of power, is largely due to the alliance's failure to recognise the importance of ideological issues and the re-evaluations demanded by the transformations currently underway.

That is why I hope that the salutary realisation urged by Professor Cotta's report will not lead to dangerous evasion or hasty, ill-considered actions, but will instead be strengthened by greater historical awareness, putting us in a position to fulfil our duty in full, including in our relations with other well-intentioned people.

5 - However, there is only one conclusion I would like to draw from this contribution: regardless of our individual views, which are inevitably diverse, we should all recognise our duty to demonstrate our willingness to respond to the Council's call. There is much to be done, for everyone, in different fields according to our respective vocations. We need courage, capacity for dialogue, tolerance and a genuine spirit of charity. This way, we can help to bring closer, with humility of purpose, those new times that lie at the heart of the aspirations of every Catholic who wishes to bear witness in the world to their faith and their civic commitment.

*Church–State Relations, a Hundred Years After Porta Pia**

This text of an unpublished speech was among Luigi Granelli's archival papers. Presumably delivered on 20 September 1970, it commemorated the centenary of the Breach of Porta Pia (i.e. the Capture of Rome) and the establishment of Rome as the capital of Italy.

In his analysis, Granelli traced the difficult relations that had divided the Italian state from the Catholic Church. The Christian Democrat MP re-examined the Roman Question, which had been resolved by the Lateran Pacts, paying particular attention to the views expressed by Catholic figures. Granelli cited the emblematic accounts of Sturzo and De Gasperi, but equally significant was his reference to the speech delivered on the Campidoglio in October 1962 by the then Cardinal Montini. Montini later became Pope Paul VI, and Granelli had several disagreements with him in Milan in the 1950s over the policy of opening to the left. On that occasion, the Cardinal had described the loss of temporal power as 'providential' for the Italian Church.

However, according to Granelli, it was above all in the wake of the Second Vatican Council that the Catholic Church definitively abandoned any temptation to exercise temporal power.

Some time later, Granelli took part in a debate organised by Catholic jurists at the Centro San Fedele in Milan on the reform of the Concordat – for which a special study commission had been set up. There, he declared, 'the state and the Church are sovereign in their respective spheres. In order to consolidate this distinction, rather than engaging in the controversies of the past, we should work to eliminate anachronisms and privileges of bygone eras. We should fully liberate

* ASIS, Fondo Granelli, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 24.

a relationship that unmistakably encourages tolerance and consolidates religious peace and democracy for all'.

Rhetoric is the Achilles heel of any commemoration, but this risk must not lead us to forget historical events of decisive importance that still matter today. The centenary of Rome becoming the capital of Italy is undoubtedly one of them. Its commemoration may rekindle controversies and clashes that were important at the time, but it may also invite a superficial glorification of a harmony achieved perhaps under the illusion of putting aside problems that, in reality, persist despite their natural evolution. We must guard against these mistakes.

It is not so much a question of organising solemn official ceremonies. Indeed, as the Hon. Andreotti observed, it would be more meaningful to commit to clearing the shanty towns or completing the east linear settlement project in Rome – than reflecting on the lessons that, a century on, the event still holds for us.

The 'Roman Question' ended with the separation of the state and the Church and the subsequent new relations between them – each sovereign in its own sphere. This marked the beginning of a new phase in Italian history. However, the outcomes of this turning point are not secured once and for all. On the contrary, they must be consolidated and defended in close connection with the changing times. Relations between Church and state are fundamental to peace and civil prosperity, especially in Italy. The dramatic upheavals of the modern era have demonstrated how these relationships are increasingly transforming from legal or diplomatic issues into liaisons that, at every level, systematically engage the conscience of citizens.

Therefore, a genuine sense of the democratic state, a more authentic religious awareness, and a tolerant culture of dialogue or understanding are not just historical achievements to be celebrated. Rather, they are essential values that must be shared more widely among all citizens if they are to be secured for the future.

To this end, it is certainly not helpful to resurrect the ghosts of

clericalism and anti-clericalism. This dangerous temptation concerns Catholics and secular people alike. This temptation thrives when mutual conformity prevails, or when ambiguity takes the place of the acknowledgements and distinctions that should be affirmed without convoluted caveats.

Italian Catholics should view 20 September 1870 for what it means beyond the harshness of the historical circumstances. Secular power hindered the Church's universal religious mission and, at the same time, prevented Italian Catholics from participating on an equal footing as citizens in the country's civil and political struggles. This is not a case of justification in hindsight. Historical development allows us to respect the past without self-deception and, equally, to move beyond it without regret, with a view to greater civil and religious achievements.

One example of a definitive judgement, in the religious sphere, can be drawn – among the many authoritative statements – from the significant words used by the then Cardinal Montini. His 1962 speech at the Campidoglio recalled that providence, ‘somehow dramatically unfolding through the events, took from the papacy the burden of temporal power so that it might better fulfil its spiritual mission in the world’. After a century of turbulent events, and especially following the Second Vatican Council, it can be said that religious conscience – and not just the Church's mission – has everything to gain from leaving behind the burden of temporalism and the confusion between religion and politics. But this historical verdict is also decisive for the full development of Italian Catholics' civic and democratic vocation. Here, too, the history is long and dramatic, but it is important – and still necessary – to remember it in order to emphasise that the autonomy of politics, the sense of the constitutional state, and keeping religion uncompromised by temporal ends represent ideal achievements of the Italian Catholic movement itself. Its values were not mechanically borrowed from secularism, nor merely imposed by historical events. There have been, and still are, integralist, restorationist or progressive distortions

within our own ranks, depending on their leanings. These tend to confuse values that, according to Catholic conscience itself, should be kept clearly distinct. Suffice it to recall the ‘case of conscience’ of the Risorgimento, prominent figures such as Manzoni or Rosmini, and the political battles of Sturzo, Meda, and De Gasperi, to demonstrate that, in civil and political terms, the achievements linked to the end of temporalism are a distinctive and original legacy of Italian Catholics. This legacy must be safeguarded and enriched.

Here, too, among the many, some significant statements are worth recalling. In 1915, Luigi Sturzo stated that Catholics should engage in national life as citizens, ‘not as a religious sect advocating its own spiritual way of life, nor as a religious authority guiding the community of the faithful, nor as a clerical party defending the Church’s historical rights, but as a civil way of life informed by Christian principles, in public morality, in the development of fruitful thought, and in the practical realities of political life’. Fifty years later, in the face of temptations of temporal power that had not been fully overcome, De Gasperi acutely observed in one of his last speeches, ‘the believer acts as a citizen in the spirit and the letter of the Constitution and commits himself, his professional group, his class, and his party – not his Church’.

The ruling, therefore, can only be considered final in both political and civil terms. Nowadays, it is primarily up to Catholic democrats, within the context of a historic achievement that belongs to the whole country, to defend the values of autonomy. These are an essential prerequisite for waging their civil and political battles within the constitutional framework.

However, these values must be practiced and defended consistently, without yielding to modern forms of temporalism and without renouncing our ideals. We must do so in a spirit of open dialogue with all secular forces, so that they too – victims of their own integralism – do not feel tempted by a resurgence of anti-clericalism that would be as pernicious as clericalism was for so long.

That is why we must reject formulaic celebrations. The issues on

the table are pressing (there is no point ignoring them), from divorce to the revision of the Concordat. These issues could shake the foundations of a superficial harmony and rekindle anachronistic conflicts that are harmful to both religious conscience and civil progress, unless a mutual sense of proportion, respect for each other's values, and a firm determination to keep the debate on a civil and political footing prevail. The constitutional means that the country's democratic system makes available to everyone on an equal footing should be used accordingly.

Italy faces difficult challenges in its ongoing transformation. Though they are no greater than those of the past, they will be more easily overcome if Catholics have no regrets about the 'Breach of Porta Pia' and if lay people understand that religious conscience, which has nothing to do with clericalism, far from being a relic of the past, is a vital element that enriches civic life itself. In essence, this is where we will be able to measure everyone's maturity in celebrating, beyond solemn ceremonies and outward diplomatic courtesies, a decisive moment in our national history. This can still contribute to the strengthening of a civil and democratic coexistence.

*Facing the Divorce Referendum**

The referendum to repeal the Fortuna–Baslini Law of 1 December 1970 took place on 12 May 1974. It introduced the legal institution of divorce into the Italian political system. Amintore Fanfani, who at that political juncture was leading the Christian Democrats, committed the party to an intense referendum campaign. This saw the country radically divided into opposing camps. Alongside the DC and the Italian Social Movement were the Catholic groups that had called for the referendum. However, on that occasion – and for the first time on a political stage – the rifts and divisions that had hitherto remained latent within the Catholic world emerged in a striking manner. Several Catholic intellectuals publicly spoke out against the repeal of the law. Fanfani led the fight against divorce from the front line and, despite ill-concealed discontent and a few last-ditch attempts to find a legislative solution to avoid the referendum, so too did the left wing of the party. The latter ultimately accepted Fanfani's hard-line stance at the leadership meeting on 9 February 1974. The outcome of the referendum, which saw a 'no' vote to repeal the law win with a surprising 59.3%, revealed the reality of an increasingly secularised country and seriously undermined the Christian Democracy's political dominance. In one of his statements commenting on the result, Granelli highlighted a 'fault of the DC, as a whole, for lacking the courage, which Alcide De Gasperi had shown at other difficult times, to oppose a dangerous confrontation'.

The text of this unpublished speech, presumably delivered in Boario, is preserved in Granelli's archival papers.

This speech was transcribed directly from the tape recording without being

* ASIS, Fondo Granelli, series VIII, subseries 2, b. 25.

revised by the author. It was therefore decided to correct a few obvious transcription errors and publish it as an example of Luigi Granelli's 'off-the-cuff' public speaking.

My dear friends,

I believe that a reflection like the one we are called upon to undertake, which can be neither evasive nor simplistic, brings with it difficulties that no one can ignore.

We are in the process of defining, or rather trying to define, a position for Catholic democrats in Italy at this time – that is, at a time when, with the referendum deadline approaching, we are faced with some extremely weighty and difficult moral choices. It has rightly been said that this choice not only divides political parties but often also divides groups of friends who have long been used to agreeing on this or that political issue. Therefore, we need to be very tolerant and very respectful of one another, even though we must not pretend nothing is happening. Let us avoid the path of silence, the path of waiting for events to free us from an issue that is, in fact, of great importance.

As always in difficult times, we must shoulder our responsibilities, state our views clearly, and help to give direction amid the widespread uncertainty. Above all, looking to the future, we must safeguard the political commitment of Catholic democrats. Otherwise, our whole country could take a step back towards the historic barriers between Guelphs and Ghibellines, between secular citizens and Catholics, and this would be extremely dangerous.

Accordingly, we should first and foremost acknowledge the particular gravity of holding a referendum – the first in Italy's history – on such a sensitive issue that directly affects freedom of conscience. Various sides are exploiting it. Paradoxically – or perhaps not so paradoxically – in the very year in which we are celebrating De Gasperi, we are dramatically subjecting the country to a yes–no dichotomy that, politically, represents the opposite of everything De Gasperi sought to teach Catholic democrats. We know well that, behind the 'yes' and the 'no', behind this extreme simplification of

political struggle, lies that vertical divide between camps that is the opposite of pluralism and of democratic life in our country. De Gasperi always opposed this radicalisation. He sought to preserve a role for the DC as a party of Catholic democrats, protected from clerical, clerical-fascist, right-wing or purely electoralist blocs. He always endeavoured to maintain a dialectical link with the others – the forces of the secular left, the socialist left, and the democratic left. Undoubtedly, the circumstances of the referendum are already blowing apart any such prospect, and are presenting us – and everyone – with one of the most difficult challenges of the post-war period. We must not underestimate it, either in terms of how it unfolds or in terms of its consequences. As I will explain later in my speech, these consequences risk bringing back, almost unchanged, both the substantive and the political problems – those concerning the family, which cannot be resolved with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’, and the issues of rebuilding a balance. In fact, the head-on clash that is currently taking place will undoubtedly and severely damage that balance.

Just yesterday, whilst looking through some typewritten pages, I noticed that in 1971, right here in Boario, I had a heated debate with Fr. Macchi on precisely this issue. Fr. Macchi insisted that defending our conception of the family, including in political terms, would not lead to religious wars or radical clashes. On the contrary, he said, it was time to free ourselves from that inferiority complex.

I believe that, as we progress through the election campaign, we will increasingly realise that, as I said at the time in my debate with Macchi, it always takes two to maintain peace. It is not enough for one side to unilaterally declare war while saying it does not want war. When you start down the path of opposing fundamental ideas, the response is radicalisation. No war has ever been fought by firing flowers from guns, and as we go forward, we can see that things will only get worse.

The most extreme positions within the political camps will resurface during this heated month. To give an immediate example

from the political sphere, there is no doubt that the Communists are not the dominant force in the left-wing camp – or, more accurately, the pro-divorce constitutional camp, which includes a significant section of the Communist Party. It is the secularists who hold sway, that is, those who see the defence of divorce as a particular model of society. The more reasonable and responsible positions within the pro-divorce camp, including in Parliament, risk being sidelined by the radical and dialogue-resistant hegemony of the Catholics towards the anti-divorce faction. This applies to the Catholics as well. Furthermore, many people prefer the path of silence to that of dishonour; Fanfani, by nature, always speaks, and does so alone; Lombardi maintains a dominant stance on this issue, which is certainly incompatible with the traditional position of the DC. Therefore, there is a risk that the most extreme positions will emerge – those least open to dialogue and to understanding. This is the political situation, and we cannot accept it. The decision to hold a referendum on a matter such as this has meant choosing political radicalisation. Hoping that this clash which, in reality, can only be political will not be politicised is delusional. On the contrary, it is worth remembering that, as things progress, everyone is realising that this test is, and will be, divisive. Indeed, they used to say, ‘No, you know, it’s a civilised debate; there won’t be any major difficulties.’ In the meantime, you only have to look around to see that a test like this divides Catholics. I would say that Catholics are deeply divided, not only among their political representatives, but also among their ecclesiastical ones. This risks humiliating the Church, because it involves it in a battle which, however civil it may be claimed to be, will undoubtedly have serious consequences, from a religious point of view, for the Church’s position in Italy. It also pits the DC against all the constitutional parties, almost arm in arm with the fascists, and I believe that, for a certain section of Italian Catholics, there could not be a more divisive outcome than this.

Events are proving those who fought to avoid a referendum of this kind right. This is not because the referendum is illegitimate –

this is certainly not the case – but because Parliament had the right and the duty to also amend the Fortuna–Baslini Law. This would have avoided such an ordeal. Therefore, allow me here, in the first, concise part of this report, to recall the series of mistakes, instances of inaction, and failures to take on responsibility on the part of the DC and the other political forces that have led to this confrontation. We are now in the midst of the election campaign, and we will say for the last time – and then we will not talk about it again – what could and should have been done to avoid the referendum. Indeed, politics does not happen by itself, and we are now at the heart of a clash that cannot allow us to forget reality, however stark it may be.

I will no longer discuss this assessment of the past from today on. However, this does not mean that, by setting aside our assessment of past responsibilities, we have, so to speak, shelved those responsibilities. These responsibilities will remain very specific, even in the post-referendum assessment. In fact, when we will pick up the pieces, whatever the outcome, and when we will try to overcome the negative consequences of this trial, we will also have to remember – in order to learn a lesson and gain experience – whose responsibilities it was for not having prevented such an ordeal. To sum up, and also to recall the role I modestly played in this, I will say that, for reasons of fairness and justice, we cannot focus solely on the reticence of the recent period. I said this in an interview with *L'Espresso*, and I say it often: Fanfani certainly bears serious responsibility from this point of view. It was no coincidence that the Palazzo Giustiniani pact included a reference to religious peace, which meant precisely this – an attempt to resolve a dispute between the political parties through parliamentary channels. Fanfani undoubtedly bears responsibility for not having tried hard enough, for not having clarified where the difficulties of the attempt lay, for, in the end, never having spoken to the party leaders or to the national council about everything that had happened before the party leadership made its famous, unanimous decision to go to a referendum. In a way, he never reassessed from the outset why the attempts were to be considered unsuccessful.

When I requested that leadership meeting – where I do not belong, but which I believe is the highest form of democratic expression in a political party – I also asked that, before deciding on the referendum, the leadership should take stock of why all the attempts that had been made to avoid it had to be considered unsuccessful, and why my own proposal for a meeting of all the leaders of the parliamentary groups in the constitutional arc, to try – even at the last minute – to find a parliamentary solution, had not been accepted. Therefore, I do not deny that the seriousness of the responsibility extends to the last moment. However, if we want to look to the future, the mistakes lie much further back. Particularly when assessing what we will do next, we must say that the first and most serious mistake – again, due to the DC's failure to take on responsibility and perhaps its lack of courage – was to link the introduction of divorce into Italian law to the referendum as a *quid pro quo*. The agreement between Rumor and De Martino essentially deceived the two parties into believing they could overcome what was a genuine obstacle. But in fact, the only real, serious *quid pro quo* for Catholic democrats, and for a party like the DC, in relation to the possible introduction of divorce into civil law was family law reform, namely softening the issue of the indissolubility of marriage in certain specific cases, within the overall framework of the law.

The issue was not addressed at this level for lack of courage. But this could have produced a higher synthesis of the opposing positions of Catholics who defended the unity of the family and of lay people who claimed an element of freedom. Since then, all that has been done is to keep postponing payment of a bill of exchange that we are all now about to pay. That payment has been deferred, among other things, through a whole series of highly mysterious manoeuvres that will undoubtedly be the subject of very interesting study by future historians. In fact, almost surreptitiously, immediately after the introduction of divorce and the simultaneous passing of the law establishing the referendum, the idea began to circulate across all the parties that a way would later be found to prevent this referendum

from taking place, as if the Italian people could be given an instrument of direct democracy (by the way, the value of such instrument, in my opinion, has been aggrandised beyond measure). I will always remind everyone that the referendum can also be used for blatant anti-democratic operations. For years, through referendums, neighbouring Switzerland denied women the right to vote – a right that is one of the most important elements in the exercise of democracy. So, by extolling this instrument of direct democracy and offering it to significant sections of the electorate who are also critical of the party system, the constitution, Parliament, etc., it was like handing a toy to those who could make use of it. It was no use saying, in the end, that we would find a way to avoid the referendum. All the more so because the periods when attempts were made to avoid the referendum, using the only constitutionally correct and possible route – a substantial parliamentary revision of the Fortuna–Baslini Law – occurred under circumstances that were, at the very least, suspicious.

We saw a major effort to revise the Fortuna–Baslini Law on the eve of the election of the President of the Republic. Some might even imagine that, if a certain price had been paid at the time, this law might also have been revised. What is certain, however, is that once the Head of State had been elected, the same protagonists in this mediating effort forgot for a long time that amending the Fortuna–Baslini Law had an objective rationale of its own, beyond any counterpart that might have been obtained from it.

In addition to the aforementioned initial error of linking the introduction of divorce to the referendum rather than to the reform of family law, and in addition to the mysterious and suspicious course of all the attempts to amend the Fortuna–Baslini Law in Parliament, which were abandoned halfway through and then left without any plausible explanation – I would add the latest, rather serious act of inaction on this issue. In my opinion, this came in the most recent period, after a proposal – one that was, in truth, not insignificant, at least for some in the DC – made personally by the secretary of the Socialist Party, the Hon. Francesco De Martino. Alongside the

proposals put forward by the Communists and the secular parties on protecting children, providing safeguards for the weaker spouse, and improving the practical application, on the civil side, of many provisions of the Fortuna–Baslini Law, De Martino also advanced – for the first time, in fact – the undoubtedly interesting argument that spouses’ freedom of religious choice has a certain legal significance, even within the framework of a law that is the same for everyone. This would have made it possible to lay the legal foundations for a consensual revision of the Concordat, following the Holy See’s unilateral exercise of its sovereignty in denouncing an infringement. This infringement was not, in truth, recognised by the Constitutional Court, which on two occasions deemed the principle of divorce and the Fortuna–Baslini Law to be compatible with the Italian constitutional order. However, De Martino’s latest proposal would certainly have made it possible to resume the discussion on the relationship between the state and the Church. I will address this subject in the final part of this report. We should not deem this relationship as having been erased following a referendum like the one we are currently holding. Likewise, we should not consider erased the consensual revision of the Concordat on a sensitive point: even without introducing dual marriage legislation, it would still have ensured respectful treatment for religious marriages, while also allowing Catholics the right to exercise the options provided for by civil law for all Italian citizens. The fact that we also abandoned the opportunity to give the revision of the Fortuna–Baslini Law a more reassuring tone for Catholics ultimately led to the gradual squandering and destruction of all the opportunities that could have properly avoided the need for a referendum. There was also no final verification, because if that parliamentary meeting I had proposed among all the parties across the constitutional spectrum, had taken place, and if the various responsibilities had been acknowledged there – because there is no doubt that even one section, the most hardline section of the pro-divorce camp, was pushing for a referendum and did not want an agreement – then we would at least have had that

final verification. You should also remember that document signed by a number of MPs – Socialists, Republicans and secular MPs – who would have opposed the so-called ‘marriage’ between Catholics and Communists on an issue like this. That final verification would at least have enabled us to go before the electorate with a more credible message about all the efforts made to avoid a referendum of this kind.

Moving to the second part of the report, there is the equally serious responsibility of having, for so many years, shelved and failed to bring to completion the reform of family law. Such a completion would undoubtedly put us in a position to make a positive case to the electorate about the family, rather than merely defend ourselves on the matter of yes or no to divorce.

So, we have seen that we have set aside this series of missed opportunities – which, out of common decency, I shall not mention again from now on during the election campaign – but we have not shelved them. Indeed, they remain political liabilities that we will one day have to reassess in terms of what still needs to be done after 12 May. Furthermore, this series of missed opportunities reveals multiple liabilities within the DC. I must say, without making any particular claims, that on the missed opportunities I have mentioned, some prominent figures from the democratic left did indeed take a public stance. However, unfortunately, these positions have always seemed rather isolated within the DC, partly due to the silence of influential and significant figures within the party who, like us, although not on the left, should have felt a duty to defend the DC’s secular and democratic position. I am also referring to the majority of the Doroteo group. This group tends to distance themselves from Fanfani’s integralism in private conversations but, in public, when decisions need to be made, never takes a position and never makes a choice. So, the responsibilities are very broad. The Christian Democrat left played its part, even though it was unsuccessful on all these occasions because its appeals went unheeded. We are currently trying to reflect together on what we need to do today and tomorrow, without forgetting the responsibilities of the past. This is why I could

not restrain myself from this assessment based on a historical reconstruction. This is also because, as I will say at the end, tomorrow, in more difficult conditions, we will have to do what we did not have the courage to do yesterday. Hence, remembering the past is certainly appropriate. Let me now come to the second and more important part of my reflection, namely what should we do in the referendum campaign, what stance should we adopt, and how should we assess the position of Christian Democrats in the face of such a serious issue of conscience. Not only this question does challenge us with the problems of the family; it also reduces to a simple 'yes' or 'no' an issue that cannot be reduced to 'yes' or 'no'. In fact, a 'yes' or a 'no' detached from the 'how' makes no sense – or will only make sense to superficial people, but not to those who approach these matters with a concern for conscience. It also confronts us with issues of conscience that go beyond the family issue, in terms of the common good more generally.

In this battle, the DC risks taking an unnatural position, cutting its ties with what I would call the more sensitive, more morally attentive, and more culturally lively parts of the Catholic world. It risks instead echoing the most hardline, most anti-democratic positions one can imagine.

It is no coincidence that Gedda and Lombardi, who could be seen as De Gasperi's historical enemies in terms of political alignment or conception of politics, lead us to this risk. The possible consequent fracture in the social and civic fabric of Italy would cause irreparable damage far beyond the family unit.

We have always been taught, and continue to be taught, that the common good must be seen in all its complexity and that no issue concerning the family alone can be separated from safeguarding the common good as a whole. We also know that democratic concord, religious peace, tolerance in the country, and the development of democracy are fundamental and essential elements of the common good. Therefore, we must emphasise that we are in a situation of considerable unease and difficulty when it comes to making choices

in which we need to be fully confident.

I believe that the first lesson we need to learn from this diaspora, which has Catholic democrats themselves taking up so many different positions, is tolerance, mutual respect, and an effort to understand the reasons that can lead to different attitudes. Here I must say straight away that, to be completely frank with one another, I believe we need to draw a clear distinction even within the broad spectrum of Catholic democrats, and I will not make the fundamentalist mistake of assuming that Catholics, simply because they are Catholics, are Christian Democrats – something we have always rejected. The DC is not the party of all Catholics; there are Catholics who are right-wing and are not Christian Democrats. We must say the same about all Catholic democrats: you can be a Catholic without being a democrat, but there are certain positions that must be carefully respected.

However, if we look at our history, we need to be aware of the following genuine, substantive political difference. On the one hand, a Catholic democrat is any individual citizen that even without choosing a political party takes a position before the state and the law. Once this person has resolved his issue of conscience, has resolved everything. On the other hand, a Catholic democrat who is active in a party, takes on historical responsibilities, and seeks to change legislation. This person has an objectively different role. I do not believe in the distinction that considers all Catholic democrats to be DC members or that all Catholic democrats are not DC members and do not take on the responsibilities typical of a political party.

The difference in roles and liability is clear, and we need to assess this difference with much serenity, especially given that freedom of choice and freedom of conscience must be fully respected. And I believe that, precisely because of this honest distinction I have tried to make between Catholic democrats who are politically and legislatively active, perhaps there is a gradation of responsibility here too. I believe that the responsibility of a Christian Democrat who is also a legislator, who sits in Parliament, and who has led a campaign

on the Fortuna–Baslini Law, is greater than that of a Christian Democrat who may also have their own particular opinion on the matter.

Let me add one thing. Oddly enough, Fanfani is constantly criticising the other parties for not allowing their members to decide freely on this issue. However, the DC, which should be setting an example, not only demands discipline but also ridicules those Catholics who, with a troubled conscience, take a different stance. From this point of view, there may be different degrees of responsibility. And yet, since I want to take on mine, I have never shied away from taking on responsibility, and I believe that in the past I have also offered some testimonies in defence of the autonomy of politics from clerical encroachment or the interference of ecclesiastical hierarchies. I believe that we must not neglect or forget our positions as Christian Democrats, unless we decide to hand over to the right the role of Catholic democrats, or unless we propose to return – and those positions were also respectable – to the stance, as a matter of conscience, of the Catholics of the Risorgimento. These were also morally consistent but relied on absolute detachment from responsibility for the formation of the unitary national state, even though they had nothing in common with the old temporalists who wanted to defend the temporal power of the Church.

It is no coincidence that, even back then, the establishment of the Popular Party differed sharply from the clericals, who wanted to defend temporal power, and also from the Catholics, who wanted only to assert a matter of conscience and were therefore willing to accept, if necessary, a state created by others, but who did not consider the question of how to be present as active protagonists in political life. So, today, the DC stands at a crossroads: it needs to distance itself from any temptation to fall back into clericalism, but also from the temptation to reduce to an individual matter – however respectable for an individual – what cannot be so for a political party. And here I want to say at once what our stance is, or rather what our stance should be. I am speaking very frankly, although I believe that

anyone who comes here later to speak on this subject will not easily find the thread in a tangle that is objectively complex. In the meantime, I have to say that, when it comes to a decision like the one before us, the position of Italian Catholics must be firmly anchored in the principle of freedom of conscience. Here, we risk returning to old controversies in the face of the bishops' deliberation, which, at the doctrinal level, calls on Italian Catholics to respect certain values. We cannot follow those who challenge the Church's right and duty to express its positions on doctrinal matters. We are among the Catholics who believe that not everything that comes from the Church's magisterium is necessarily doctrinal, and that even within the Church's teachings, there is room for debate when it comes to the practical application of certain moral principles. However, when the bishops call for due consideration to be given to the defence of religious doctrinal values, and – to the extent that they do so, at least in part, because not everyone agrees even on this – to the social value too, of what is commonly called natural law, of the indissolubility of marriage, they are certainly not going beyond the balance of powers between the state and the Church.

Of course, we would be going back to a past – a past that we must not revisit in our country – if this doctrinal warning, this reminder of principles, were to result in an organisational and electoral directive that in any way interfered with the freedom of conscience of individual Catholics. I do not use many quotations, but let us keep to quotations from Bergamo – later I shall quote Monsignor Alberto Bellini at greater length. So, Monsignor Gaetano Bonicelli explained to those who thought they had not understood the bishops' decision that it is the Church's consistent teaching to respect the final instance in every decision, namely freedom of conscience.

The Church has always taught that no one can interfere with a person's conscience. The Church is there to enlighten, to teach, to guide, but it can never infringe upon a person's freedom of conscience, which remains inviolable for every Catholic. There are

texts to support this – I have brought the books with me – and there are very specific passages from the Second Vatican Council that establish freedom of conscience as an absolutely inviolable freedom from a doctrinal point of view. However, when we claim this freedom of conscience for everyone – and I mean everyone, whether they vote one way or another, otherwise we would be falling into the opposite extreme – there are things we need to consider very carefully. We cannot underestimate the complexity of the position of those Catholic democrats, who today, invoking freedom of conscience, refuse the imposition in civil legislation of a value that they claim as their own and that they hold and defend as a religious belief. Catholic democrats such as La Valle, Pratesi, Scoppola and others adopt the stance of those who argue that we shall follow and respect the religious belief underlying our understanding of marriage, regardless of the legislation in which it is expressed. Incidentally, this legislation is not repressive; it does not force anyone to choose divorce, it guarantees a right for those who wish to resort to it, but it does not impose it.

Those Catholic democrats say, ‘It is a teaching of the Council that we should not demand from the law and the state authority, respect for a belief of faith or a position of conscience that we safeguard ourselves. Indeed, we safeguard it all the more insofar as we are free to conceive of this relationship as a relationship of self-giving’. Certainly, this does not contradict the Church’s doctrinal teaching, at least as far as the religious conception of marriage is concerned. Monsignor Bellini has written some very valuable and important things on this point. Indeed, unlike the secular view, there is no doubt that the more difficult family life is, the more Christians should see love and mutual self-giving as the strongest bond, but this can never be imposed by law. This is either a conviction of faith or a conviction of conscience, and is therefore a way of building the family founded on goodness and common sense. It either exists or it does not exist, but without it, it is clear that the family will not emerge from its crisis. In this regard, it would be very helpful if, in addition to its doctrinal

reminders, the Church were to make a greater commitment to launching a pastoral care programme for the family to defend the religious conception of marriage in terms of education and preparation in all areas, so as to build families that are healthy in the way they conduct themselves, rather than in the way the law ultimately protects them.

So I do not think these Catholics – who, by the way, all seem to me to believe in God far more than the fascists – can be criticised on that score for voting to defend the family in this referendum.

There may be a point of difference, here. Those Catholics are right in saying that a matter of faith cannot be translated into a legal provision, and that none of us has the right to impose on others something that is valid for us but cannot be valid for them. From the perspective of the rule of law, based on freedom and pluralism, this is certainly correct. However, I am quoting here an unimpeachable voice: Monsignor Bellini. He is very clear in defending the religious conception of marriage and, from a historical perspective, in assessing whether or not it is appropriate to impose by law on others a conception of the family that they do not accept. He goes on to say, however, in a spirit of tolerance and openness, that there may also be cases where Catholics seek to assert their particular conception of indissolubility in legislation.

Indeed, as Monsignor Bellini also writes, where a law imposes indissolubility on others and is not in itself a religious duty, he rejects the idea that the motivation could be religious; rather, it can be a civil duty aimed at developing values and conditions in society that are conducive to the growth of the human personality. Believers, too, must work for the common good, so if they consider a law on the indissolubility of marriage necessary, they have a duty to support it. Monsignor Bellini explains that, while there may historically be a certain conception of the family, a very delicate and precise discussion opens up for us here. As I have already said, I appreciate and respect the position of the Catholic democrats who will vote to defend the principle of divorce in Italian legislation. From the point

of view of their religious beliefs, they do not feel that this law affects their understanding of the family, and so they are voting in this spirit. I have already acknowledged that, in a situation as complex and diverse as the Italian one, there may be some truth to their claim that it is important for Catholic democrats not to use the law to impose on others a conception of the family that they cannot accept without seeing in the state an element of constraint. However, I do not believe that this can be the view of militant Catholic democrats in a party like the DC, which is not a pro-divorce party. We need to be clear on this point. Even the Communists do not ask the DC – indeed, they have never asked it – to give up its conception of the family. Indeed, it would be inconceivable that, from the perspective of social and civic value, we should not be able to defend a conception of the family that is not a secondary element in the overall structure of society and the state. Therefore, we cannot say that the issue of the family can be resolved solely in terms of individual freedom or choice of faith. There is also the issue of the social, civil, and legislative construction of the family. This cannot fail to be of interest to a political party. Individual citizens do not enter here, once they have resolved their issues of conscience or faith. But this issue must concern those Catholics who have to work on legislative reform and who may also have this vision of the family to defend, i.e. a social, community-based vision, which must be enshrined in law.

Now, this is precisely where the problem lies, because if we are to make families a social asset to be defended through legislation, we must not do so in a dogmatic way. We should not assume that we are the only ones who have a particular conception of the family; and it is time to stop portraying even those secularists who support divorce as destroyers of the family. Serious secularists have always viewed divorce as an exception to a rule of family unity that must, after all, be protected. It is absolutely not true that everyone on the pro-divorce side is an extremist. It would suffice here to consider the profound diversity of views on the family: while still recognising the overriding principle of the indissolubility of the marital bond, there

are Communists who see the family as a social institution, and secular parties of the Risorgimento that have a contractual view of the family, which is united and divided according to the interests of the spouses and not out of respect for a social entity that deserves to be protected. However, if we adopt this approach, then we must abandon integralism and understand that defending our own conception of the family also requires respect for the conceptions of others. Our defence requires comparing different points of view in order to find a solution to the issue of family law, through dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect, rather than through radicalisation or division. In line with this reasoning, some theologians have stated very clearly that, in a legislative framework based on the unity of the family, on the protection of children, on the safeguarding of the weaker spouse, and – let us add this – on the importance of the spouses’ religious choices, it would not be difficult to accept the lesser evil of a divorce criterion. This, in very specific cases, would allow for the dissolution of the marital bond, which, from a moral and religious point of view, we cannot accept, but which, from a civil point of view, we can and indeed must accept.

Therefore, on the civil and democratic level, the point is not that the DC, as a political party, should set aside its own conception of the family. Nor is it that it should be prevented from ensuring, or seeking to ensure, that this conception prevails, while respecting the general public interest. The problem lies in the ways in which one tends to impose this view. I set out the long history of missed opportunities to avoid the referendum, and as everyone knows, I proposed an approach that did not reject the principle of divorce in legislation – because a pure and simple repeal of the principle of divorce would never have passed. I rather sought to make the principle of divorce acceptable as an exception or as a lesser evil, as theorists put it. However, this would be done within a legislative conception of the family that would guarantee Catholics the full compliance with the principles of tolerance and pluralism and the protection of the social and civil good of the family. This did not happen, and I tell you that

this will be the problem of the future. This problem clearly distinguishes a Catholic democrat who, after voting on 12 May will go back to his life, from a Catholic democrat who, as a member of Parliament, will have to start afresh in engaging with the other parties to find a solution to the problem.

This is where we must be very clear about what the democratic left's stance on this issue could be – and, in my view, ought to be. And this requires far greater courage than has been demonstrated thus far.

Even though our institutional and public stance must be consistent with the position we have taken in Parliament, we must clearly differentiate ourselves on two points. We have been highly critical of the Fortuna–Baslini Law, and we refuse to accept, with a 'yes' or a 'no', a law that we cannot support because of a whole range of objections. What is more, this is widely recognised by the pro-divorce camp. In fact, the Carrettoni proposal and De Martino's subsequent proposal clearly show that there is room among pro-divorce supporters to amend this law – room that was not found within the DC. Yet, at a time when others accepted part of the DC's approach, the DC too should have accepted part of others' views by acknowledging the pro-divorce principle in civil legislation. However, two positions must be absolutely and clearly distinguished. They lead us to be critical of Fanfani at this time, not only because of his past responsibilities but also because of the formulation of the referendum campaign. We reiterate our choice to repeal the Fortuna–Baslini Law. Of course, we would have preferred repeal it in Parliament, but we are forced by the current situation and our overall responsibilities to go through the tight constraint of a popular referendum. However, we cannot accept that this campaign is based on failure to respect absolute freedom of conscience. A party founded on freedom should protect this principle much more than it currently does.

Here, among my papers, I also have a copy of *La Discussione*, one of the latest issues. I wonder whether, with cartoons of this sort,

we can convince those who need convincing. With a hard-line campaign like the one we are running, not only do we no longer distinguish ourselves from the fascists, from Gedda, or from Gabrio Lombardi, but we do nothing but confirm the choice of those who would already be convinced regardless of our decisions. In other words, none of that constructive reasoning, seriousness, and effort to persuade that stops short at the issue of freedom of conscience, which we absolutely must uphold, comes across here. We cannot help but look with some dismay at the fact that, for example, not only does *Il Popolo* publish the speeches of Gabrio Lombardi – who, among other things, advocates secularist, separatist views on the relationship between the state and the Church that are not in keeping with a party like the DC – but no mention is made of any of the positions of dissent and concern that exist among Catholics. A newspaper belonging to the party of Sturzo and De Gasperi is being outdone, in terms of liberality, by a Catholic newspaper like *Avvenire*, which is fighting its own battle but also respects the dissenting views within the Catholic world. This looks to me like evidence that we must not meddle with the hard-line stance that has shaped this election campaign.

We cannot say on the political stage that Catholics who live a deeply religious life, who have stood shoulder to shoulder with the DC in democratic struggles, and who are exercising their freedom of choice, should be judged by us. This would be all the more unjust given that we have shown little courage politically, democratically, and in parliament. We cannot judge them as poor Catholics or poor democrats, when their entire lives are guided by a different logic.

We need to try to persuade others, but to do that we must first and foremost respect their freedom of conscience and their freedom to choose. We cannot claim that those who do not vote in a certain way, or who do not enjoy the party's favour, should be considered lost forever to democratic dialogue and cannot aspire to a democratic stance.

So, we differ – and we must differ, and we must say this very clearly – from the extremism of this campaign, because we believe

that the party of Sturzo and De Gasperi – to refer to two classic approaches – must keep open a dialogue based on reason, tolerance, attempt to persuade, not on calls to order, not on denial, not on attitudes that even the Church has now abandoned. We risk becoming more clerical than traditional clericalism if we do not respect this freedom to vote with the utmost seriousness. So, we will do our utmost; we will try to persuade people; we will try to explain why we are in favour of a repeal that does not close the chapter but reopens it in Parliament, and reopens it in Parliament on the basis of the many missed opportunities that I mentioned in the first part of my speech. However, on the issue of absolute respect for freedom of choice, freedom of decision, and respect for this freedom, as well as for communicating the reasons for this freedom, we cannot follow either the extremism of Lombardi and Gedda nor the one-sided, fundamentalist approach that the party's current secretary is giving to the entire election campaign. Incidentally, I should point out that this censorship in the party press on the issue of freedom not only affects Catholic democrats who dissent, but also those Catholic democrats who are active in the party and who hold different views on this issue. So much so that, in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek but not entirely light-hearted manner, just the day before yesterday, I sent back to Fanfani the form asking each Member of Parliament to indicate the towns where we will be going to fulfil our duty of informing and civic service to the voters, who will then vote in freedom of conscience. There, I indicated the four cities, leaving out Arezzo because it seemed a bit provocative, but I added the following condition: that the party newspaper, *Il Popolo* publish summaries of the speeches I will give on these occasions. This is because, at the moment, *Il Popolo* is not only censoring the speeches of those who vote 'no', but is also censoring the speeches of those who say 'yes' for reasons that do not sit well with that extremist approach. And this is extremely dangerous. Then there's *La Discussione*, which in my view is not even a newspaper. It is more like a satirical rag in the hands of Ciccardini, who uses it to vent his repressive, authoritarian ambitions.

In my opinion, he should also be removed from the National Council, because it is unacceptable that the newspaper founded by De Gasperi, meant to encourage debate and respect everyone, stoops to the level of *L'Asino* and *Il Becco Giallo* but in reverse. This is clearly an affront to our democratic tradition.

So, firstly, precisely because of our loyal conduct within the DC, we must demand the utmost freedom of conscience for everyone, and we must respect the decisions of those who vote, even if they vote in a way that differs from the party's appeal, which the party, perhaps also due to the lack of credibility of its past actions, is unable to win acceptance for. The second issue on which we need to take a stand before it is too late is our commitment for after the referendum. Many people are convinced that, once the referendum is over, the only issue will be whether or not to keep the centre-left alive. No, dear friends, we must say this straight away, before we are misunderstood once again, and even if we remain in the minority. After the referendum, whatever the outcome – and the outcome will inevitably be close – the issues of the family, family law, and the relationship between the state and the Church – in other words, the fundamental issues of our political commitment – will resurface, along with those of overall political balance. Here, too, we are debunking certain simplifications that, in my view, are highly superficial. Now it is being claimed that we have to be against the Fortuna–Baslini bill and against divorce, which is a bourgeois institution. I wish we are not starting the process the other way round, that is, to begin by discarding what the bourgeoisie may have left us as a positive legacy – namely, a sense of freedom and the rule of law – in order to keep alive everything that they, on the other hand, sought to eradicate from society.

We need to have the courage to say that if the family is in crisis, it is not in crisis solely over the legal matter of the indissoluble bond. Just look at the economic and social structure, customs, and the very sense of life of our country: the crisis of the family lies elsewhere, not just here. When we criticise the Fortuna–Baslini Law in terms of

children and the weaker spouse protection, the subordination of women, and similar issues – which also make a big audience impact – we cannot forget that by repealing the Fortuna–Baslini Law, we will not return to a legislation that protects all the things we reproach the Fortuna–Baslini Law for not protecting. Rather, we would be returning to an anachronistic understanding of the Code, and we must not forget that everything we are asking of civil law today is not even applied by canon law or by the practice of the Roman Rota, which ultimately does not concern itself with these matters. Therefore, we must take this up again with great seriousness and carry forward a bill that defends our vision of the family more than we might imagine. For example, at the heart of family law – whether or not divorce exists – is the joint ownership of property. Family is a matter of contract in the typically bourgeois conception, not because it can be dissolved or not, but because it lacks a social vision of the family. Think about emigration. Think about economic and social injustices. When we look around and see why the family is in crisis, including from the point of view of social mores, we have to say that, whether we vote yes or no, and especially if we return to the old code, we have absolutely not pursued a policy to protect family unity in modern terms. Furthermore, a party like the DC, after more than twenty years in power, has never implemented and has never pursued such a policy.

So, we need to resume the discussion, and we must not forget that this is a clear, non-evasive assumption of responsibility. This led Berlinguer and De Martino, faced with the troubled consciences of many Catholics, to state that, should the pro-divorce side win, they would be willing to review the Fortuna–Baslini Law on points that could be crucial for our conception of the family. It is a serious matter – I have asked for this, and I am asking again – that, during the referendum campaign, the DC did not publicly declare its willingness, on this point, to reopen discussions with lay people and the left, so that, even if the repeal side wins, family legislation can be created that takes due account of the needs of Catholics, but also of secularists

and of those who do not share our conception of the family.

People say, 'But you want to introduce a second version of divorce.' We must have the courage to say that, under a different legislation and without prejudice to certain fundamental non-religious reasons that are not affected by civil law, from the point of view of the social conception of the family, we can accept the principle of divorce as a lesser evil. Only, it must be part of a policy to protect the family and its dignity, which is not only legal but also social. Therefore, we need to raise the issue again immediately, not least to avoid being accused of hypocrisy later – that is, of turning a blind eye during the election campaign and then bringing the issue back up in Parliament. In fact, the situation will follow this logic: for the campaign supporters, Fanfani occasionally boasts that he did not use his repeal majority in Parliament to abolish divorce. However, this is an issue that applies not only to the present but also to the future. In fact, if we repeal the Fortuna–Baslini law on family legislation we only have two choices. We go back to the clerical-fascist majority that we have already rejected, or we seek another majority in Parliament, which would force us to come to terms with the left. This may be willing to respect our views only if not faced with a fundamentalist interlocutor who disregards the views of others. And here the debate restarts on all the missed opportunities we have had in the past. We have neglected issues of this kind far too much, and these include the question of proper dialogue between the Church and the state on such matters. Let us not delude ourselves. For example, a 'yes' or a 'no' in the referendum battle will not lead to setting aside that other problem. This latter risks becoming serious, again, due to the DC's inaction on revising the Concordat between the Holy See and the state, which no longer reflects changes in both democratic life and religious and ecclesiastical life. Perhaps here too, when the damage is irreparable, we will remember that we wasted years on a revision that would have enabled us to improve the relationship between the state and the Church, or at the very least that we underestimated the balance of power needed to achieve these

objectives. Let us tell the whole truth: the Catholics who are protesting today against the introduction of divorce on the grounds that it would be contrary to Article 7 of the Constitution – which is not true, as the Constitutional Court has already ruled that the correct interpretation is different – are forgetting to mention that if we had gone to the Constituent Assembly with the same political alignment as we are going to the referendum with, Article 7 would not even have been included in the Constitution in the first place. Article 7 was introduced, and, in introducing it, the Communists – first and foremost – and the secular forces – somewhat reluctantly – recognised the sovereignty of the Church and the proper relationship with the state, also giving up some of their own particular interests. This happened because they had fully learned the Constitution's lesson of tolerance, which is what leads the DC to always remember Sturzo's teachings. Sturzo always opposed Catholics in politics representing only their own particular interests; instead, he wanted them to take a national view of their problems. He also taught us that, while we can express our views freely, we cannot expect the state to be shaped in our image and likeness against the wishes and rights of others.

So, the Constitution's lesson in tolerance, its substantive lesson on the problems facing the family, and the common good in general – to renew a link in our country between Catholic democrats, secular citizens and the left, in the direction of substantive respect for Article 7 – lead us to say that we must distance ourselves from the hardline campaign that focuses solely on repeal, by stating from the outset what we will do once repeal has occurred. Our action should aim not only at defending the centre-left balance, but also at resolving the problems of the family. This now requires an understanding between secular citizens and Catholics. This means that we need to do tomorrow, in more difficult conditions, what yesterday we did not want to do for lack of courage, of imagination, or of political initiative. I do not believe that, in the event of a victory for the repeal campaign, it will be easy to save the centre-left and its political

balance, by imagining that this page can simply be erased.

Here, we need to be careful about getting stuck on labels. It may be deeply moving to hear Fanfani constantly repeat that the centre-left must not be tampered with and that the referendum must not make any difference. But politics is never merely a matter of desire, and let us not forget – to give a somewhat irreverent example – that when Nixon was bombing North Vietnam, he always said he wanted peace and not war there. However, in order to secure the ceasefire, he had to stop bombing.

As party secretary, Forlani never denied... he never claimed that the DC did not want an alliance with the Socialists; he only said that the DC proposed the five-party alliance, the alliance with the Liberals, as a way of avoiding an alliance with the Socialists. Now, it is no longer enough to say that we want to keep the centre-left intact. We need to create the conditions under which the centre-left can survive and continue. Undoubtedly, if we do not want the divide that opened up with the referendum to become permanent, a sensitive issue like the one that arose will once again present the DC with the challenge of continuing a dialogue with the secular forces and with those who do not share our views. At the same time we should keep separate the levels of religious beliefs on the indissolubility of marriage, which apply to us in the same way as they do to Catholics who will vote in favour of divorce, from the secular and historical perspectives that need to take into account the current situation. And so, dear friends, I come back to my conclusion, having said that we must strongly justify our actions while respecting the views of those Catholics who do not accept our appeal, but also asking these Catholics not to fall into the opposite error of thinking that anyone who does not vote 'no' is not a Catholic, is not a democrat, or is forever lost to the hegemony of a party abandoned to its fate.

The situation is hard for everyone: I believe that we too, as members of the DC, deserve the respect we show to those who, having no political responsibilities, make a different choice. But why does the discussion keep coming back to the party? Because, my dear

friends, this referendum on divorce is the first warning sign about the historic situation in our country. This is becoming apparent, including among the most positive Catholics, and it only takes the jokes and quips by Bartolo Ciccardini to dismiss the views of Scoppola, La Valle and many other religious figures, from Cardinal Pellegrino to others, who, on this issue, are putting forward a point that is not ephemeral or fleeting in the development of the Catholic world and of Italian Catholicism. Faced with a situation like this, there may be a resurgence of the political temptation to view religious and theological awakening as a reason to abandon political responsibilities, i.e. to leave to others the task of doing what Catholics are not supposed to do in politics. Divorce is not a minor issue. The way Catholics reason about divorce is: 'Ultimately, we don't need to take action; all we need is a space that guarantees us freedom, and within that freedom, we do what our conscience tells us.' What applies to divorce could apply to socialism tomorrow.

What is the Christian movement for socialism, if not the decision that, since socialism is ultimately superior to capitalism, it can also be accepted, provided that certain values are respected – values that Catholics, as a minority, uphold? We therefore find ourselves at a crossroads that, not coincidentally, brings us back to the question of conscience in the Risorgimento. Faced with a DC that risks becoming increasingly a party of power, integralism and clientelism, rather than an instrument for democratic presence, Catholics may be tempted by individualistic and isolationist impulses to give up the practice of politics and to rely instead on other balances, on other forces entrusted by history with carrying forward a situation of reform or transformation. So, at this point, we have to say that, however difficult our militant position within the DC may be, it must be reassessed at all costs, despite the many difficulties.

One of the mistakes made in 1924–25 was precisely to abandon those sections of the Catholic population that went on to become the mass base of authoritarianism, precisely because this substantial social force was not kept in support of the DC. It is not enough for a

few clear-sighted and morally irreproachable intellectual minorities – who, for their part, are in the right, not least because of the DC's failure to deliver – to make the right choices. We know that, even when dealing with socialism, with the Communists, and with those who want to build a democratic path to socialism, what matters is that there are interlocutors who represent a substantial political force, with real historical weight, and not just minorities who can accept the idea of the Polish path to socialism – where, in the end, building a different society is reduced to the risk of a concordat in reverse.

So, we are still at a crossroads: should we quietly settle our individual issues of conscience by offloading them onto a vote, which is the simpler option? Or should we continue, despite the pain and discomfort, a political militancy within the DC, to save the DC and ensure that it does not isolate itself behind an integralist fence, but keep the debate open with the other forces, making them respect certain DC values? Here we return to the issue of democratic tolerance and freedom versus integralism – an integralism that must be assessed with great objectivity.

I have the impression that, among the changes that history is recording, a rather profound diversification of the classic Fanfani integralism is emerging. We insist on fighting it, to the point of dressing it up in Gaullist clothes. Incidentally, those clothes would be rather ill-fitting, given the different stature of the two personalities.

I believe that the most dangerous form of integralism that may emerge in our country is the integralism that aims for an establishment centre-left, rather than for right-wing alternatives. In other words, that seeks to establish relations with other parties on the basis of vassalage or programmatic efficiency. It neglects the values of pluralism, distinction and debate, and the fact that everyone brings their own values into the life of the state – which, indeed, has always been the DC's most genuine tradition.

So, dear friends – and I really must conclude here – this is why Catholic democrats are facing difficult choices at the moment. We have a trying month ahead of us. After 12 May, all the problems we

deluded ourselves into thinking we could put aside will be back on the table, and we will have to address them. We need, at least among those who act in good conscience, to understand one another on the basis of the principle of tolerance. For our part, we believe that continuing to be active and committed within the DC, maintaining political engagement even at this difficult juncture – which differs from the hard-line positions that unfortunately seem to be taking the place of civil debate – is a way to preserve a role for the DC. The party must not at all sever its ties with those Catholics who currently disagree with us.

Recovery lies in the future. If, in the future, we manage to establish or preserve the democratic and tolerant legacies that we have squandered in the past, perhaps even this dramatic lesson from the divorce referendum will not have been in vain.

*Catholic Democrats: Between Renewal and Debate**

On 11 May 1974, on the eve of the referendum to repeal the divorce law, Luigi Granelli wrote a letter to Professor Paolo Brezzi, a medieval historian from the world of Catholic associations and a leading figure in the 'Catholics for the "No" vote' movement opposing its repeal.

In his letter, sent even before the surprising referendum results were known, Granelli called on dissenting Catholics to 'reopen a debate among us in the aftermath of 12 May, whatever the outcome of the referendum', because 'respect for pluralism' should continue to be 'in any case, the hallmark of a serious, open, and absolutely free discussion'. 'What we need to do,' Granelli added, 'is to build on the traumatic results of the referendum to develop a greater awareness of the independent, democratic role of Catholics within our institutions, a spirit of tolerance and freedom, a powerful religious witness to our shared values, and a new relationship between the state under the Republican Constitution and the Church of the Second Vatican Council.'

An article by Giulio Goria, published in Paese Sera on 12 June 1974, summarised the latest developments in the Italian ecclesiastical and political world following the Plenary Assembly of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI). In fact, its President, Cardinal Antonio Poma, had called for 'a necessary, more careful reflection on pluralism within the Church'. The author of the article also reported on Granelli's letter to Brezzi, interpreting it as an attempt by the left wing of the Christian Democrats to win back the support of those Catholic democrats who, for the DC, would have represented 'free-floating votes'. In another letter –

* 'Ci scrive l'on. Granelli' [The Hon. Granelli wrote to us] in *Paese Sera*, 21 June 1974, p. 3.

anthologised here – to the newspaper's editor, Granelli clearly expressed the meaning of his proposal, dispelling any ambiguity.

Dear Editor,

Due to international commitments, I belatedly read Giulio Gorla's article on Catholic democrats, published in Paese Sera on 12 June. To my disappointment, I found a version of my letter to Professor Brezzi that I cannot simply let pass without comment. This is not a criticism of the columnist, who is, as always, attentive to the positive developments taking place among Italian Catholics, but simply a clarification of my position to correct any misrepresentation. I would therefore be grateful if you could publish this letter of mine, in order to dispel any unfortunate misunderstandings.

Domenico Rosati, who clearly does not know me very well, has expressed the opinion that my letter to Professor Brezzi, written before I knew the result of the 12 May referendum, echoes the Hon. Andreotti's thesis about the so-called 'floating votes'. He dismisses my proposal for dialogue as a feeble attempt to co-opt dissenting factions for political gain. Nothing could be further from my views, which have not changed over time. The full text of my letter is not public, therefore it is worth reiterating that it excluded any instrumental purpose and showed full and absolute respect for the positions of the Catholic democrats who, legitimately, courageously, and with serious reasons, had expressed their 'no' to the repeal of the divorce law. My letter merely proposed a dialogue on an equal footing, where none should instrumentalise the other. This dialogue should occur between these Catholics and the DC members who have remained faithful – on the referendum too, even within party discipline – to the teachings of De Gasperi and Sturzo, in the name of a living cultural and political pluralism and against integralist regression. We continue to consider this proposal for dialogue useful and free of any ulterior motive. We understand the frosty reception our invitation has met, somewhat strangely softened by the counter-invitation of the official DC party to the next Catholic Democrat conference. Nevertheless, we take offence at the misrepresentation

of our intentions.

What does our respectful approach to dissent have to do with the recovery of ‘floating votes’, as the Hon. Andreotti alluded to on other occasions? We simply want to compare ideas with ideas, without infringing on anyone’s freedom of choice, and we consider the a priori rejection of such a comparison to be an integralist residue. To avoid any suspicion of tactical manoeuvring, let us recall that we have always defended the autonomy of Catholic democrats’ political choices from any clerical interference. This, in the very interests of religion itself, and the full legitimacy of the pluralism of those choices. Please allow me to quote a 1967 statement to demonstrate the validity of a belief that is not the result of the controversies surrounding the Referendum.

At the conference organised in Lucca in 1967, I recalled that the autonomy and plurality of political choices among Catholic democrats dated back to Sturzo, although they were reinforced by the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council. I stated verbatim that those Italian Catholics who felt they had to move in this direction ‘in opposition to the DC itself, have every right to do so’, and that ‘if they had the courage not to sit idly by waiting for the appointed hour, but were willing to face the inevitable personal and collective risks, they would undoubtedly help resolve the situation far more effectively than by delivering wishful, moralistic sermons against a misleading sense of unity’ around the DC. We remained consistent with this view even when faced with the difficult choices of the referendum. Why should we change our minds now of all times?

The problem is another. The DC needs to undergo a profound renewal in the face of the positive and vibrant developments under way not only in Italian society but also among Catholic democrats themselves. More, claiming exclusive representation, on its part, would be impossible and detrimental. However, Catholic democrats who legitimately wish to put forward political agendas or ideals that are also alternative to those of the DC cannot, without falling into left-wing integralism, refuse dialogue with all the ideological and political

forces that are working towards a genuine renewal of Italian society.

We do not deny the value of this dialogue, albeit with the modesty that comes from the responsibility we take for our failures, including within the DC. We have long been open to dialogue with all Italian political and ideological forces. Hence, it would make no sense to close ourselves off to Catholic democrats who have disagreed with us, and who still disagree with us as is their right, not least to contribute to an important and credible affirmation of pluralism.

After all, the same problem arises for everyone. One cannot imagine creating an alternative to the DC, or defining, in full autonomy, an effective political role, on the basis of a simple 'no' to the repeal of a law. Indeed, that law has been recognised as inadequate for resolving, in the name of freedom and the sovereignty of the state, the problem of serious family legislation. Rather, why not seek, through dialogue, a mutual definition of roles and vocations, also in discussion with the other popular and democratic forces that are indispensable to the historical development of contemporary Italy?

This, and this alone, is our proposal for dialogue. It may be rejected, but we will not stop looking with interest and respect at the experiences of other Catholic democrats. However, in that case, it would be helpful for everyone to explain the reasons of such a refusal. Above all, it would be honest not to confuse this with the idea of winning back 'floating' votes, which belongs to a quite different strategy. Anyone who is convinced of their own ideas seeks consensus around them and engages with the ideas of others. This has nothing in common with certain remnants of integralism and intolerance that seem to persist even within pluralism.

For this reason, Editor, I felt I could not let Giulio Goria's article pass without comment, and I would like to ask you to give me space to set out my honest intentions – intentions that only misinformation or a guilty conscience could distort. With warm regards.

*The Idea of the Base: Remembering Marcora**

Giovanni Marcora, affectionately known to his friends as ‘Albertino’ – the nom de guerre he adopted during the Resistance – can be regarded as the main organiser of the Sinistra di Base current.

The founding conference in Beigirate was held on 27 September 1953 on his decisive initiative. After that, Marcora played a key role in coordinating and managing a current that, as the Florentine Nicola Pistelli put it, consisted of a series of ‘scattered tribes’. These ‘tribes’ owed to the diverse geographical backgrounds of its members (the Lombard group was the largest, joined by Florentines, Emilians, Venetians and Campanians) and their different cultural backgrounds (many exiles from Cronache Sociali were joined by a sizeable group from the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart founded by Fr. Agostino Gemelli).

Marcora was the first to acknowledge the importance of the press in spreading and debating the faction’s ideas: magazines such as La Base, Prospettive, and Stato Democratico, as well as the news agency Radar, found in him their main supporter. Between the late 1950s and the early 1960s, he became head of Christian Democracy in Milan and Lombardy, and in 1968 he was elected senator for the Vimercate constituency. He always remained very attached to his native area, and in 1970 he was elected mayor of his hometown, Inveruno.

In the Senate, his name became associated with the law on the right to conscientious objection, a cause the late Pistelli had worked hard for, and he succeeded in getting it passed in 1972. The following year, Marcora supported the

* ‘L’idea della Base. Marcora a sette anni dalla morte’ [The idea of the Base: Marcora, seven years after his death], in *La Discussione*, 10 February 1990.

'Palazzo Giustiniani Agreement' between Moro and Fanfani. He agreed to become the DC deputy secretary and to work with the Arezzo-born politician in running the party. In the same period, he was the energetic organiser of the Perugia Economic Conference. This was convened to discuss and address the international recession, and was attended by Pasquale Saraceno, Siro Lombardini, Romano Prodi and Beniamino Andreatta.

In 1974, the Base leader took on the role of Minister of Agriculture, a position he held until 1980, achieving excellent results that were also acknowledged in Europe.

Marcora died in February 1983 at the age of just sixty, after suffering from a serious illness.

On the seventh anniversary of the death of Sen. Giovanni Marcora, known as the partisan 'Albertino', a square in Bozzolo was named in his memory. The emphasis on the spiritual bond between Marcora and Fr. Primo Mazzolari was highly significant. Despite the differences in their paths, the two men shared several characteristics. Mazzolari was an unorthodox priest, accustomed to going against the grain and paying the price personally. Marcora, meanwhile, was a forthright politician who was a leading figure in hard-fought minority battles within the DC, but did not shirk the duty of taking on a high level of responsibility, within the party and in the institutions.

First and foremost, he was involved in anti-fascism and the Resistance. Then, in the immediate post-war period, he worked to build and establish a party of Catholic democrats with broad popular support. He defended the autonomy of politics and the irreplaceable vitality of Christian inspiration against all forms of sectarianism. Finally, he cultivated a love for the land and a commitment to the modern development of an agriculture capable of freeing itself from ancient forms of servitude.

In the wake of these memories, let us pause and reflect on Marcora's generous legacy, which is in tune with many key figures in Catholic democracy. In these difficult times, it may be useful to focus on one lesson in particular: his democratic vision of the party. The risks of regression in national politics had become plainly evident in

1953, during the final phase of centrism. In a highly confused situation, the most worrying aspects were governmental instability, an inability to tackle the country's major problems, pressures from the right that would have transformed the DC into an unnatural conservative party, and injunctions not to undertake what most considered a dangerous path, that is, an advance in political relations with the left.

This is when the idea emerged of 'relaunching' a left-wing struggle within the DC after an excessively long hiatus. This had fostered a stifling internal conformism, compared with the fruitful 'Dossettian' era. The Base was born, and it found in Marcora a pillar and a generous and enthusiastic guide. He mobilised the local party cadres, intellectuals, and the various natural 'leaders' [in English in the original text] of a widespread democratic Catholicism, to resist a moderate drift within the DC. This brought about a collective and credible revival of reformist initiative, in a courageous prospect of an opening to the left.

Even then, there was no shortage of calls for unity, and attempts were made to lay the blame on those who had reopened, within the party, a dialectical process that many saw as risky and counterproductive. Despite the difficulties and misunderstandings, the outcomes were quite the opposite. A dangerous period of disorientation came to an end, and a lively and constructive internal debate replaced the resigned habit of justifying everything. The party tackled the issues of its own renewal and of a turnover in the leadership inspired by the primacy of ideas over personal or generational ambitions. As a whole, the DC was able to become the decisive factor in a positive opening to the left. The party vitally broadened the state's popular base, and implemented forward-looking reforms, thwarting the right's attempts to marginalise it. Once again it became, as in its early days, a point of reference for the most dynamic currents of Catholic democracy.

It would be a mistake to think that times have not changed: nothing in history can repeat itself mechanically. However, the past

offers valuable lessons to those who understand it correctly. Aldo Moro often pointed out that the DC cannot be a left-wing party, but that it vitally needs its left wing in order not to lose sight of its direction as a popular, reformist party that is attentive to changes in the country. Given the dangers that are plain for all to see, it would be a sign of serious political short-sightedness to underestimate the value of the left taking the initiative again within the DC today. There are worrying signs within the party. Not only in Palermo, a difficult experience – unusual in a city in a constant state of emergency – was disowned ahead of the elections. Even in Brescia, there was no hesitation in seeking the PSI's help to sideline democratic Christians who had worked with professionalism and transparency in the city council. Internal debate is languishing, and in many cases, instead of debating ideas, the party is letting the logic of numbers prevail in support of mediocre carve-ups. On the country's major issues – such as press freedom, the antitrust, the drugs bill, the changes to electoral laws, the defence of public intervention in the economy, and the repeated postponement of greater fiscal rigour – the DC appears to be trailing behind the initiatives of other parties, rather than putting forward its own proposals on an equal footing with them.

On the political front, then, at a time when everything is in flux internationally and the PCI's turmoil is opening up new political scenarios for everyone, the DC as a whole does not seem to grasp the importance of a Morotean attentiveness to what is happening on the Italian left. It seems oblivious to the need to defend – beyond a defensive running-down of the traditional five-party coalition government formula – the full right of the Catholic democrats' party to continue playing a leading role in the future positive developments of Italian democracy.

The renewed initiative of the party's left derives its *raison d'être* from all this – and it is no small thing. Why persist in viewing it, what is more so ungenerously, as a symptom of a decline in the sense of responsibility? In fact, the opposite is true. As at other difficult times in the party's history, resuming a critical function and sourcing ideas

and proposals to give the DC a greater awareness of its role is a duty. Here, Marcora's lesson and the experience of the Base are once again highly relevant. The commitment to unity on the essential issues, loyal support for the government, and the irrevocable commitment to defend, in any event, the continuity of the legislature are not in question.

It is up to the party's left wing to courageously chart a path towards the overall recovery of the DC. It should also constructively acknowledge its responsibilities, avoiding any Aventine secession at a time when the most vibrant currents of democratic Catholicism, especially among young people, are looking at the Italian situation with distrust and growing perplexity. This is not an easy step, not even for the left. Any unproductive personalisation of the ongoing battle must be dropped. Each 'leader' [in English in the original text] needs to rediscover a taste for joint efforts and collective deliberation. Their political culture should not require them to flex their muscles every day or get bogged down in noisy controversies. On the contrary, it should restore the primacy of ideas and consistent behaviour. After such a months-delayed 'relaunch', and after having missed the opportunity of the party congress, we must press ahead with seriousness and a sense of responsibility. Indeed, what is at stake is correcting the party's line and resuming a period of reform and internal renewal. Therefore, no minor concessions can justify unproductive tactical retreats.

There is no need to set up spurious preconditions, either within the party or in relation to the PSI or other government allies. Clarity, which justifies a battle from a minority position, does not rule out the possibility of resuming collaboration once everyone has recognised the dangers under way and the need to provide persuasive remedies. Here, too, Marcora's example is helpful. He had a strong sense of the need to 'put his shoulder to the wheel' in keeping with clear ideological and political orientations. He demonstrated this within the party, in government, and at European level. But this sense of responsibility did not prevent him from swimming against the tide,

like Fr. Primo Mazzolari and many others, whenever it was necessary to remind the DC of its duties as a great popular party, which must be a reforming one, open to the challenges of the future, and should never retreat into the management of the status quo.

PART TWO

Luigi Granelli's Political Battles

Granelli's membership of the Christian Democrats' Base faction can be seen as his first political battle. In fact, it is useful to begin here in order to analyse and understand his political activity, which was, above all, an expression of a profound cultural awareness.

The Base was founded in September 1953, a pivotal year in many respects. Indeed, the general election of 7 June had a significant impact on Italy's subsequent history. As is well known, the coalition parties failed to trigger the majority bonus by just a few thousand votes. Although the Christian Democracy party was once again the largest one, it had lost its absolute majority in Parliament, and the succession of increasingly short-lived governments was a clear example of such a difficulty. With the vote on 7 June, the party irrevocably reaffirmed its primacy in the Italian political system; however, 'that definitive consolidation around the Christian Democracy party that the election result imposed was hard to translate into parliamentary and governmental arrangements'¹.

Furthermore, within the party itself, decisive changes and new developments were underway. Two great leaders were soon to leave the political scene: Alcide De Gasperi and Giuseppe Dossetti. Both had represented political and cultural models that invited reflection and helped shape government action. As Giorgio Campanini

¹ P. Craveri, *De Gasperi*, il Mulino, Bologna 2006, p. 611.

observed, the limit of De Gasperi's thesis was that it underestimated how broad a consensus might have been won for a policy of bold administrative and economic renewal of Italian society. Dossetti's limitation, on the other hand, was to assume that Christian Democracy could pursue that course of renewal on its own².

However, the two leaders did not leave a void, but rather a legacy to be carried forward or rejected, and with which to reckon. As noted by some members of the faction, it was no coincidence that the Base was formed after the June 1953 elections. For example, Giovanni Marcora identified the electoral campaign leading up to 7 June as an important moment of critical reflection and political maturation, and Sergio Passera also viewed this year as the key to understanding the emergence of the Base. For the Christian Democracy faction, the aim was to fill the gap left by Dossetti's politics and the disappearance of Cronache Sociali, by creating a group that, building on De Gasperi's conception of the state, would revive the issues of welfare and reform, give new impetus to democratic development, and involve other forces – especially the Socialists – in defining new perspectives for the expansion of politics and the economy³.

The Base was founded at the Belgirate meeting in September 1953. The meeting had been organised by Catholic partisans, including Marcora, Aristide Marchetti, Fr. Federico Mercalli, and Bruno Bossi, as well as by Catholic intellectuals and local Christian Democracy officials. These included Gian Maria Capuani. Capuani had given the introductory report that, revised by Giuseppe Lazzati, took up some of the arguments from the battles championed by Dossetti. Beyond the particular circumstances of 1953, a further element emerged as a prominent and defining feature of this faction within the Christian Democrats: its constant reference to the Resistance. The Liberation struggle was seen as a dynamic and

² G. Campanini, *Fede e politica. 1943–1951. La vicenda della sinistra DC* [Faith and Politics. 1943–1951. The Story of the DC Left], Morcelliana, Brescia, 1976.

³ F. Boiardi, 'E nacquero una corrente e una rivista: "La Base"' [And so a Movement and a Magazine Were Born: "La Base"], *La Discussione*, 12 May 1990.

ongoing historical process, and the values of anti-fascism became the key factor in establishing a genuinely democratic state.

Marcora and Marchetti came from Lombardy, which was the area most closely associated with the Partisan struggle. They had been influenced, both spiritually and culturally, by those members of the Church who, particularly in Northern Italy, had been antifascists. In a 1980 interview, Marcora recalled how he came to make his own choices under the guidance of a priest: 'The history of antifascism is also a history of cultural tradition, a history that was not mine. But I met a priest, Fr. Giuseppe Albeni, who was the first to tell us about Don Sturzo and the Popular Party'⁴. According to Marchetti, participation in this important historical period, which 'was not a civil war but a war of civilisations, a moral, human, and cultural uprising'⁵, formed the cultural foundation 'for the struggle for the rights to work, study, health, and housing, for state intervention in the economy, for Mattei's decisions regarding ENI, for Vanoni's economic planning, for the nationalisation of the electricity industry, for the fight against monopolies, and for social reforms'⁶.

As Granelli states, the Constitution itself could not be understood without the historical and political premise of the Resistance.

It is therefore clear that, after the Resistance, the country's democratic forces needed new foundations for a Constitution that was not a mere reissue of the Statute, and for an organisation of the state more in line with society. But also they needed to do so in a spirit of cooperation and political realism, in the face of the surprising fact brought about by the collapse of Fascism: the fact of a popular

⁴ A. Staterà, 'Mica per dire, ma se c'ero io...' [Just Saying, If I'd Been There...], in *L'Espresso*, 21 December 1980.

⁵ A. Marchetti, 'I cattolici di fronte alla lotta armata' [Catholics Facing Armed Struggle], in M. Fini (ed.), *1945–1975 Italia, fascismo, antifascismo, Resistenza, rinnovamento* [1945–1975: Italy, Fascism, Anti-Fascism, Resistance and Renewal], Feltrinelli, Milan, 1975, pp. 278–290.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Resistance and the emergence of mass parties⁷.

The partisan struggle had involved various political and cultural groups, and in this respect it found its logical continuation in the Constituent Assembly. Indeed, the Constituent Assembly's task was not only to 'draft a Constitution that was more in line with society's new needs, but also to translate the great pluralistic, civic, moral and political fervour that had emerged from the anti-fascist struggle into legal norms and into the state's legal order'⁸. Strengthening the bond of solidarity was the value most strongly felt by those who took part in the Resistance, in its various forms. It was also a defining feature of the Base, which found expression in Catholics' autonomy in the field of politics, in their ongoing search for cultural contributions from sources beyond Catholicism, and in building a dialogue with the Socialist Party, which Granelli described as 'an inevitable trend in the development of Italian democracy'⁹.

De Gasperi and Dossetti were not the only politicians who influenced and inspired the actions of the Base. Luigi Sturzo was also an important figure for the so-called 'third generation', to which the members of the Base belonged. As Pietro Scoppola observed, 'in a seeming paradox, Sturzo's popularism became an ideal point of reference within the Christian Democracy party, thanks to a group like the Base, against which Sturzo did not shy away from vigorous polemic'¹⁰. The question of disagreement was the Base's economic vision, which favoured state intervention in the economy. This position was also supported by other members of Christian Democracy, such as Ezio Vanoni and Amintore Fanfani, as well as by figures from outside the strictly political sphere, such as Giorgio

⁷ ASIS, FG, series III, 2, b. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, series I, *Attività di partito* [Party Activities], b. 8, file 33.

¹⁰ P. Scoppola, *La repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico 1945–1996* [The Republic of Parties: Evolution and Crisis of a Political System, 1945–1996], Il Mulino, Bologna, 1991, p. 353.

La Pira¹¹ and the president of ENI, Enrico Mattei¹². Sturzo viewed state intervention in the economy as an attack on private enterprise and as a first step towards a form of state socialism.

Despite these contrasts, the Base embraced Sturzo's early work, particularly his non-formalistic, historically informed interpretation of events and his reflections on the meaning of the state. Recalling the figure of the Popular Party leader, Granelli stated:

Sturzo's fight for local autonomy cannot be explained without considering its close link with society. Likewise, the fight for proportional representation – which was not a technical battle but a battle for freedom – or the fight for universal and women's suffrage cannot be explained without considering them as political reasons and practical means of liberation. In fact, they were meant to free Italian political life from Giolitti's clientelism and mend the separation between social forces and the race for political power. Therefore, it seems to me that the first vital element of popularism is about politics meant not as an abstract projection of principles, nor as the mere organisation of protest and dissent, but as the ability to mobilise and organise social forces against clientelist exploitation, in

¹¹ For Giorgio La Pira, see: E. Balducci, *Giorgio La Pira*, Giunti, Florence 2004; S. Leoni, *La formazione politica del pensiero di Giorgio La Pira* [The Political Formation of Giorgio La Pira's Thought], Cultura Nuova Editrice, Florence 1991; L. Rogasi, *Giorgio La Pira. Un siciliano cittadino del mondo* [Giorgio La Pira: A Citizen of the World from Sicily], Edizioni Polistampa, Florence 2006; A. Scivoletto, *Giorgio La Pira. La politica come arte della pace* [Giorgio La Pira: Politics as the Art of Peace], Studium, Rome 2003.

¹² On Enrico Mattei, see: G. Galli, *Enrico Mattei: petrolio e complotto italiano* [Enrico Mattei: Oil and the Italian Conspiracy], Baldini Castaldi Dalai, Milan 2005; N. Perrone, *Obiettivo Mattei, Petrolio, Stati Uniti e politica dell'ENI* [The Mattei Target: Oil, the US and the Policies of the ENI], Gamberetti Editrice, Rome 1995; L. Maugeri, *L'arma del petrolio. Questione petrolifera globale, guerra fredda e politica italiana nella vicenda di Enrico Mattei* [The Oil Weapon: The Global Oil Question, the Cold War and Italian Politics in the Enrico Mattei Affair], Loggia de' Lanzi, Florence 1994; B. Li Vigni, *Il caso Mattei: un giallo italiano* [The Mattei Case: An Italian Mystery], Editori Riuniti, Rome 2003; L. Bazzoli, R. Renzi, *Il miracolo Mattei* [The Mattei Miracle], Rizzoli, Milan 1984.

order to assert their autonomy – that is, to achieve a concrete political outcome that is consistent with the needs expressed by society¹³.

The Base recognised the need to start from historical reality, without abstractions or preconceived ideological frameworks. It interpreted the world as an evolving process. It aimed at fully understand the vital trends of society and make them a mature, democratic and participatory component of political life, thus bridging the divide between the ‘official’ country and the ‘real’ country.

This realignment endeavour clearly shows the popular inspiration shared by several figures in the Christian Democracy, albeit with different aims. Whereas among the former Popolari this inspiration underpinned a proposal plainly hostile to the left, for Granelli and the Base it became, instead, the ground and justification for dialogue with the Socialist Party¹⁴. This ‘left-wing appropriation’ of popularism was the way forward to broaden the democratic base of the state. As Nicola Pistelli, a member of the Florentine Base, pointed out, the failure to reach such an agreement in the early post-war period had enabled the establishment of the Fascist regime in Italy¹⁵.

Until the mid-1950s, the Base held no offices within the party or in Parliament: it was founded as a valuable laboratory of ideas and was a small, albeit significant, current within the party.

Indeed, one need only consider the publishing initiatives launched immediately after the Belgirate conference. The magazine *La Base* began publication on 1 November 1953. Marchetti was its editor-in-chief, while Granelli, Capuani, Giovanni Galloni and Leandro Rampa took part in the editorial work. The magazine, which came out fortnightly, already set out the political lines that would

¹³ Excerpt from the volume: VARIOUS AUTHORS, *Il Partito Popolare: validità di un'esperienza* [The Popular Party: A Valuable Legacy], Centro Studi Luigi Puecher, Milan, 1969, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 354 ff.

¹⁵ N. Pistelli, *Scritti politici* [Political Writings], edited by E. De Mita, Editrice Politica, Florence, 1967, pp. 64 ff.

shape the faction's cultural and political battles: the independent responsibility of Catholics in politics, dialogue with the Socialist Party, and a new direction in economic policy. Finally, building a democratic state was both the synthesis and the goal of the Base's political action.

The final issue of *La Base* was published on 30 July 1954; its closure was not imposed by the Christian Democracy leadership. However, the party's Directorate had stated that it was unacceptable to support positions contrary to the party's general line through public statements and newspapers 'aimed above all at an internal polemic of such acrimony that it could not be permitted within any party'¹⁶.

The Base's second editorial venture was the fortnightly magazine *Prospettive*, first published on 10 November 1954, a few months after the Christian Democrat Congress in Naples. At that congress, the faction achieved a considerable success: the Base figures Giuseppe Chiarante, Galloni, Camillo Ripamonti and Rampa were elected to the council.

Probably, because of these new responsibilities within the party, *Prospettive*, which had a print run of 15,000 copies¹⁷, represented a qualitative leap forward, and showed greater maturity than the magazine *La Base*. A series of articles edited by Chiarante devoted a greater and more consistent attention to the Socialist Party and its political trajectory towards a more democratic and autonomist development.

In terms of language and content, the fortnightly magazines *La Base* and *Prospettive* represented a small revolution in the panorama of the Italian Catholic press of the 1950s. Of course, they were not the only ones to contribute new and deeper perspectives on culture

¹⁶ A. Damilano (ed.), *Atti e documenti della Democrazia cristiana 1943–1967* [Acts and Documents of the Christian Democracy, 1943–1967]. Edizioni Cinque Lune, Rome, 1967, vol. 2, p. 664.

¹⁷ ASILS, *Fondo Marcora*, b. 12/E 3.

and politics¹⁸. As stated in the leading article of the first issue, *Prospettive* had the ambitious aim of representing not a faction, but a new experience in forming a civil and political conscience. In response to this new need, it was necessary, as Granelli wrote in his article 'Forza e debolezza del centrismo' (Strengths and Weaknesses of Centristism), to highlight the political limits of centrism that, in his view, was condemned to decision-making paralysis:

This fact shatters the illusion that the crisis can be resolved within the current democratic stronghold, as well as the myth of social reformism. A series of social reforms that leave economic structures intact and do not satisfy the yearning for freedom that characterises certain basic demands of the working classes will never be able to bring about a genuine 'growth' in trust or any effective broadening of the state's political base. In fact, these latter are already creaking given the country's narrow margins of stability. For this reason, while we reiterate the urgent need for a bold overhaul of social imbalances, we also believe that the crisis cannot be overcome either by parliamentary deals or by the mere preservation of solidarity among the parties at the top if this is not reflected at the grassroots level, among the working classes¹⁹.

According to Granelli, this analysis highlighted the need for a 'democratic understanding of the political role of the Catholic and

¹⁸ On the Catholic press, see A. Majo, *La stampa cattolica in Italia. Storia e documentazione* [The Catholic Press in Italy: History and Documentation], Piemme, Casale Monferrato 1992, pp. 196 ff.; F. Malgeri, 'La stampa quotidiana e periodica e l'editoria' [Daily and Periodical Press and Publishing], in F. Traniello, G. Campanini (eds), *Dizionario storico del movimento cattolico in Italia* [Historical Dictionary of the Catholic Movement in Italy], vol. 1, tome I, *I fatti e le idee* [Facts and Ideas], Marietti, Casale Monferrato 1984, pp. 292 ff.; S. Ristuccia (ed.), *Intellettuali cattolici fra riformismo e dissenso* [Catholic Intellectuals Between Reformism and Dissent], Comunità, Milano 1975; G. Invitto, *La mediazione culturale. Riviste italiane del Novecento* [Cultural Mediation: Italian Journals of the Twentieth Century], Micella, Lecce 1980.

¹⁹ L. Granelli, 'Forza e debolezza del centrismo' [Strengths and weaknesses of centrism], in *Prospettive*, 10 November 1954.

secular masses' in a democratic state that had yet to be built.

The Base group did not yet have its own representatives in Parliament. So the election of its four councillors represented an important step in taking on responsibility. This launched the search for a new, more influential role within the Christian Democracy party. At the Christian Democracy Congress in Trento in October 1956, the Base achieved significant recognition: Granelli was elected to the National Council for the first time, with 312,100 preference votes, along with Galloni (399,100), Ciriaco De Mita (314,400), Fiorentino Sullo (514,400), Pistelli (331,600), Rampa (524,800), Andrea Negrari (223,300) and the Lombardy ACLI²⁰ member, Alessandro Buttè (309,700).

On the opposition side, at the Socialist congress in Venice, Nenni argued that the dialogue with the Catholics, opened at the previous congress in Turin, should be continued, and that a united-front policy was neither possible nor useful for the new socialist outlook²¹. Nenni denounced communism for its subservience to Soviet politics and ideology and moved closer to pro-European positions. Indeed, the Socialists had voted in favour of the European single market, whose founding treaty was signed on 25 March 1957, alongside the Euratom Treaty. The international situation was changing dramatically, and this also had an impact on the Italian Socialist Party: the Hungarian tragedy had made it possible for the Socialists to break away from the Communists²². Finally, at the National Council in Vallombrosa, Secretary Fanfani focused his report primarily on the socialist

²⁰ A. Di Raimondo (ed.), *Dieci congressi D.C. 1946–1967* [Ten Congresses of the DC, 1946–1967], Tipografia Gravinense, Turin.

²¹ M. Degl'Innocenti, *Storia del PSI, Dal dopoguerra ad oggi* [History of the PSI from the Post-War Period to Today], Laterza, Rome–Bari, 1993, vol. 3.

²² E. Di Nolfo, 'Il socialismo italiano tra i due blocchi' [Italian Socialism Between Two Blocs], in *Trent'anni di politica socialista 1946–1976* [Thirty Years of Socialist Politics, 1946–1976], Edizioni Avanti, Parma 1977, pp. 47–66.

question and on the need to broaden the political base²³.

The Base current 'had long since given up its official organs, so as not to expose itself further to disciplinary sanctions or marginalisation'²⁴. In Florence, *Politica*, founded in 1955 and edited by Pistelli, had a wider remit than an explicitly factional journal, in order to avoid censorship. However, following the Sixth Christian Democrat Congress in Trento in October 1956, the Socialist Congress in Venice in February 1957, and the Christian Democrat National Council in Vallombrosa in July of the same year, it became clear that the creation of a new tool for communicating and disseminating its ideas could no longer be postponed. This tool would serve as a link between those 'scattered tribes' that, according to Pistelli's definition, made up the Base Group.

On 10 October 1957, the first issue of *Stato Democratico* came out, initially edited by Felice Calcaterra and later by Granelli, who had conceived and inspired the magazine. In a letter to a number of leading Base figures dated 9 September 1957, Granelli explained the need for a new magazine in the following terms:

As you may have heard, we intend to start publishing a national fortnightly magazine. We are staking everything we have left in order to break out of the stalemate of the past few months, and present ourselves to the public once again with very clear ideas and aims. Furthermore, the newspaper will also serve to reunite, around a solid publication, the support of all those energies that are waiting for an effective revival in the realm of ideas²⁵.

Through *Stato Democratico*, Granelli resumed his campaigns for dialogue – including cultural dialogue – with the Italian left, for the

²³ F. Malgeri, 'Gli anni di transizione: da Fanfani a Moro (1954–1962)' [The Transition Years: From Fanfani to Moro (1954–1962)], in IDEM, *Storia della democrazia cristiana* [History of the Christian Democracy], Cinque Lune, Rome, 1987, vol. 3.

²⁴ V. Gallo, *Antologia di 'Stato Democratico' (1957–1959)* [Stato Democratico: Selected Writings (1957–1959)], Ebe, Rome, 1972, p. 24.

²⁵ ASILS, FG, series I, *Attività di partito* [Party Activities], b. 1, f. 2.

broadening of the democratic base, for the renewal of the party, and for a reformist line in the economic, institutional, and foreign policy spheres. In doing so, he raised ever more explicitly the question of an opening to the left.

This political programme proposed transforming the Vanoni scheme into the Vanoni Plan, establishing the administrative regions of Italy, and implementing the Constitution. Furthermore, Stato Democratico explored in greater depth the idea of a more dynamic foreign policy to overcome the confrontation between blocs through its numerous biannual thematic supplements and the pamphlet series, *Idee e Battaglie*.

On 18 and 19 September 1965, the conference 'The Role of Political Parties in Italian Democracy' was held in Cadenabbia. It was organised by the Lombardy branch of the Christian Democracy party, of which Granelli was deputy secretary. As he himself stated in an invitation letter to the conference, 'the aim is to mobilise, in a shared effort of research and further reflection, people active in the political and cultural fields, to develop a qualified contribution on a highly topical issue'²⁶.

The Cadenabbia conference took place in a difficult political and social context. The centre-left, only recently launched after a long and difficult gestation, was already facing its first disillusionment. In fact, it was seen as incapable of isolating the Communists and of embarking on an incisive reform drive. In politics, this meant renewing the institutions; in the economy, implementing economic planning that would ensure harmonious and balanced development. Yet the changes brought about by the economic boom and the resulting social transformations created new social tensions that were difficult to manage²⁷.

²⁶ ASIS, FG, series I, b. 6.

²⁷ N. Tranfaglia, 'La modernità squilibrata. Dalla crisi del centrismo al "compromesso storico"' [Unbalanced Modernity: From the Crisis of Centrism to the 'Historic Compromise'], in F. Barbagallo (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana, La*

Granelli, elected to the Italian Parliament in 1968, continued his campaigns in Parliament, where he held various posts. As Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs from 1973 to 1976, he focused primarily on emigration, organising the first National Conference of Italians living abroad (then numbering over 15 million). The conference was held in Rome from 24 February to 1 March 1975 and was entitled 'Less Emigration, More Integration'.

Until then, emigration had been treated as a matter of welfare. The Conference acknowledged instead that emigration was in fact one of the major national issues. This made clear the need for involving as protagonists Italians expats in the issues that affected them closely. This should happen not by studying past migration experiences but by reflecting on the present and on the prospects of Italy's new policy direction. The representatives of Italians abroad presented a coherent platform of demands, including the right to vote in local elections in their host countries, participation in consular committees, adequate educational provision, and social security.

For the first time, Italians living abroad had the opportunity to make their voice heard and to present their requests and projects in an institutional forum. Granelli himself stated:

This is a further chapter in the history of a genuine national unity that has not yet been achieved. Italians living abroad, whether forced by dire necessity or by a conscious and free choice, are a living and fully fledged part of a modern and genuinely democratic national society. The solemn confirmation of this fact in the eyes of domestic and international public opinion, is one of the undisputed achievements of the National Conference on Emigration. This heritage must be jealously guarded²⁸.

In Granelli's view, reduced emigration would, in theory, mean greater integration and also a 'vigorous revival of economic planning

trasformazione dell'Italia. Sviluppo e squilibri [History of Republican Italy: Development and Imbalances in the Transformation of Italy], Einaudi, Turin, 1995, vol. 2, t. II, pp. 7–111.

²⁸ ASILS, FGFondo Granelli, series III, b. 2.

aimed at eliminating, especially in the South, the structural causes of unemployment, which is a source of depopulation and forced emigration²⁹.

More generally, as far as foreign policy was concerned, Granelli argued that the criterion for assessing the positions adopted should be a conception of the international community. This, also according to Sturzo, needed to be 'based on law, on pluralism, and on peaceful cooperation between peoples in the name of a solidarity that pools available resources for a better future for all of humanity'³⁰. This yardstick also applied to military alliances, such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Far from being seen as obstacles to the process of détente, these military organisations had themselves become tools for dialogue: 'Of course, overcoming rigid, opposing blocs distinguishes détente from confrontation, not from dialogue. However, the gradual achievement of this goal does not conflict with the existence of alliances in which politics prevails over the military and offensive aspects'³¹.

This rejection of neutrality had already been expressed in the Base's fortnightly magazine, *Prospettive*, through a series of articles by Chiarante. In response to accusations of neutralism from the right-wing press, Chiarante wrote that, even within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance, Italy and Europe could 'rediscover their own independent and positive role'³². International politics and the focus on the 'Third World' had been a key area of reflection for the Base. Indeed, almost every issue of *Prospettive* featured articles on the situation in Germany, the Cold War, international détente, the 'non-aligned' countries, Africa, and the consequences of colonial policy.

The cultural and political development of this vision of the international community included a particular, sensitive focus on the

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³¹ L. Granelli, *Da Helsinki a Belgrado* [From Helsinki to Belgrade], cit., p. 7.

³² G. Chiarante, 'Politica estera ed apertura a sinistra' [Foreign policy and opening to the left], in *Prospettive*, no. 7 (30 May 1955).

issue of decolonisation. This was due to the influence of the neo-Atlanticist position advocated within the Christian Democracy party, especially by Giovanni Gronchi and Fanfani³³. In particular, one can foresee there the ideas of Mattei and La Pira. As Galloni noted, Mattei's economic vision mirrored La Pira's political vision³⁴. Indeed, Mattei had great admiration for La Pira and for his initiatives to promote dialogue between Jews, Muslims and Christians for peace in the Mediterranean³⁵. This stance was also shared by Mattei, who attempted to pursue a different oil policy, moving away from the old colonial-style forms of exploitation³⁶.

Granelli's name is also associated with another important initiative he undertook in his role as Minister for Scientific and Technological Research, a position he held from 1983 to 1987. The previous political class had shown little attention to the increasingly important role of technological innovation. The successive governments up to that point had limited themselves to occasional interventions, delegating the study and organisation of this area to the National Research Council (CNR). By the end of the 1970s, scientific research was emerging as a true driving force and a strategic sector for twentieth-century development. Low levels of investment as well as outdated and precarious scientific and technical education and training were symptomatic of an inability to grasp this novelty. In fact, the research sector played a secondary and marginal role in Italy's development in the second half of the 1950s, during the so-

³³ G. Calchi Novati, 'Mediterraneo e questione araba nella politica estera italiana' [The Mediterranean and the Arab Question in Italian foreign policy], in F. Barbagallo (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, tome 1, pp. 246–247.

³⁴ Archivio Storico dell'ENI, *Fondo Fonti orali. Intervista a Giovanni Galloni di Vincenzo Gandolfi* [ENI Historical Archive. Oral Sources Collection. Interview with Giovanni Galloni by Vincenzo Gandolfi], Rome, 18 March 1991, pp. 17–18.

³⁵ B. Bocchini Camaiani, 'La Chiesa di Firenze tra La Pira e Dalla Costa' [The Church of Florence between La Pira and Dalla Costa], in A. Riccardi, *Le chiese di Pio XII* [The Churches of Pius XIII], Laterza, Roma–Bari, 1996, pp. 282–301.

³⁶ E. Mattei, *L'evoluzione del mercato petrolifero* [The Evolution of the Oil Market], ENI, Rome, 1960.

called 'economic boom'³⁷. As Minister for Scientific Research, Granelli contributed significantly to the increased attention towards technology that began in the 1980s. He was convinced of the need for a competitive technological equipment of European and global level³⁸. Accordingly, he increased investment in research, with the aim of halting that one-way mobility whereby scholars who had emigrated abroad were rarely encouraged to return to Italy.

Finally, Granelli worked to bring about the construction of the Synchrotron facility in Trieste, to study the laws of matter and the infinitely small. In November 1986, the Trieste Synchrotron Company was established, with Nobel laureate Carlo Rubbia as its president; in 1987, this was followed by the creation, in the same city, of a biotechnology research laboratory³⁹.

Finally, in 1988, the Italian Space Agency (ASI) was established, and went on to become the reference point for Italian scientific and technological excellence. ASI brought together the activities carried out by the CNR, the management of the national programme, and the representation of Italy's interests within the European Space Agency (ESA). Furthermore, the Agency's structure had innovative management features, with a productive link between the public and private sectors. THE ASI's internal staff were hired through public sector contracts, while private sector contracts were used for studies, research, design and implementation activities with industry, universities and other organisations.

Granelli's final battles, fought in the 1990s, were essentially

³⁷ For an overview of scientific and technological development in Italy, see C. Antonelli, 'Il cambiamento tecnologico: innovazione e modernizzazione (1945–90)' [Technological change: innovation and modernisation (1945–90)], in F. Barbagallo (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana, op. cit.*, vol. 2, tome 1, pp. 479–526.

³⁸ For an overview of scientific and technological development in Italy, see C. Antonelli, 'Il cambiamento tecnologico: innovazione e modernizzazione (1945–90)', in F. Barbagallo (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana, op. cit.*, vol. 2, tome 1, pp. 479–526.

³⁹ Extensive documentation in ASI/IS, FG, series IV, b. 9.

shaped by issues of domestic politics. At the very start of the decade, on 6 August 1990, Law No. 223, 'Regulation of the Public and Private Broadcasting System', was passed. It is commonly known as the 'Mammì Law', after its first signatory, Oscar Mammì, then the Republican Minister for Posts and Telecommunications. Fourteen years after the Constitutional Court ruling that legitimised local broadcasting, this law provided, for the first time, a comprehensive framework for the Italian broadcasting system. The law, which went through a difficult parliamentary process, formalised the existing RAI–Fininvest duopoly.

Regarding advertising sales, Granelli called for rules that would ensure genuine pluralism, 'to allow more players to operate in broadcasting, on a competitive footing guaranteed by the free market'. Finally, at the end of the interview, Granelli stated that 'the aim was to launch a process that would move beyond the existing duopoly (RAI–Fininvest), with the goal of abolishing the licence fee and then having the public service broadcaster run itself as an enterprise, albeit with particular duties'⁴⁰.

Granelli, who had served on the RAI-TV Supervisory Committee, declared his opposition to the request for a confidence vote. In his view, the bill required a broader and more open debate. He defended the regulation of the advertising sales system, as a condition for greater pluralism and for giving more entities the opportunity to enter the radio and television frequencies market.

In 1994, Granelli returned to these issues in an article published on 15 March in the daily newspaper *La Repubblica*. He noted the discontent and dissatisfaction with what he saw as increasingly biased media reporting and the ever more serious distortion of reality brought about by television. Once again he protested against private broadcasters, which he claimed were 'protected by an ill-judged law', and against a public service broadcaster 'that is increasingly less a

⁴⁰ F. Frulli, 'TV, una legge dopo 14 anni' [TV: a law, 14 years later], in *Il Popolo*, 7 August 1990.

guarantor of pluralism on television'⁴¹.

In the early 1990s, Italy's political system collapsed, although, as Scoppola has noted, it is difficult to pinpoint a precise date for this. 'Rather, it was a process of gradual realignment that unfolded over the two-year period 1991–1993 and reached its culmination, at least symbolically, in the referendum of 18 April 1993'.⁴² The referendum brought about the abolition of the proportional representation system that had been the cornerstone of Italian politics. This process was triggered by a series of factors involving both international and domestic politics: from the collapse of the Soviet Union to judicial investigations into public corruption. In the end, the reform from within, which the political parties could not carry out would be imposed on them from the outside, albeit in contradictory ways and with uncertain outcomes.

Christian Democracy was also caught up in the end of the political system. In the 1992 general and local elections, the Christian Democracy party lost eight and five percentage points, respectively. In July 1993, the Constituent Assembly met and resolved to transform Christian Democracy into the new Italian Popular Party, which was officially launched at the start of 1994. Granelli said he opposed the party's new name and recalled the experience of Romolo Murri and De Gasperi. They had chosen the name 'Christian Democracy' to evoke the value of democracy, 'in the face of the disaster of dictatorships and wars'⁴³. Furthermore, the Christian inspiration was key 'as a hope for profound change, in the wake of ideas that, with the rediscovery of Sturzo, Maritain, and Mounier in

⁴¹ The article has now been published in L. Granelli, *Messaggi in bottiglia* [Messages in a Bottle], Accademia degli Incolti, Stampa 2000, Florence, 1994, p. 32.

⁴² P. Scoppola, *La repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico 1945–1996* [The Republic of Parties: Evolution and Crisis of a Political System, 1945–1996]. Il Mulino, Bologna, 1991, p. 459.

⁴³ L. Granelli, *Perché ho difeso la Democrazia cristiana* [Why I Defended Christian Democracy], Ed. La Base, Rome, 1994, p. 12.

France, and of reflections on the Code of Camaldoli in Italy, had found wide resonance among Catholic democrats⁴⁴. In Granelli's view, Christian Democracy had been a valuable historical experience, one not to be consigned to the past, but rather to be liberated 'from errors and degenerations through the construction of a new DC that deserves the name for its programme, its ethos, its democratic vitality, its organisational structure, and its leadership, and not merely for the apparent novelty of a fleeting label'⁴⁵.

In the early 1990s, the disconnect between the 'official' country and the 'real' country became increasingly apparent – a trend that had already emerged in the late 1960s and then came to a head in the following decade, particularly after the divorce referendum. Indeed, during the 1970s, the divide between society and politics became stark. If we examine these years from the perspective of the emergence of changing attitudes, it becomes clear how rapidly Italian society was transforming and, by contrast, how slowly the political parties were developing their own cultural and political thinking. In a political and social context that had shifted strongly to the left, the role and function of a party like Christian Democracy appeared anachronistic. During these years, there was a downward trajectory of modernisation in favour of secularisation: in other words, the optimistic vision of a linear modernisation of society was fading away⁴⁶. Pier Paolo Pasolini had denounced this 'passing of the baton' with great clarity in the pages of the *Corriere della Sera*⁴⁷. In his famous article on the disappearance of fireflies, the Friulian intellectual described the changes that had transformed Italy from a

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ G. Marramao, 'Politica e società secolarizzata' [Politics and secularised society], in F. Lussana, G. Marramao (eds.), *L'Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta, Culture, nuovi soggetti, identità* [Republican Italy in the Crisis of the 1970s: Culture, New Protagonists, Identity], Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2003, vol. II, pp. 17–22.

⁴⁷ Cf. P. P. Pasolini, *Scritti corsari* [Corsair Writings], Garzanti, Milan, 1975.

poor, agricultural country into a rich, industrialised one as an epoch-making anthropological mutation driven by consumerism.

As Giovagnoli wrote, 'Twenty years later, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the USSR, against a backdrop of a shift to the right in public opinion and after another referendum, the role played by the DC once again appeared obsolete. The party seemed to represent an obstacle to the country's need for modernisation'⁴⁸.

At the first Congress of the Italian Popular Party, held in Rome on 29 July 1994, Granelli described Italy's situation in unsparing terms. He urged a return to study, reflection, and a proactive spirit. He also set out the course the new party should follow on the major issues of economic recovery, state reform, the extension of citizenship rights for individuals and the most vulnerable groups, and a strongly pro-European and liberal foreign policy.

With the aim of revitalising the party's activities, in September of the same year, Granelli founded Popolari Intransigenti. This association was meant to respond 'to the serious crisis of disarray and the disengagement of many Catholic democrats'. In the final years of Granelli's Catholic activism, one senses a somewhat troubled participation in the dynamics of the Christian Democracy party, albeit with an unwavering conviction to remain within it. In this regard, it is worth quoting an excerpt from the letter Granelli wrote in 1968 to Lidia Menapace, a member of the Base group, who had decided to leave the Christian Democracy party and join the Communist Party:

I don't swear allegiance to the DC. As long as I remain in the DC, I will do so because I believe in its purpose, even though I am fighting to change its policies, which in many respects run counter to my ideals. [...] Political activism within the popular forces – the only truly decisive forces in our era – always requires an attitude of humility and service, and always encounters a gap between thinking and acting: I have witnessed many genuine struggles of conscience. [...] The

⁴⁸ A. Giovagnoli, *Il partito italiano. La Democrazia cristiana dal 1942 al 1994* [The Italian Party: Christian Democracy from 1942 to 1994], Laterza, Rome–Bari, 1996, pp. 267–268.

dilemma exists, but I choose to stay in order to change things⁴⁹.

MARIA CHIARA MATTESINI

⁴⁹ ASILS, FG, series 1, b. 7, f. 27.

*The Constitution and the Organisation of the State**

Granelli delivered this speech in Gardone Riviera, in the province of Brescia, on 10 December 1974, during a refresher course for teachers entitled 'From Liberal Italy to Republican Italy'. The course also provided an opportunity to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Resistance, the importance of which, as Granelli himself emphasised in his address, had been a constant theme in the reflections of the Base faction. On the tenth anniversary of the Resistance, the fortnightly magazine Prospettive described the fascism–anti-fascism alternative as fundamental, because it had been at the root of the new Italian state, with its republican institutional form and its democratic constitutional order¹.

Anti-fascist sentiment also led to developing new models of political and social behaviour. These were reflected in the search for cultural contributions not solely Catholic in origin. In terms of political action, this took the form of dialogue with the Socialists, with the aim of broadening the democratic basis of the state by bringing the popular classes into it.

In order to constructively approach the topic I have been asked to address – a topic that will be covered not only in my introduction but also in the discussion that follows – I deem it appropriate to set out a premise, a framework for interpretation, so that we understand each other from the outset. There is, in fact, a way of looking at constitutions and the organisation of states that might be entirely foreign to the Italian context: namely, considering constitutions as

* ASILS, FG, series VIII, 2, b. 25.

¹ ASILS, FG, series VIII, 2, b. 25.

products of legal scholarship and the organisation of the state as the outcome of functional mechanisms derived from organisational science. According to this view, it would, in theory, be sufficient to sit the best legal scholars and organisational experts around a table and draft the organisation of the state and a republic's constitution that could be as perfect as possible.

In reality, the process – the path through which the 1947 Republican Constitution was drawn up in our country – points in the opposite direction. Some people, on reading the articles of the Constitution, might even find inconsistencies, contradictions, and questionable positions. They could therefore, with juridical condescension, point to constitutions that are much more coherent and perfect. A classic reference is the Weimar Constitution, which was undoubtedly one of the most perfect in terms of its legal structure, but one of the weakest at resisting the rise of Nazism, a dictatorial regime among the most inhuman that history remembers.

From this, we can immediately draw an initial conclusion, namely that both the Republican Constitution and the consequent constitutional order of the state are of value only insofar as they are closely linked to the historical and political conditions within which these fundamental acts of state life take shape. If this link is not made at once, we cannot understand the value, the limits, and the very possibilities for the development of both the Constitution and the state's constitutional order.

Awareness of the close link between the Constitution, the legal system, and political society stems from the fact that, unlike the Albertine Statute, the Italian Constitution was drawn up by a constituent assembly democratically elected by the people. Indeed, after the Resistance, a decision was taken: the legal foundations of the new Italian state would not be laid by leading law scholars, but by a democratic assembly elected by the people. This assembly would naturally include politicians, party representatives, and anti-fascist activists, as well as eminent jurists, but not in their professional capacity, rather as representatives of the Italian people.

The Constituent Assembly, which drafted the Constitution and laid the foundations of the state's constitutional order, is a significant democratic development in the face of the collapse of the previous state. There is a historical awareness of setting in motion a process different from the one that had characterised, from unification onwards, the history of the state and its institutions in our country. The Albertine Statute had been the result of an opposite process: that is, a statute granted from above, by the ruling class of the time (or, technically, by the monarchy), although it was more progressive than previous absolutist forms of government. Indeed, the Albertine Statute contained certain guarantees, certain declarations of freedom, and a certain vision of the state, which, given the country's historical context, were the product of a modern form of liberalism for its time. However, it was a statute granted to the people and, therefore, to some extent, alien to them. As such, it was also politically fragile: it is no coincidence that Fascism gradually, without the need for any dramatic measures, dismantled the guarantees contained in the Statute and transformed the liberal state that had emerged from the Risorgimento into a dictatorial, Fascist state.

In this regard, I recall a 1922 quote from Sturzo, which is quite indicative of the critical stance that some had already taken towards that kind of state. Sturzo said: 'The state is all the more perfect the more it represents and expresses the various constituent elements of society and helps them to develop their inherent energies in a continuous, progressive effort.' That is, the state is valid to the extent that it reflects the conditions of society and enables society to develop through institutions that are rooted in it, rather than being external to it or imposed from above. In this way, he implicitly criticised the growing divide between the Risorgimento-era state and large sections of society.

It is therefore clear that, after the Resistance, the democratic forces of the country needed not only to lay the foundations for a new Constitution – one that was not merely a copy of the Statute – and for an organisation of the state that was more in keeping with

society, but also to achieve this in a spirit of political realism, taking into account the shattering fact brought about by the collapse of fascism: the fact of a popular Resistance and the emergence of mass parties. The Constitution cannot be understood without starting from the historical and political context of the Resistance. In normal times, there might be a simple difference in method between a Statute imposed from above and a Constitution drawn up by a democratically elected assembly. In reality, the Italian Constituent Assembly did not come into being during a normal period, but at a time of profound moral, cultural, and political upheaval in the country. It was established in the wake of the Resistance against fascism, which had seen the united contribution of the Italian people across all their different ideological and cultural backgrounds, from the old pre-fascist class of liberal origin to the Communists, the Catholics, the Socialists, and members of the Action Party. These political groups, with their very different ideological backgrounds, having mobilised against fascism, all found themselves, in the face of the collapse of the state, committed to building a different state reality: a new legal and institutional order. Therefore, in addition to the change in method, we must not forget the ethical, cultural and political significance rooted in the Resistance and logically developed by the Constituent Assembly. Its task was not only to draft a Constitution more in line with society's new needs, but also to translate the great pluralistic, civic, moral, and political passion that had emerged from the anti-fascist struggle into legal norms and the organisation of the state.

If we bear in mind this methodological premise and this reference to the historical and political context – the period, one might say, in which the Constitution was drawn up – we can better understand some of its typical features. Those who today talk so readily about constitutional reform are used to thinking of such reform as the result of a comparative study of different constitutions. For example, people think: the two-party system works in the UK, it works in the US, whereas our constitutional order, which is not a two-party

system, doesn't work well. So let's amend the Constitution to make the state work better. This is just one example, but it illustrates the temptation to turn back, to once again conceive of the state on the basis of functions and mechanisms that are alien to our history and detached from the realities of the country, and to once again seek to superimpose the state on society's own order.

I believe it is deeply wrong to look at the limits of our Republican Constitution – which is, of course, a framework open to change – by comparing it with other countries' experiences, and forgetting the specific nature of our historical and political circumstances.

There are at least two specific features of our Constitution that we need to keep firmly in mind. First: a certain notion of the irreversibility of the form of the state runs throughout the Constitution. Indeed, our Constitution is what experts describe as 'rigid', meaning it is very difficult to amend, and this is clearly because many of the drafters remembered how Fascism had dismantled the Albertine Statute, piece by piece. After such an experience, a Constitution aimed at refounding the state had as its fundamental concern the creation of a form of state that, at least as regards the republican form, the ban on the re-establishment of the Fascist Party, and the protection of certain fundamental institutional mechanisms, was absolutely rigid.

While other parts of the Constitution can be amended through mechanisms that include qualified majorities in Parliament, a second reading after a certain period of time, and popular initiatives, the democratic and republican form of the state cannot be subjected to constitutional revision and is therefore to be considered irreversible. It goes without saying that, historically, a reversal in the form of a coup d'état, an authoritarian act, or a revolutionary overthrow is always possible. However, from the point of view of democratic functioning, the constitutional order is protected against amendments that could bring about a change in direction.

The second feature – a subject of lively debate at the Constituent Assembly – was the question of whether this rigidity, which applied

to the form of the state and its fundamental structures, should be extended to the entire text of the Constitution, or whether there should be a set of provisions – which constitutional lawyers describe as programmatic – that are stated as principles in the Constitution but whose practical implementation is left to ordinary legislation. The old ‘guarantist’ view, according to which only peremptory norms – declarations of principle accepted by all and therefore rather general – should be included in the Constitution, was supported mainly by Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, a representative of the liberal legal and political tradition, while it was opposed by the rest of the political spectrum, namely the Christian Democracy party, the Socialists, the Action Party and the Communists. Representatives of these parties argued that the weakness of the Albertine Statute, and of the liberal constitutions of the 19th century in general – which nonetheless represented progress compared to the previous absolutist regimes – lay in the fact that the principles were solemnly proclaimed, but the real conditions for their widespread exercise did not exist. Certain freedoms already enshrined in the Albertine Statute were not equal for all, because the economic and social conditions in practice meant that the effective exercise of these rights was restricted to the privileged classes (for example, the right to vote, or freedom of expression, which was rendered meaningless by the high prevalence of illiteracy).

Therefore, the approach of making an abstract affirmation of rights was ruled out. Wishing instead to set out the ways in which those rights could be exercised, it was necessary to draw up programmatic provisions that would commit Parliament and the government, albeit gradually, to ensuring their effective implementation. This programmatic conception of the Constitution, and the resulting dynamism in its application, is already evident in an exemplary manner in the combined provisions – as jurists would say – of Article 1 and Article 3. Article 1 contains a solemn statement of principle: ‘Italy is a democratic republic founded on labour. Sovereignty belongs to the people, who exercise it in the forms and

within the limits of the Constitution.’ Meanwhile, Article 3 states: ‘It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by in fact limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic, and social organisation of the country.’ Beyond the abstract affirmation of rights, with a rights-guaranteeing flavour, the Constitution programmatically sets out as a task for the Republic, through the exercise of popular sovereignty, an operational direction aimed at removing the obstacles that prevent all citizens from effectively exercising their rights.

In line with this, Title III deals with economic relations, which clearly cannot be resolved once and for all by a constitutional provision. They rather require complex and detailed legislative work, guided by the programmatic provision on the right to work and its protection for every citizen. The section on economic relations includes the very important statement of principle, ‘economic initiative is free’. However, this is supplemented by the programmatic provision that free economic initiative ‘must not conflict with social utility’. By affirming the freedom of enterprise, the Constitution-makers clearly rejected the idea of collectivising the economy, but they also rejected an economic system based exclusively on private profit, and therefore contrary to social utility or the general interest. One important provision concerns the expropriation of land and businesses for purposes of public utility. However, the importance of purposes of public utility should not obscure the protection of private property, which, in the event of expropriation, is entitled to compensation.

We also find this programmatic approach in the provisions on citizens’ rights. Not only are the general rights to freedom of thought, association and expression, and to equality between men and women, etc., affirmed. Indeed, these rights are made effective through the political right to form political parties in order to ‘contribute to determining national policy’. Historically, the constitutional

importance given to political forces organised into parties marks the transition from an individualistic, and therefore fundamentally elitist, society to an organised society in which all citizens can genuinely exercise the popular sovereignty they hold. The same could be said for civil liberties as a whole. I shall not dwell on this topic any further; instead, I invite you to reread the Constitution. You will appreciate the efforts of the framers to avoid a mechanical repetition of the traditional rule-of-law state, and instead build a democratic rule-of-law state. As we have said, this programmatic section of the Constitution is not rigid; on the contrary, it is dynamic and constantly evolving, precisely because it aims to integrate civil and political society into the legislative and constitutional system. On the other hand, as we have said, the provisions of the Constitution concerning the form of the state and its organisation are rigid in nature. However, despite the mandatory nature of certain provisions, the state system envisaged by the Constitution has not in fact been established, either immediately or in full. A striking example will suffice: the transitional provisions of the Constitution even provided for the establishment of the regions, and consequently regional elections, within one year of the Constitution coming into force. In reality, the regions were established twenty years later, and this delay had an impact on the overall structure of the state, which was intended to have the regions as a fundamental institution. The system of government established by the Constitution is characterised, first and foremost, by a return to the parliamentary system, which is based on universal suffrage, the direct election of representatives, and the legitimacy of political parties. Parliament is bicameral – the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate – and, viewed from today's historical perspective, this may give rise to justified objections. In fact, the two Chambers operate in virtually the same way (i.e. they do not have genuinely different functions) and therefore only end up making the parliamentary process for passing laws longer and more cumbersome. However, we must first of all return to the historical context of the Constituent Assembly, which was driven by the desire to prevent the executive

branch from abusing its powers, as Fascism had already done, and thereby weakening Parliament to some extent. Accordingly, as a fundamental guarantee of civil liberties and democratic institutions, the introduction of two Chambers elected by universal suffrage was intended to provide what was effectively a second level of appeal, an additional parliamentary check on the government, and thus a stronger democratic and popular safeguard over the institutions of the Republic. Furthermore, the two Chambers were also supposed to have different functions and a different electoral base. Indeed, the Senate was intended to represent the regions, but the failure to establish a regional system ultimately helped to justify the criticism that it was a 'useless duplication'. However, the different electoral systems (the Chamber of Deputies is elected on the basis of party lists, while the Senate is elected in single-member constituencies) and the different age limits for candidates and voters are certainly not sufficient to counter this criticism.

A further element of democratic safeguard and control was introduced with the institution of the referendum to repeal laws. Again, in this regard, we must not make an emotional judgement about an instrument of direct democracy that we used for the first time, and in a dramatic way, on a sensitive issue. In the framers' conception, the referendum represents the control of popular sovereignty over the legislature, in the sense that the legislature knows that its work – the law – can be put to a repeal referendum if half a million citizens, in line with the overall design of the Constitution, or five regions, request it. There is therefore a whole range of institutions, from bicameralism to the popular and regional initiative for repeal referendums, which undoubtedly constitute a balance of powers and checks on the various powers. This can prevent any power within the state from overriding democratic institutions. Alongside this decision in favour of a democratic parliamentary system – strengthened compared to the 19th-century model by the people's power to initiate or repeal laws – is the decision in favour of local self-government (municipalities, provinces and regions). The

liberal state that emerged from the Risorgimento was centralist in nature, which led to the suppression of the autonomous and pluralistic traditions of Italian society. The Italian Constitution clearly states that the new constitutional order is not federal, in the sense that the regions are not states within the state, but rather autonomist and decentralised, in the sense that the regions perform an administrative function and, within certain general parameters, also a legislative function. Provinces and municipalities are assigned administrative functions, either of their own or delegated to them by the regions.

The regions are named in the Constitution in keeping with our country's historical and political tradition. The criticism is probably justified from the point of view of legal rationality or functionality in terms of economic or territorial planning. However, the decision to opt for the historically and politically defined regions was intended to give constitutional prominence to the diversity that exists within the country, in order to build, in freedom, the genuine unity that the stifling centralism of the Risorgimento state had failed to achieve. As for the provinces and municipalities, on the other hand, there is the possibility of reorganising these local authorities in line with changes in the population and the needs of local communities. Notwithstanding this broad recognition of local autonomy, it must be said that the Constitution brings all the powers of the state together within the single republic. In this regard, please allow me a polemical aside against the now-frequent use of the expression 'separate bodies of the state' to refer to the judiciary, the army, and the police, as if they could in some way be conceived as separate from, or even opposed to, the state's constitutional order. The Constitution guarantees the judiciary the independent exercise of its functions, but within the framework of the unity of the state, which does not allow any power to avoid complying with the laws. Indeed, the very fact that the President of the Republic is also President of the Higher Council of the Judiciary demonstrates precisely the desire to bring a power, whose autonomy and independence from any other

power are solemnly proclaimed, back into political and constitutional unity.

And it is still the President of the Republic who ‘commands the armed forces, chairs the Supreme Defence Council, and declares a state of war as resolved by the Chambers’. Therefore, it seems to us genuinely arbitrary and a distortion of the state’s constitutional order to speak of ‘separate bodies’. One part of the Constitution that has yet to be implemented is that relating to the organisation of the executive, specifically with regard to ‘the organisation of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the number of responsibilities and the organisation of the ministries’. In reality, the problem with the organisation of the executive is not just a question of the number of ministries, as some critics simplistically claim, but a genuine problem of reorganising functions. This has become particularly relevant with the establishment of the regions. In fact, the transfer of certain functions to the regions has effectively stripped some ministries of their powers. Hence, these ministries should be radically reorganised, or even placed within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in line with its role as a ‘unity of political and administrative direction’. I therefore believe it is wrong to blame the rigid constraints of the Constitution for the failure of our executive arrangements, when it is the Constitution itself that provides for the reorganisation of the executive to make it more efficient and functional.

Another important body, set up later than provided for by the Constitution, is the Constitutional Court. Its main task is to safeguard the ‘constitutional legitimacy of laws and acts having the force of law issued by the state and the regions’. If Parliament had been swift to bring ordinary legislation into line with the new constitutional provisions, the Court’s role would have been purely one of safeguarding. In reality, the Constitutional Court, through its judgments, did more to innovate ordinary legislation than the Parliament of the Republic did through its legislative initiative. However, the Constitution stipulated that part of the legislative

function would be devolved to the regions, while Parliament would be responsible for the primary legislative function – the major laws aimed at modernising the state and governing relations between the state and its citizens, and between citizens themselves – in line with the constitutional framework. I genuinely believe that the delay in establishing the regions has thrown the entire process of reforming the state off balance, altering the functions of the various powers and the intended checks and balances between them. At this point, therefore, we should question whether it is still possible to fully implement the Constitution, and what factors have hindered its implementation so far, and are therefore hindering it, or could hinder it again.

Just a few years after the Constitution was promulgated, Piero Calamandrei, who had played a key role in its drafting, expressed the fear that, in the end, the Constitution would be no more than the façade of the new state, behind which the old liberal edifice would remain intact, even made worse by fascism. Indeed, there had been a tangible, pragmatic return to reducing the Constitution to a mere set of procedural safeguards, and it was clear that the delays and the slow progress were not merely technical in nature.

Indeed, as we have already said, the Constitution of the Italian Republic is not merely a legal document; it is an expression of the political conditions of Italian society in the aftermath of the liberation struggle. Accordingly, it was bound to be continually influenced by changes in those very political conditions. In Italy, the change that occurred on the international stage with the start of the Cold War led to a breakdown in cooperation between the forces that had been united in the Resistance and in the drafting of the Constitution. These forces therefore found themselves divided in exercising the sovereign power, which, according to the intention of the framers, was the basis on which the dynamic implementation of the Constitution was to be founded.

For example, it is no coincidence that a certain constitutional thaw began in Italy with the shift from centrism to the centre-left,

that is, with the broadening of the democratic base of the state through the inclusion of larger sections of the population. The Constitutional Court, the implementation of the regions, the Workers' Statute, and other significant pieces of legislation that reflect the spirit of the Constitution can be realised when favourable political conditions for implementing the Constitution are created, while there is clearly a setback or a delay whenever political struggle leads to a break between the forces that drafted the Constitution.

The policy for implementing the Constitution – not just for the next few years, but probably for the next few decades – is to be the track along which we build a state that effectively replaces the old authoritarian, centralist state that merely guarantees rights. The new, democratic state should be founded on local and regional autonomy and aimed at achieving substantive equality among citizens. Therefore, the nature of the political relationships between the forces that drafted the Constitution and those that are now called upon, albeit in different capacities, to make its implementation possible is clearly relevant.

For example, when faced with the danger of a neo-fascist resurgence, it is logical – and indeed imperative – for the anti-fascist camp to regain its unity. This is regardless of whether some forces are in government by popular mandate and others are in opposition as a result of the different outcome of democratic political struggle. This anti-fascist unity is not the result of momentary expediency, or worse, of opportunism. Rather, it is the application of the transitional provision of the Constitution that prohibits 'the reorganisation, in any form whatsoever, of the dissolved Fascist Party'. Therefore, dialogue, cooperation or debate between all political forces is in line with the Constitution, while a return to fascism is contrary to the Constitution.

Given that the values of anti-fascism, the Resistance and democracy are shared by all the political forces that contributed to the drafting of the Constitution, we should bear in mind that the process of implementing the Constitution is qualitatively and

politically different from forming a coalition government. In order to form a government, a concrete agreement is needed on what needs to be achieved in terms of economic policy, social policy, and foreign policy. So it is clear that the differences – even profound ones – between the various political forces make it impossible to reach an agreement among all the forces in the country. When it comes, instead, to implementing the Constitution, the relationship between the government and the opposition must not prevent efforts to achieve the broadest possible consensus among all the forces within the constitutional arc. Moreover, there is a highly significant historical precedent: in 1947, when, as a result of the international situation, the tripartite coalition (DC, PSI, PCI) that had governed the country up to that point broke down in an incandescent political climate, Title v of the Constitution, relating to the Regions, was approved by the Constituent Assembly with the votes of the Christian Democrats, the Liberals, the Social Democrats and the Communists. This, even though the Communists were in opposition and the other parties were in government. Despite the very deep political divisions of the time, it was possible to find unity at a moment when the new state that had to be built was taking shape.

Clearly, the same spirit is needed if we want to move from statements of principle to putting the Constitution into practice. We want to remove Calamandrei's objection that we have limited ourselves to building a façade that hides the old state. Therefore, regardless of how political forces are arranged into government and opposition, we must once again put forward, as a fundamental requirement, dialogue, convergence, and a willingness to seek and reach agreements whenever the legislative process encounters matters of constitutional implementation. These affect not only all political forces but also all citizens.

Therefore, the problem of implementing the Constitution is not a moralistic one, where the government and Parliament can be accused of laziness. It is rather a problem of political will aimed at restarting a march that, while remaining distinct, led us from the

Liberation to the drafting of the Constitution. Moreover, such a path is facilitated today by the fact that the international situation is different from the one that led to the Cold War and the confrontation between opposing blocs. Equally flawed is the argument put forward by those who claim that the inefficiencies of our political system are attributable to the now-outdated Constitution and that we should move towards a presidential republic, with a strong executive capable of governing. In practice, these arguments once again propose overcoming the crisis of the state through an abstract model of organisation. But it is unclear how this model could lay the foundations for genuine national harmony or for a real connection between the state and the realities of society. In opposing these calls for constitutional reform, we do not mean to argue that the Constitution should remain unchanged in its entirety. Rather, we think that it should be implemented to its full potential, giving full prominence to the dynamism it embodies. By helping to build around the Constitution a mobilisation of culture and schools, as well as ongoing popular support, we strengthen the republic and its democratic institutions. In fact, the construction of the state is based not only on rules, laws, and government actions, but also on customs, on ways of living, and on the presence and participation of all citizens. In other words, the Constitution will remain alive and vital if we courageously resume the process of implementing it. However, this process does not depend solely on the will of this or that government, but on a general impetus from the forces at work in society. These shall concretely reaffirm the principle that it is not society that must adapt to the state, but the state that must adapt to a democratically developing society.

*Strengths and Weaknesses of Centrism**

After the closure of the magazine La Base, the final issue of which was published on 30 July 1954, the Base faction of Christian Democracy launched a new publishing venture, Prospettive. This first appeared on 10 November 1954, a few months after the Fifth Congress of Christian Democracy, held in Naples from 26 to 30 June. Marchetti was the editor-in-chief, while the editorial team included Granelli, Gian Aldo Arnaud, Galloni, Giuseppe Chiarante, Giovanni Di Capua, Rampa and Marcora.

Like its fortnightly predecessor, the new magazine continued the political battle in the name of anti-fascist values, the renewal of the party, the building of a democratic state, the fight against monopolies, and a different form of anti-communism that took into account the needs of the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

Following the Naples Congress, which had elected four Base councillors, Prospettive was to represent a concrete political line. While its tone was no longer as 'youthful' as that of the previous magazine, it remained consistent with its own choices and with its commitment to achieving the objectives that followed from them, as part of its new responsibilities within the Christian Democracy party.

The speech delivered in the Chamber of Deputies by Hon. Togni, which was already vigorously rejected by the Christian Democrat grassroots at the Naples congress, can serve as an effective point of reference when examining the political situation. Of course,

* L. Granelli, 'Forza e debolezza del centrismo' [Strengths and weaknesses of centrism], in *Prospettive*, 10 November 1954.

we need to grasp the political motive underlying the deplorable incidents, without confining ourselves to moralistic judgements that stigmatise, on one side, the extreme intolerances and, on the other, call for a firm defence of Parliament's dignity.

Let us take the latter for granted and focus on the former.

Few people noticed, or wanted to notice, that the Tuscan MP's speech was – among other things – a provocation and an attack on the DC's overall line and on the Scelba government.

The Hon. Togni expressed the need for a 'strong and authoritarian policy' against communism – a stance typical of the Catholic right within and outside the DC. Now, it is clear that he is challenging both the centre-left line agreed in Naples, deemed too compromising in the face of the 'communist danger', and the government policy based on solidarity among the democratic parties, deemed weak and inadequate because it is fighting on two fronts. In any case, we think there is no point in raising a scandal or merely assigning personal liabilities: it is well known that the intolerant Tuscan MP will never keep quiet, as MP Dossetti once did. Togni will go on playing the Italian McCarthy, in defiance of every appeal to respect the congress decisions of the party to which he belongs.

In politics, one cannot expect to influence what cannot be influenced. It would be a mistake to assess the situation on the basis of frameworks that do not reflect reality, which is what it is. Reality shows that the fundamentalist and authoritarian tendencies, held in check for so long by De Gasperian centrism, find their main impetus to harden and spread in the current weakness of the centrist balance. Therefore, rather than engaging in a pointless debate with the new champion of old and now outdated right-wing solutions, it is more important to examine the political situation in Italy without seeking to turn a blind eye to the limitations of the four-party formula. While recognising its great value as 'democratic resistance', we must seek a way forward, with energy and courage, to promote the development of the state in the interests of the people, which remains the only

practical means of blocking the authoritarian temptations encouraged by the monarchist–MSI camp.

To do this, we need unflinching analysis and a sense of proportion.

Today, it is easy to make the same mistake as the left, which attacks the Scelba–Saragat formula – a formula condemned to immobility for causes far more complex than the will of the cabinet itself. In doing so, the left is indirectly playing the same game of the right. Or it may fall into the blurred perspective of the smaller parties, who present themselves as the sole defenders of democracy and freedom, perhaps squabbling over agricultural contracts (Liberals) or stamping their feet over the appointment of an ambassador to Washington or a minister for entertainment (Social Democrats). This way, it forgets that the true defence of centrism lies not so much in securing ministerial seats, as in the country itself, and to the extent that they are able to spread the prestige of a formula among the working classes. This formula has emerged from universal suffrage, and will ultimately have to be judged by the majority of citizens at the ballot box.

Is democracy and freedom best defended by overthrowing the Scelba–Saragat government before a better ‘democratic’ solution has been found? Or by clinging to a defence of the four-party coalition, which remains a mere formality unless it finds a way to engage with the popular movement sweeping the country?

Clearly not.

We are convinced that the great strength of this political alliance lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it represents a concrete anchorage in the anti-fascist camp – albeit in its moderate, reformist form. On the other, it continues the ‘secular’ conception of the state that is characteristic of De Gasperi’s approach. Indeed, this coalition rejects – even though in many cases it is forced to endure it in practice or in the form of provocations – the fascism of the industrial bloc and a unilateral, reactionary policy. Thereby it aligns itself with the traditions of the Resistance as the foundation of a popular state that

goes beyond the limits of pre-fascist democracy. The Hon. Togni's attack also clearly demonstrates that the current government is not a sufficient tool for the anti-Communist struggle, whether on the terrain of McCarthyism or that of political Catholicism. The latter is attempting to bypass the DC and the Resistance in order to reconnect with the traditions of Gentiloni. These traditions would lead Catholics to play a 'substitute' role in preserving the bourgeois state in the face of the rising proletarian and peasant tide. This would unnaturally and catastrophically conflate both religious interests – in their spiritual dimension – and political interests – in their dimension of freedom – and would further exacerbate both the crisis of the state and the specifically religious crisis in Italian society.

This shows that the current formula in fact also represents a continuity of the state's 'secular' meaning, against any integralist venture that would take us back within the historic 'political fence' (De Gasperi, 'Letter to Fanfani').

However, alongside the considerable strength of today's 'centrism', we cannot remain silent about its fundamental weaknesses. We have already spoken of the inertia that unfairly seems to affect this government. To get a sense of this predicament, one need only consider the predicament of the smaller parties, which have not yet managed to mount an effective comeback of their own. Then there is the policy of the industrial and agricultural bloc, which defends the government half-heartedly because it guarantees a certain 'security', but nevertheless uses the chain of newspapers it controls to present alternatives that are certainly not left-wing, and to inflate the stature of those who propose them beyond measure. Beyond that, the most serious limitations of the current coalition are those relating to the lack of popular forces to sustain it with the necessary breadth across the country.

The government crisis represents a standstill in executive power that needs to be seen as part of the wider political crisis facing the state. Against this backdrop, the illusion of resolving the crisis within the current democratic stronghold, and the myth of social reformism,

are shattered. A series of social reforms that leave economic structures intact and do not address the desire for freedom that underpins certain fundamental needs of the working classes will never be able to bring about a genuine 'growth' in trust or a real broadening of the state's political foundations. Besides, these are already under strain due to the country's reduced margins of stability. For this reason, we reaffirm the urgent need for a bold overhaul of social imbalances. However, it is worth reiterating: neither parliamentary manoeuvring nor any solidarity among the leading parties can overcome the crisis if this is not reflected at the grassroots level, among the working classes. We need a series of political commitments across the country to ensure a democratic understanding of the role that the Catholic and secular masses must play as constituents of the democratic state currently being built. For this reason, the DC has undertaken an exemplary nationwide reorganisation effort, with the aim of creating a fundamentally new political situation. This is based on real problems rather than on necessarily rigid ideological intransigence. The success of this commendable endeavour will depend on the extent to which it is not only organisational in nature, but also linked to the urgent need for the comprehensive and balanced development of Italian society as a whole. Viewed in this light, it seems to us that the weaknesses of the current 'centrism' are acceptable, because no other combination has so much strength. Indeed, in the last resort, this provides genuine protection against right-wing adventures and, safeguards the anti-fascist and secular nature of the state. This way, it enables all political parties to review their policies and to provide development and growth among the working classes. This, in turn, that can reconcile ideological differences on the basis of real interests, thereby offering the country a broad democratic alternative which, carried through at the top, will deflate to the point of ridicule the absurd pretensions of the Hon. Togni and the Italian right.

*Sturzo's Democratic Vision of the Party**

The Centro Luigi Puecher held the conference Il Partito Popolare: validità di un'esperienza (The Popular Party: A Valuable Legacy) in Milan on 8 February 1969, to commemorate several significant dates: the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Popular Party, the centenary of Filippo Meda's birth, and the tenth anniversary of Sturzo's death. Attendees at the conference included Vittorino Colombo, Scoppola, Gronchi, and Gabriele De Rosa, among others.

For Granelli, as for the Base, Sturzo was an important point of reference, despite their differing views, particularly on economic issues. Indeed, the influence of Sturzo's thinking emerges in the field of political ideals, especially the following: the relevance of the democratic nature of the state, the fight against clientelism, the tool of proportional representation for renewing the party and parliamentary leadership, and, finally, his belief that local autonomy was a guarantee of transparency and freedom.

Sturzo's teachings were also important in defining the role of political parties, seen as concrete instruments of political struggle rather than as abstract, dogmatic 'places' disconnected from historical contingencies. These reflections led Granelli to maintain a constant focus on the problems of the state and the institutional order.

Identifying Luigi Sturzo's conception of the party in his thinking and actions does not mean mechanically reproducing a model of political power in a profoundly different era. Such a step would demonstrate a complete misunderstanding of Sturzo's teaching.

* VARIOUS AUTHORS, *Il Partito Popolare: validità di un'esperienza* [The Popular Party: A Valuable Legacy], Centro Studi Luigi Puecher, Milan, 1969, pp. 403–420.

Instead, we need to grasp the key elements that led this conception to success, how it addressed the problems of the time, and the theoretical framework – still valid in principle, although in need of adaptation to the specific historical context – of a major popular and democratic political force inspired by Christianity. Therefore, we will not focus on the specific events and the long struggles that led to the establishment of the Popular Party as one of the most significant forces in Italy's national development. We will not even refer to the concrete actions and struggles of the Popular Party during its short existence, which could very well also be subject to severe criticism and error checking. Instead, we will be focusing above all on the intellectual effort to pave the way for the emergence in Italy of a modern, Christianity-inspired Popular Party.

With his typical clarity, Sen. Gronchi painted a precise and detailed picture of the situation. He recalled that the lively activity of the Popular Party had been very short. Indeed, from an operational point of view, three years for a party are perhaps less than three days. However, the vigour and strength of the struggle waged over those three years, or the subsequent unwavering resistance to authoritarian temptations and pressures can be appreciated by retracing the historical period that prepared the birth of the Italian Popular Party. Luigi Sturzo's appeal 'to the free and the strong' from the old Hotel Santa Chiara was not a sudden gesture. Rather, it was the liminal point of a concrete political struggle that followed it. Indeed, anyone familiar with the background to this popular movement will know that the key elements of the party's ideology can be traced back to the Caltagirone speech of 1905. In that speech, with great foresight, Luigi Sturzo set out a coherent, precise and concise model of political force that was innovative and profoundly revolutionary compared to previous conceptions within the Italian Catholic movement at the time. The period from 1905 to 1919 is longer than the period in which the party engaged in concrete political struggle. Indeed, those years were crucial in developing greater maturity and, among the friends who would later work with Sturzo, greater awareness of the vision

that Sturzo himself had already clearly outlined as early as 1905. It is therefore worth recalling, in essence, the key features of the model of political force that Sturzo shaped through his actions from the start – those features that remain valid despite the passage of time.

Politics as a living expression of the trends shaping society

We know what the political and social climate in Italy was like at the start of the twentieth century. On the one hand, the ruling bourgeois class, buoyed by its Risorgimento achievements but lacking any genuinely liberal drive, was willing to resort to any kind of political opportunism in order to hold onto power. Clientelism triumphed, representing the worst form of political humiliation. On the other hand, the Catholic masses were estranged from the state because they had rejected the Risorgimento process. And yet, they were profoundly divided among themselves as to how to overcome this alienation. The intransigent old guard – who, upon the death of the King, appeared in the newspapers with headlines such as: ‘The King is dead; long live the Pope’ – continued its doctrinal and practical battle of rejection. It abstractly denied the principles of the French Revolution, of democratic and constitutional achievements, and of the liberal state. In short, on a practical level this resulted in Catholics’ abstention from public life. This doctrinal and practical abstention was even formally reinforced by the principle of ‘non expedit’, which prohibited Catholics from voting. But alongside this underlying intransigent tendency, a movement was emerging within the Opera dei Congressi – which brought together the various Catholic organisations – that Sturzo, in a telling statement, defined as ‘constitutional hybridism’. Such a commitment stood halfway between a religiously framed defence of historical rights and of the Church, and a willingness to bring out certain flaws in the state system and act to amend them. Now, this constitutional hybridism by the Opera dei Congressi movement mixed the religious with the social, and added to the intransigence, which reduced our doctrine to a

mere rejection of the reality of the state. These two obstacles stood in the way of the advent of the Popular Party. How were these obstacles overcome? With what characteristics did Don Sturzo give life to the popularist movement that later led to the founding of the Popular Party?

I will limit myself to a few key points, the first of which is highly topical. On this, I fully agree with Professor Scoppola, namely that Sturzo's keen political instinct was driven by historical and social reality rather than by principles alone. Indeed, Sturzo was critical, for example, of the doctrinaire approach of someone like Toniolo, who conceived of society and its organisation in an organic but abstract way. His construction, however monumental it might be, was irrelevant to any concrete historical and political action. On the contrary, and in a remarkably modern way, Sturzo conceived of politics as a living expression of society's developmental trends; in other words, he linked politics to what grows, moves and is vital in society. On that basis he exercised a mediating function for principles which, otherwise – detached from the living fabric of historical development – would remain mere, unusable abstractions.

Let us not forget that protest – now fashionable both as a term and as an attitude – existed then too, and was profound. The dissatisfaction of the southern lower classes, the protests of the peasant masses, the impatience with Giolitti's clientelism, and the contrast between the 'real' country and the 'official' country were all evidence of a lively and widespread discontent within civil society, and, at the same time, of the need to find a political outlet to change the situation. In the course of this conference, reference has been made to Christian sociology – a topic that would take us a long way in terms of its definition. Now, I believe that an aspect of Sturzo still needs to be explored in depth and made better known to the general public, namely Sturzo as a sociologist. In this regard, he was not inspired by a fundamentalist or ideologised form of sociology that claims to explain the whole of reality on the basis of certain fixed principles. Rather, his historicist approach sought to interpret social

phenomena not as simple sectoral facts but as elements that affect society as a whole and its development dynamics. Precisely that vivid understanding of society, with its problems, its protests and its movements, allowed Sturzo to give a political interpretation, or a political meaning, to the tensions of his time.

Sturzo's fight for local autonomy cannot be explained without considering its close link with society. Likewise, the fight for proportional representation – which was not a technical battle but a battle for freedom – or the fight for universal and women's suffrage cannot be explained without considering them as political reasons and practical means of liberation. In fact, they were meant to free Italian political life from Giolitti's clientelism and mend the separation between social forces and the race for political power. Therefore, it seems to me that the first vital element of popularism is about politics meant not as an abstract projection of principles, nor as the mere organisation of protest and dissent, but as the ability to mobilise and organise social forces against clientelist exploitation, in order to assert their autonomy – that is, to achieve a concrete political outcome that is consistent with the needs expressed by society.

A clear historical consciousness beyond deterministic evolutionary thinking and sociological pragmatism.

The second important factor that explains how Sturzo could, in practice, overcome the aforementioned obstacles of tradition and mindset widespread in the Catholic movement at the time lies in his keen sense of history. In this regard, I agree with Gronchi's remark about certain shortcomings of the younger generations. I am not referring to my generation, which rediscovered Sturzo and popularism in the struggles following the Resistance. Rather, I mean today's younger generations, who almost always run the risk of launching their opposition and protest from ground zero, with no sense of the past, no awareness of tradition, and without any context. Such a 'ground zero' approach to protest often ends up undermining the protest itself. In fact, denying and rejecting all past experience ultimately leads to frustration, powerlessness, and an inability to find

a political outlet for contemporary social phenomena.

On the other hand, it was precisely his historical awareness that enabled Sturzo to tackle certain problems of his time successfully. Rather than uncritically rejecting the past, he sought to grasp the reasons and background for behaviours and traditions. That is why, when faced with the Opera dei Congressi, Sturzo did not adopt a position of indignant rejection, nor did he limit himself to criticising its constitutional hybridity. Instead, while working to overcome it, he made a careful appraisal. He thus realised that, within the diverse group that was the Opera dei Congressi lay the tradition of early Christian Democracy and the stirrings of the *Leghe Bianche*. In other words, the Opera dei Congressi contained forces that were in many respects very different from those that it intended to represent as a whole.

Drawing on his keen and well-researched understanding of history, Sturzo was able to derive the conditions for overcoming the Opera dei Congressi. At the same time, though, he could preserve, as a legacy for the Popular Party, the vital elements that also existed within that hybrid institution. Similarly, Sturzo was able to understand the reasons for the Italian state's crisis and to point out the paths to its transformation through the assumption of political responsibility by the Catholic popular classes. He did so precisely by recognising that national unity was a good thing, but that there were flaws and limitations in the Risorgimento process carried out in our country by the liberal class. Undoubtedly Sturzo's understanding of history was not an uncritical acceptance of deterministic evolutionism; it was not a mechanical view of change as an unceasing advance that 'always moves in a straight line', as he liked to say. Rather, it was an understanding of the vicissitudes of history, of its ups and downs, and of possible setbacks; it was, therefore, an ability to link the actions of the forces at work in society to the living sense of the history yet to be made.

I want to emphasise this need, on the one hand, to be aware of the deep-rooted shortcomings of the nation's political history and of

the position of the Catholic movement, and, on the other, to identify the elements of development that have always been present even in past historical experiences – whether these concern, as in the case of the Popular Party, the nation's history or the history of the Catholic movement. It is a lesson that we should all keep constantly in mind. Anyone familiar with the current reality of political parties knows very well how – for example, in today's Christian Democracy – far too little effort is made to pass on to the younger generations a sense of their link with our past. This link must certainly not be a mechanical one, because in that way one would misrepresent Sturzo's living lesson. Rather, it must be a critical link: a connection of thought, an awareness of belonging to the same tradition of struggle that sees politically conscious action as a force for historical construction.

A precise vision of a Catholic party's political autonomy: a national vocation

Quite rightly, Scoppola pointed out that Sturzo's understanding of autonomy for the political party of Catholics was not merely about non-confessionalism. Rather, for Sturzo, autonomy was a far broader concept than separatism.

The idea of the Catholics' political autonomy is probably the most powerfully innovative idea that Sturzo introduced into Catholic political thought and, more importantly, into Catholic political action. However, in this case too – and perhaps especially in this case – his preparation was thorough and methodical. Indeed, in his 1905 speech in Caltagirone, he stated: 'The party of Catholics is not an ecclesiastical offshoot in the clerical sense of the word, nor is it or can it be a monarchical offshoot in the sense given to it by the Liberals: defending the altar is defending the religion, and defending the throne is defending the principle of authority. But neither the altar nor the throne are organic components of the party of Catholics; they do not compose the constitutional framework of a free, constitutional, popular life.' In other words, the motivations behind

Catholics' political engagement were distinctly democratic and popular, and therefore the party of Catholics was conceptually autonomous in that it pursued its own ends – the ends of democratic citizens – and not simply the ends of Catholics. Of course, Sturzo was well aware of the existence of the Roman Question, and also of how sensitive it was for some Catholics. He certainly had no intention of denying the problem or being indifferent to its resolution. Clearly, the issue of religious freedom is too important for a sincere Catholic to ignore. However, Sturzo had a comprehensive understanding of the party's autonomy, and had the strength to place the issue of religious freedom within it. Hence, such freedom was not an issue exclusive to Catholic political militancy, but rather one aspect of the broader question of freedom in Italy. Indeed, he stated: 'Catholics, as a nucleus of people with a specific ideal and vitality, must address this issue, which, among other problems, also takes in the religious one, but not as a religious congregation [...], nor as a clerical party defending the Church's historical rights, but as a reason for civic life inspired by the Christian principles of public morality, in sociological terms, in the development of fruitful thought, and in the concrete realities of political life.'

Therefore, a sense of national vocation gave the party of Catholics strength and autonomy. In other words, it placed Catholic democrats on the same level of legitimacy as other citizens. It liberated them from the 'papal' subordination to which they were confined, from their political abstention, and from the way they were judged by other political forces. Moreover – as Sturzo again stated – 'as the old organisation disintegrated and the activities of Catholic associations were essentially confined to the religious movement, our active members began to regain a clear awareness of the constitutional hybrid nature of the *Opera dei Congressi* and of the consequent impossibility of achieving any position within it as a national party'.

A battle fought solely for religious freedom would have ended up leaving Catholics immobilised outside the structures of the State,

preventing their concrete contribution to the other issues of Italian society. Sturzo, with his organic and institutional conception of freedom – by preserving which religious freedom too would be affirmed, and by affirming which the rights of religion too would be safeguarded – brought Catholics back within the framework of constitutional legality and enabled them – on an absolutely equal footing – to collaborate with the other political forces to solve shared national problems.

The primacy of thought and its dialectical development through the free interplay of different factions

In this regard, a highly significant passage by Sturzo illustrates better than any comment of my own the deep conviction that political thought is formed through dialectical debate and the resulting synthesis. 'Perhaps not everyone will deem it appropriate to address issues considered premature for contemporary Italian public sentiment, or at least issues that, especially for Catholics, should be addressed with an authoritative voice rather than with free discussion [...]. Instead, I believe that every historical event is prepared by the formation of thought, just as every law is imposed more by facts and convictions than by mere authority. [...] Discussion of problems, therefore, is preparatory to any solution, even if it is then up to an authority, whatever it may be, to judge and decide. Historical solutions require discussion, which in turn becomes life; and I feel the need for such discussions, which do not reduce life to abstract philosophising, but apply theories to life – and to that life which, by a comprehensive and natural fact we all share and widely experience, and nowadays we call national.' One cannot fail to notice Sturzo's intellectual and political honesty here. But aside from that, it is worth noting from a historical perspective that the congresses of the Popular Party were, in fact, quite dynamic and marked by a greater diversity of political positions and even fundamental beliefs, than the subsequent post-war congresses of the Christian Democracy party

appeared to be. And yet, despite this, popularism never questioned its own unity (I certainly do not regard the phenomenon of certain members who defected and gave in to fascism as a rupture within popularism). In fact, in Sturzo's view, the dialectical element of the clash of ideas and the search for a common political position was a key, conscious factor. At the Bologna congress, when Sturzo said that religion is universality and politics is division, and that the Party should not be confused with the Church, he also said that if politics is diversity, then out of that diversity must arise the ability to seek out certain political approaches by means of a common method.

Based on this strong idealistic drive, which was nevertheless firmly rooted in the country's reality, Sturzo consistently fought against an approach – unfortunately still very much alive today – that drew up abstract, almost testamentary lists of things to do, which remained wishful if there was no real commitment to achieving them or if they were detached from the historical context. He used to say: 'A programme comes to life when, alongside its declaration, there is a historical judgement on how to implement it and the construction of a political thought. It demands a unifying cement through research and dialectic.' This is at once a lesson in political realism and in internal party democracy. Sturzo never argued against different currents of thought; on the contrary, he always valued them if, as they should, they represented an element of dialectic and research in the development of political thought that is never definitively fixed.

Only in this way can the party become a school of thought and action. Only in this way do speeches cease to be a ritual in which people often do not believe, and instead become a living experience that links what is said to what is done. Only in this way, on the basis of consistency, can the work of politicians be judged, and it is on this basis that we must today call upon the current political class to measure themselves against this standard and allow themselves to be judged.

The organic and subsidiarity-based conception of the state and the international

legal order: the relationship between society and political institutions

This latter aspect of Sturzo's thinking is certainly the least original, and I would even say that it falls within the traditional framework of Catholic political philosophy, rooted in Thomism. Of course, when Sturzo proposed the creation of an independent, democratic and popular Catholic party, his intention was not to revolutionise Catholic political philosophy, but rather to provide Catholics with a tool for political action that was suited to the social relations and political institutions of the historical period in which they lived. His organic conception of the State, grounded in subsidiarity, is therefore entirely coherent. However, in line with his passion as a man of his time, it takes on a remarkably incisive historical significance and concreteness. The heavy class bias of the bourgeois state that emerged from the Risorgimento, the stifling centralism resulting from royal unification, and the economic and social problems of the southern masses were all very specific historical factors that led Sturzo to campaign for democratic control of power (universal and proportional suffrage), for the strengthening of local autonomy, and for agrarian reform, cooperatives, and rural credit – in short, for all those institutions that could accommodate society's drive for creativity and renewal. All these issues, even individual and sector-specific ones, found common ground in the overarching institutional question: anything that could be resolved by institutions other than the state had to be entrusted to those institutions, and anything that had to be entrusted to the state had to be decided with the involvement of the people as a whole. In this way, the purpose of power took on a very specific institutional content and form.

A certain weakness has been observed in the Popular Party's approach to foreign policy. This is certainly true of Sturzo's early writings, but, especially during his London exile years, a process of maturation had occurred on these issues, and this should not be overlooked. There, he firmly asserted that peace and law must form the foundation of the international order, and that it is necessary to

fight politically to overcome nationalist self-interest and establish cooperation between peoples. To some, these ideas may seem generous but utopian. However, the international events of recent decades have taught us that, in foreign policy, realism is not necessarily a virtue; that possibly the only way out of tensions and power blocs is pursuing with courage and conviction the utopia of peace and cooperation. After all, this is what people – especially the younger generations – now feel with clear awareness, in the West as in the East: the horror of war and the intolerability of the Cold War, of division into blocs, and of subordination to the superpowers.

What we have been outlining brings an important lesson to those of us who belong to a Catholic party fifty years after the founding of the Italian Popular Party. Of course, it is not a question of mechanically replicating a model – indeed, if we were to do that, we would be showing that we have misunderstood Sturzo's historical teachings. Rather, it is a matter of bearing in mind the essential characteristics of Sturzo's experience and presenting them anew in a way that is consistent with our own historical context. In this sense, I believe that the concept of the party as a voluntarist instrument is still alive and well today. This concept is rooted in a constant interpretation of the ferment of society and on an understanding of historical development that enables the mobilisation of the popular masses and the intellectual 'elites' for a political struggle that accepts the constitutional method and ideological tolerance.

However, I believe I can draw another valuable lesson from Sturzo's experience. I would particularly like to offer it to younger generations, as a candid critique of certain shortcomings that seem to emerge from their most widespread attitudes. This lesson is about the importance of the struggle for enforcing principles in history. Once certain objectives have been conceptually identified, we need the patience, tenacity, and courage to pursue them. In his speech in Caltagirone in 1905, Sturzo already had a clear vision of what would later become the Popular Party, yet the party was not founded until fourteen years later.

The party was founded in 1919 because Sturzo was aware that, once the ideal goal had been set out, he would not achieve concrete results. He would therefore implicitly expose the goal itself to criticism for being abstract and wishful, unless he embarked on and tenaciously pursued that long and patient struggle that turns the insights of a few into the cement of many people's commitment. This is the lesson that I believe we should remind the younger generations of today. Indeed, too many young people, when faced with disappointment over setbacks and with results that do not materialise in the short term, risk giving up the struggle, adopting a stance of disengaged indifference, or becoming frustrated with the unfolding of history.

There is an interesting anecdote worth recalling in this regard. A few days after Sturzo delivered his Caltagirone speech in 1905, the statutes of the Catholic organisations of the time were published. They provided both an ideal and a practical refutation of what Sturzo had argued. Concerned that the stance of Catholic organisations at that time might cause confusion and undermine the trust of those who were beginning to understand his concept of a Catholic party, Sturzo added a postscript to his speech that is remarkably illuminating. Indeed, he wrote: 'We must therefore work and fight against the distrust of those who view life through the narrow lens of petty details [...]. Any conservative formula will only ever be a hindrance to be removed, never an obstacle that blocks the way. The ideal of a national Catholic party remains intact as the most legitimate and necessary aspiration for the vitality of militant Catholics; [...] the influence of this ideal cannot be circumvented by half-measures or by attempts that do not win the trust of the majority: the journey, though hindered, can only be delayed, not brought to a halt. After all, no one believes that progress is a straight-line ascent; that would be the worst mistake, which would lead us to suicide.' Our final observations follow on from this fine page of political will. Today, there is a lot of talk about the crisis of political parties, about the disconnect between parties and civil society, and about the loss of

capacity, prestige and imagination among political forces. All of this is true, although in part it is not new, and in my view it stems from two related sets of separations. The first is the separation from society: the self-reinforcement of ideology, political thought, and 'programme-making' without direct contact with society, and the self-reinforcement of political and power struggles within the party itself, rather than in engagement with other political forces. In other words, political parties are losing that relationship with society – a relationship that is not purely sociological – which makes them what they are: entities capable of offering a political explanation of phenomena and a political response to society's needs. However, there is also a second type of disconnect. This is even more serious because it does not concern the institution itself, but the very level of individual consciousness: it is the disconnect, or rather the impermeability, between thought and action. People say one thing and then do another; they make promises and then do not keep them; they agree to all the rhetoric and then undermine it. Political debate has ceased to prioritise ideas; it no longer gives space to different schools of thought as important opportunities for reflection in the search for the best solution to the country's problems. The degeneration of political struggle into bitter clashes between power groups, and often even between individuals, can no longer be tolerated, as it threatens to undermine the parties and could bring down democratic institutions themselves. Therefore, as a matter of survival, at the very least, the parties need a profound overhaul of their structure and methods. This overhaul must restore these parties to their role as schools for developing political ideas and policies, re-establish the link with society that will enable them to become informed advocates for institutional reform in order to make room for greater autonomy, and reinstate dialogue and debate between the various political parties in accordance with democratic and constitutional principles. Even in the face of the current youth protests, which at their core tend to target and undermine the party system itself, responsible political forces must guard against two

opposing errors: on the one hand, the outright rejection of these young people's demands and the condemnation of their methods, which gives rise to an authoritarian temptation; on the other hand, a half-hearted attempt to exploit them, claiming to channel these new energies into the traditional opposition movement. In our view, these are not the ways to provide a practical political outlet for the demands for substance and method put forward by the younger generation – demands for genuine democracy, for participation, and for accountability – which cannot be ignored for too long. However, these demands can have a truly positive impact if they drive a renewal of the political parties, if they are channelled into the struggle to ensure the country's historical development, to heal the divide between civil society and the institutions, and to consolidate Italian democracy together with the grassroots as active participants.

In this respect, Sturzo's lesson remains valid: it calls not only for historical commemoration or recognition, but also for testimony in action and for the development of ideals and political thought.

*In the Struggle for a Democratic State**

Following the closure of the two magazines La Base and Prospettive, the faction acquired another publication, Stato Democratico, which first appeared on 10 October 1957.

The premises of Stato Democratico, which had a circulation of 25,000 copies¹, were in Milan, in Via S. Eufemia; the magazine carried the subtitle 'Quindicinale di politica e cultura' ('Fortnightly on Politics and Culture') and was edited by Felice Calcaterra, although Granelli was its cultural inspiration. This new fortnightly publication also addressed issues close to the heart of the Base: the building of an autonomous, national and popular Christian Democracy party, following the teaching of Sturzo and De Gasperi, and the realisation of equal enjoyment of the right to freedom, which could not be said to have been secured solely with the collapse of fascism and the disappearance of the ruling class of the liberal bourgeoisie.

At a time when dialogue with the Socialists seemed able to become a political reality, the title Stato Democratico became an emblem and a symbol of the aims with which the Base pursued the preparation for an opening to the left and its implementation. The magazine would make an important contribution to this, particularly at a local level. Speaking of this publishing venture, which came to an end in 1964, Granelli himself described it as a significant and instructive moment in Italy's cultural and political life¹.

We have devoted so much space to clarifying the national and

* ASILS, FG, series I, *Attività di partito* [Party Activities], b. 1, f. 2.

¹ V. Gallo, *Antologia di 'Stato Democratico' (1957–1959)* [Stato Democratico: Selected Writings (1957–1959)], cit., p. 11.

democratic role of the DC with a view to the task that falls to a majority party: to address and begin resolving the major, decisive problems that still hinder the development of a democratic state in Italy. Indeed, too many people forget that, in our country, the problem of a state that is organically based on the principles of democracy, guaranteed by the permanent and equal exercise of the right to liberty by all citizens, cannot be considered resolved with the collapse of fascism and the disappearance of the ruling class directly represented by the liberal bourgeoisie. Even the popular Resistance movement, the choice of a republican form of government, the independent and representative role of political parties and mass parties, and the major principled achievements enshrined in the new Constitution do not in themselves constitute a democratic state: they merely represent stages in a significant change in the political, institutional and legal framework, within which the gradual process of transforming our state structure has yet to take place. Only in this way can we justify the fact that, to this day, there remains a wide gulf between society and the state, between the Constitution's declarations of principle and certain backward aspects of the country's actual situation. So, at this point in history, what is the main and primary task of Italy's political forces? It is to work to replace the old apparatus of a hierarchical, centralising and protectionist state, which still survives in practice, with new and modern organic structures that are decentralised and capable of fostering the full development of all the energies already present, beyond the interests of particular groups. What other commitment could there be, then, if not that of ensuring the Constitution is fully implemented in every respect, and thus setting in motion the reunification of the state and society, without turning the former into an ideologically absolutist idol, and guaranteeing both the opportunity to progress and renew themselves within the framework of freedom. There is no doubt that the politics required by these needs are the only ones capable of advancing and developing the most important achievements of post-fascist democracy.

For some time now, in fact, Italy's political problem has been increasingly reduced to a mere problem of government. The political struggle is becoming increasingly heated and uncompromising, and political parties are led to view their relationships almost exclusively from the perspective of forming governments. At the same time, governments often delude themselves into believing that they can solve, through moderate social reform, problems that go beyond the economic sphere and touch on freedom. Take, for example, the so-called 'Southern question'. There is no doubt that this issue is the most striking example of the rift between the state and society that we wrote about, just as it is undeniable that the democratic governments of the past decade have made a serious commitment to tackling the economic depression in the South. But – and this is the key point – why, although these efforts have produced some economic results that cannot be underestimated, have they failed to bring about genuine civic development in southern society and to break the regrettable cycle of clientelism and political apathy?

Any reform policy that is reduced to government and sector-specific provisions (i.e. that is reduced to an intervention with no vision of general renewal, hence incapable of continuously improving the democratic environment in which the struggle between parties must freely develop) is inevitably destined to recreate new opportunities for clientelism and thus to perpetuate traditional *trasformismo*. This is especially true when such provisions come down from the top of the ministries through the channels of the bureaucracy or sub-government.

A similar phenomenon can be observed today, and certainly not by chance, in the most industrialised areas of northern Italy as well. In fact, the pressures of so-called neo-capitalist reformism, also driven by the temptation to turn trade union organisations into large patronage networks, tend not so much to overcome class divisions by responsibly integrating labour into the modern production process. Rather, they use technical innovations to absorb the working class more effectively in a paternalistic manner, thereby encouraging

the emergence of a labour aristocracy through high wages and preferential treatment.

Alongside this, one cannot fail to notice the dangerous resurgence across the country of demands from a wide range of groups, as well as the regrettable tendency of too many politicians to uncritically follow this trend, inevitably slipping into demagogic approaches to specific or sectoral issues. In all these cases, there is a growing failure to understand that freedom is a fundamental prerequisite for the lasting resolution of individual problems and for the distribution of well-being itself. But why is all this happening? In our view, this happens because, all too often, it is forgotten that Italy's political problem goes beyond the ordinary need simply to form governments, as is logically the case in countries where the state is an established reality. Instead, Italy has the extraordinary need to first and foremost establish and build a democratic state as outlined in the 1947 Constitution. In fact, the current state has unfortunately ended up surviving in a hybrid form through structures and institutions typical of the old liberal order that preceded it.

Therefore, there is a clear and unavoidable need to bring, as soon as possible, the political struggle between the parties onto the proper ground of the democratic state. The goal is not an escapism from the concrete, specific problems that have matured in our country, or from the ideological questions that arise from the changing relationships between the parties. Rather, we need to ensure that neither the problems nor the ideological questions are ever allowed to overstep, to the detriment of the freedom and rights guaranteed to everyone by the new constitutional and republican order. For this, above all, the difference between the democracy that emerged after the war and the pre-fascist democracy is key. In the pre-fascist democracy, the freedom and constitutional rights that formed the foundation of the state were bestowed by a sovereign power and guaranteed by a liberal ruling class (and it was precisely the parties with ideological and programmatic agendas that, with their emergence, brought Giolitti's system of forming governments

through essentially transformist electoral blocs into crisis). In the post-war period, instead, sovereignty passed entirely to the people, and the new Constitution had as its protagonists precisely the political parties, which drafted it in a climate of mutual tolerance that had a broad and providential significance for freedom. However, it is clear that if the current situation were to lead us once again to exhaust the entire political process in the practical formation of governments capable of governing but unable to tackle the underlying realities of Italian society and implement the new state structure in concrete terms, and if, on the other hand, the parties were to abandon the rule of tolerance and engage in a radical clash on the abstract terrain of their respective forms of integralism – that is, if they were to begin to fight among themselves to form a state deriving from their ideologies – then we would inevitably lose what sets the new democracy apart from the old – namely, the irreplaceable nature of party pluralism and the democratic character of a state founded precisely on the free overcoming of every partisan integralism. We could also, as happened in 1922, enter into a regime crisis capable of once again uniting all conservatives under the banner of the mythology of order, and of pushing all democrats into the complacent, but ideologically absolutist, orbit of the Communist initiative.

The above suffices to show that, in the face of the current uncertainties, each party absolutely needs, without pretence and with an awareness of its own limitations, to choose its rightful place in the struggle for an Italian democratic state. The rest will follow naturally. Within this framework, which guarantees freedom and progress, tolerance, and the continuity of our national tradition, the much-debated issues of political programmes and alliances will also find their proper resolution. Programmes will cease to be the grand electoral hoardings that each party uses to claim it can solve every problem on its own, only to come to a halt when faced with the need to form alliances that enable it to move from proclaiming programmatic principles to implementing them. Instead, they will strive to be a platform for limited, politically motivated

commitments, precisely to allow forces with different inspirations – but essentially driven by the same desire for renewal – to converge on democratic ground, without preconceptions or prejudices. Alliances will become instrumental to the political and programme objectives set, and it will not be the case, as in the regrettable days of the last four-party coalition, that the alliance subordinates programmes and politics to its own dogmatic definition.

In this way, programmes and alliances could enable an increasingly effective broadening of the democratic state's political base and further advance the country towards the goal set by De Gasperi as early as July 1944, when he declared in Rome: *'We want to put an end to pseudo-democratic experiments. The new state must be the definitive state in which the Italian people can govern themselves. It must be based on the widest possible participation of the masses, and decisions must not be made by a select few or by a party, but by the people'*. From this perspective, the fundamental issue of collaboration between Catholics and Socialists could be moved away from nebulous propagandistic frameworks and abstract ideological preconditions. It could be resolved – without ruling out collaboration with other forces on the Italian democratic left – both outside the narrow confines of Social Democratic reformism and beyond the Communist claim that socialism is perpetually immature. Party meetings will once again take place on the basis of far-reaching programmes, thus moving beyond both the practice of government compromises as an end in themselves and the risk of certain dangerous ideological ambushes. The Republican Constitution, besides being the legal matrix for building the new state order, will act as a higher-level moderating force against ideological integralisms.

*The Political Class and Party Renewal**

On 18 and 19 September 1965, the conference 'The Role of Parties in Italian Democracy' was held in Cadenabbia. It was organised by the Lombardy branch of the Christian Democracy party, of which Granelli was deputy secretary, almost a year after the party's ninth congress in September 1964 and ahead of the Organisational Assembly in Sorrento, held in October 1965.

On the first day, papers were presented by Sergio Cotta ('Parties and civil society in Italian democracy') and Leopoldo Elia ('Implementation of the Constitution with regard to relations between parties and institutions'). These were followed by a round-table discussion on the topic 'Democracy in crisis'. On the second day, speakers included Achille Ardigò, Galloni, Menapace, De Mita, and Franco Maria Malfatti, among others.

The Cadenabbia meeting was structured around two main strands: the implementation of the Constitution and the creation of a democratic system that would enable political parties to carry out their functions in modern and constructive forms. In this context, for example, the creation of the regions was intended as a key step towards eliminating the centralised management of power. From this perspective, the meeting was linked in spirit to the San Pellegrino conference of 1963 and aimed to initiate a discussion on the need for a change in the relationship between society and politics through a renewal of state institutions.

1. One of the most forceful criticisms of the party system is that it is undergoing a progressive and irreversible oligarchic regression. This would lead to the concentration of political power in the hands

* ASILS, FG, series I, b. 6.

of a few and, as a consequence, to the imposition of this unchallenged dominance on the very constitutional mechanisms of the state. It would be futile to question the basis of this trend, not least because the real problem is to identify the causes of the phenomenon and remedy it resolutely.

Indeed, the modern concept of democracy is inseparable from the idea of genuinely expanding the circle of power in every field, and of the regular turnover of the ruling class with members drawn from those who are governed. 'Democratic forms,' writes Dewey, 'are based on the idea that no man or limited set of men is wise enough or good enough to rule others without their consent. The positive value of this statement is that everyone who comes into contact with human institutions must play a part in creating them or upholding them.'

Therefore, the yardstick for measuring the development of democratic life cannot be based solely on the redistribution of income, the quantity of goods produced or consumed, or even the efficiency of institutions. Above all, it must be based on the degree of participation, accountability, and democratisation in the process of gaining and exercising power. Even reformist politics, if they do not tackle the concentration of power, can be – and indeed are – devoid of genuine democratic value, regardless of their economic and social outcomes. The way the hoped-for process of democratisation manifests itself also matters. Indeed, there is no doubt that, at certain times in history, circumstances have brought about significant changes in the political class. For example, the introduction of universal suffrage and the advent of Italian democracy in the aftermath of the collapse of fascism led, in various ways, to significant expansions of the political class. However, rather than paving the way for the continuous entry of new forces through the free rise of the most capable individuals, this resulted in more or less sophisticated forms of 'co-optation' by groups whose main aim is to consolidate their power, and who therefore neglect the qualitative aspects of this process.

This is the main cause of oligarchic backsliding, also facilitated by increasing socialisation and the expanding sphere of influence of public authorities. Against this backdrop, we should assess the commitment to internal renewal within the political parties that, in our constitutional system, represent the most important conduit for forming a democratic political class in the conquest and exercise of power. In this respect, the issue of the political class – which is fundamental to the development of democracy – concerns not only political parties but also institutions, since it is often the institutions themselves that push towards a concentration of power.

2. The discussion of the political class requires some clarification. The classic distinction between the leadership class and the political class, introduced by Mosca, Pareto, and other scholars to better analyse the relationship between the former and the latter, is well known. Clearly, the criticism of the oligarchic trend is of general significance, as it affects all sectors of civil society. In the civil service as in business, in schools as in the judiciary, in technical bodies as in trade unions, we are witnessing a narrowing of opportunities that impoverishes the ruling class and, in turn, has a negative impact on the level of the political class itself. Of course, the relationship is not a direct one. However, the widespread nature of the phenomenon reduces, or at least makes more difficult, the possibility of recruiting a broad range of managers with the necessary training and specific experience.

‘If the country’s directing class,’ as G. Dorso rightly wrote, ‘produces inadequate individuals who do not improve the composition of the ruling class, and consequently the ruling class in turn does not improve the composition of the political class, then the country is in marked decline until the conditions and the new forces necessary for political recovery come to fruition.’

Our focus here is not on the issue of the ruling class in its broad sense, as a factor determining the country’s civic development – which would first require a profound transformation of the education system – but on the more limited and relevant issue of the conditions

needed to foster the maturation of an adequate democratic political class. Indeed, generational renewal may also be irrelevant for this purpose, since age is not a defining qualification, and even turnover brought about through rigid mechanisms of party bureaucracy can entail many risks. The party must adopt a broad approach to the ways and methods of educating and selecting the political class.

Consequently, the discussion of this class, which primarily concerns the party as a political organisation oriented towards its own general aims, cannot be developed in integralist terms – that is, in terms of the party's absolute supremacy over society as a whole. Rather, it requires a pluralistic openness that can be succinctly summarised as an organic conception of the elites and their autonomous and complementary function.

The dangers of *trasformismo*, technocracy and corporatism, which have such a significant impact on the formation of the political class, are in fact the result of flawed relationships between the elites, of widespread centralism, of the persistent detachment of the governing classes, and of a decline in moral standards – in other words, of factors attributable to the absence, in our country, of genuine institutional pluralism and of a real, lived democracy.

Nevertheless, the problem of the democratic political class, understood as part of a wider leadership class, must be tackled decisively by the parties, since it is in this area that their commitment to renewal is most concretely expressed. But it must be tackled with a broad vision, not confined to training cadres to hold power in Parliament or in local institutions (and to instrumentalise all other social groups: the bureaucracy, the judiciary, intellectuals, etc.). It must address the very conception of the state, of democracy, and of how they understand their presence in civil society.

This clarification is essential, because it is precisely in relation to this point that we must look, within political parties, for the causes of crisis and for their inadequacy in properly tackling the problem of political education, renewal, and the role of a genuinely democratic political class.

3. The changes taking place in Italian society increasingly bring out a process whereby political parties become isolated – if one sets aside the civic act of voting – and a reduced influence of the political class. On the one hand, the proliferation of needs, spilling over into mass consumption, the myths of the affluent society, the imitation of the more well-off classes, and the many forms of alienation in leisure time, leads to an exacerbated individualism, perhaps as a reaction to certain flattening effects of socialisation. This in turn is matched by a lower level of commitment in the field of political action. On the other hand, one can observe significant shifts in the centres of power and in the places where decisions are made that directly influence individual and collective behaviour and, often more than political decisions, shape the overall direction of society's development.

The growing influence of economic forces over political representatives, who remain weak despite the vastness of the state's bureaucratic apparatus; the inevitable reliance of politicians holding public office on experts and technical specialists for their decisions; and the need to take into account, alongside Parliament and its executive arm (the government), the unilateral decisions of major interest groups – these are just the most obvious aspects of an increasingly complex situation that requires political parties to develop a new capacity for initiative and hegemony, made all the more difficult by the indifference that surrounds political parties, especially among the new social classes.

All this shows that, in the face of the dynamics of contemporary social development – both as a mass phenomenon and in its effects on institutions and the organisation of power – political parties must adapt their structures and their methods. They must also promote a new approach to recruiting and training the political class, if they are to defend their decisive role in a society that is changing rapidly, driven by impulses from various sources.

Many people see this adjustment in organisational, technical and operational terms. Therefore, we see new organisational models, larger party bureaucracies, new slogans, new tools of public authority

that overlap with the old ones without replacing them, new compromises between interest groups: in short, a chaotic scramble to avoid being left out of the ongoing transformations.

Evidently, such an outcome is a conceptual and practical reversal. Instead of being an overarching vision aimed at guiding the development of society based on core values, political action inevitably becomes a mere administration of power, subordinated to a circumstance-led course of action. Under the guise of integralist ideologies or preconceived models of historical development – increasingly abstract and detached from the movement of reality – the crisis of the political parties, their isolation, and the diminished influence of the political class they are able to produce take shape and spread.

Indeed, the nature of the adaptation must be entirely different. Political parties play an irreplaceable role as mediators between the people and the state, and between the ruling classes and power. Such a role is now constitutionally recognised. In line with Burke's classic definition, parties must once again become 'a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed'. Parties must constantly draw points of reference from the changes taking place in society. But the stirrings and new developments that have emerged, as well as the new needs to be met, must be placed within an overall political framework. This defines the party both in relation to the specific principle that constitutes it – its ideology in the broadest sense – and in relation to the general interest (national and international) that it pursues within the state and in accordance with constitutional rules.

Given the transformations taking place in Italian society and the crisis of the state, the drive for renewal and the determination to build a political class capable of fulfilling the tasks it is called upon to perform must start from this understanding of the party.

4. Let us move from theory about the problems regarding the renewal of the party and the political class to a concrete examination

of the current situation in Italy. Political struggle is gradually shifting away from abstract ideologies (and rigid alignments), which, although different from one another, share, in a sense, a nineteenth-century origin. From there, it moves towards concrete problems, which, however, are often treated merely as needs to be met.

This shift is in itself beneficial. However, it often leads to a serious disconnect between ideological beliefs, which are thereby reduced to forms of propaganda, and practical commitments. These take on a predominantly technical nature and turn practical action into a pretext for political evasion. There are notable examples of current discourse on economic programming – seen as a mere method of economic policy laden with mythical expectations – and on the implementation of the regional system, which is assessed primarily in terms of spending or the efficiency of the public administration. It is clear that taking a political stance on these issues, without excluding the necessary technical assessments, is more challenging, as it concerns the type of society and state organisation that we aim to build through democratic methods. However, it is only on this basis that political parties can once again play a genuinely political role.

A similar contradiction, also a sign of political fatigue, emerges in the area of party cooperation. Historically, the position of political parties within the structure of the state – in practice, if not yet fully by law – has served as a useful counterbalance to political conflict and the exclusivism of integralist ideologies. It has also established the principle – undoubtedly important for the proper development of political democracy – of cooperation between different parties in pursuit of a mutually agreed general interest. And yet, broad and positive cooperation such as the telling example of the centre-left experience often turns into an integralist intensification of party ideology, which is often a banal repetition of outdated slogans, almost as if to negate the very meaning of the cooperation itself. Parties, then, seem not to value mutual enrichment (which does not mean renouncing their own ideals, but rather demonstrating the political

effectiveness of their proposals) and do not use this as a concrete reason to update their understanding of their role.

All these contradictions, combined with the structural and methodological crises that exacerbate the parties' isolation from society at large, show it: parties' shortcomings become increasingly apparent when they are directly confronted with the problems of society and the state, or with the need to form alliances for purposes other than the mere sharing-out of power. These parties are constantly caught between a state of inertia that is at odds with the historical context in which they operate, thus losing influence, and a more or less wide-ranging crisis of direction and personnel, stemming from the desire (or need) to confront reality, with all its problems, through the choices it dictates. So much so that, even when, after a long struggle, the inertia of traditional politics is overcome, paving the way for the resolution of new problems and the creation of a new balance, the impulse to recreate a new inertia is so strong that old ways of thinking almost always prevail, and the innovative significance of the decisions themselves is progressively diminished.

It follows that we need to break this deadlock between stagnation and crisis by fostering the political evolution of parties. Such evolution is difficult, if we take it in its true sense. However, it is key to ensuring genuine democratic progress at the institutional level, given the importance of political parties in modern constitutions.

The renewal of political parties, and its impact on the political class, therefore takes on a decisive and far-reaching significance: without it, even the most courageous experiments, potentially endowed at the outset with a strong innovative drive, are bound to end up in *trasformismo* or the routine of power.

5. Once political parties have realised the urgent need to evolve politically and organisationally, will they be able to rid themselves of the baggage, limitations and narrow-minded views that currently stand in the way of fulfilling the new role expected of them? Is it realistic to expect a genuine renewal driven by the most dynamic and

self-aware forces within them? Are there external factors capable of creating an irreversible momentum in this direction?

Beyond facile accusations, answering these questions is essential in order to identify a concrete course of action. Undoubtedly, in a free society, political parties must find within themselves – in their creative capacity – the imagination and the strength to break out of the impasse they are in. In almost all cases, the main reason for the decline of many political forces is a lack of ideals or action which, especially since the emergence of parties with broad popular support, cannot be made up for by any expedient.

However, it would be wrong to ignore the impact that historical circumstances and institutional constraints have, in practical terms, on the very possibilities for the renewal of political parties. As I have already pointed out in a recent article, many of the parties' shortcomings are 'largely attributable to political institutions that, despite the Republican Constitution, have remained anchored in the formalistic practices and centralist criteria typical of the old, pre-fascist democracy'. Within such an institutional context, and in a stopgap capacity, they have ended up taking on many of the system's shortcomings, and it is certainly no coincidence that, in many of them, there is a strong drive towards a clientelist conception of political life, typical of earlier periods.

It follows that the crisis of the state – which still provides the legal framework within which the political struggle and the competition for power take place – also affects the political parties. It absorbs their role into its narrow and outdated structures and separates them from the very civil society from which they originate. The members of the Constituent Assembly must have been keenly aware of this inexorable logic when, in explicitly recognising the role of political parties in the Constitution, they simultaneously set out the fundamental principles of a state structure. This, with its new kinds of institutions, was intended to enable the political forces that had emerged from the Resistance to develop a presence that was different from the traditional one.

Since then, however, the will to implement a constitutional policy aimed at reforming the state apparatus, and thereby creating the institutional conditions for a genuine political democracy, has gradually faded. This would undoubtedly have prevented, or at least made more difficult, certain striking phenomena of the parties' regression and the decay of their original function. Indeed, the inadequacy of Parliament, administrative centralism, and the return to clientelist practices, often a decisive factor in political success, had a significant impact on the mindset, habits and political initiative of the parties.

It is easy, these days, to lay the blame at the door of the political parties. Of course, they do bear significant responsibility, but the real issue is not to look to the past and dream of a neutral Parliament as the interpreter of the sovereign will of the people. Such a Parliament has never existed. Rather, it is a matter of decisively eliminating the causes that, through an increasingly intricate web of factors, are fuelling a crisis that affects institutions and political forces alike.

Political parties have now become too cumbersome to be considered private associations pursuing objectives in the public interest; nor can they continue to exert influence over public life outside of the rule of law that is a fundamental principle of modern constitutional systems. Political parties are key and irreplaceable elements of the democratic structure of the modern state. As has been aptly put, they must emerge from the 'pre-legal limbo' in which, apart from the interval of constitutional drafting, they have been kept for far too long.

The issue is certainly sensitive. However, it is only by bringing political parties within the bounds of the law – that is, by recognising their value as institutions representing the will of the people – that we can curb their tendency to overreach, often to fill the void left by the state. At the same time, this allows us to reassess their function within a more coherent institutional framework, in which Parliament, the administrative apparatus at regional and local levels, and the link between the 'real' country and the 'official' country take on new and

more substantial dimensions.

This is not the place to explore the political and technical implications of the point raised – which, moreover, touches on general issues concerning the democratic state and its legal system. However, it is essential to refer to it if we are to see the decisive revival of an appropriate constitutional policy as a determining factor, at least to a certain extent, in the process of party renewal.

It is well known that the recognition of political parties demands the utmost caution, especially as regards citizens' political freedom and their freedom of association. Despite that we must act without further delay on at least a few clearly defined and specific points. We are referring, above all, to two fundamental issues: 1) guarantees of parties' internal democracy; 2) the regulation, even if only partial, of their financing.

When it comes to legally guaranteeing the democratic character of political parties, the immediate objection is that the necessary checks could – and the danger is real – undermine the parties' freedom and autonomy. Indeed, this danger is often exaggerated, with more emphasis placed on control than on safeguards. It is appropriate to provide some clarifications on this topic. Clearly, no legal regulation should in any way impair the principle of the equality of all parties before the law and of their autonomy – whether in terms of their ideology and programme or in terms of their understanding of internal party relations (e.g. so-called democratic centralism). More simply, the aim would be to guarantee, in all circumstances, freedom of association and the ability of citizens to contribute directly, through political parties, to determining national policy, by removing any obstacles that may stand in the way of exercising the rights explicitly enshrined in the Constitution (Articles 2, 3, 18 and 49).

In light of these needs, it is not impossible to establish an important principle for strengthening the will of the people, possibly also through a constitutional law. This would happen by limiting legislation on political parties to a set of protection rules. These would guard citizens who have freely joined a political party from internal

abuses and would give greater legitimacy to the actions of parties in the public interest. For example, the general principles concerning control over members, the verification of powers in elected assemblies, disciplinary measures, and the duties of adjudicating bodies, the nomination of candidates for elections, the relationship between parties and parliamentary groups, and the definition of certain incompatibilities could be governed by law and incorporated by parties into their statutes and regulations. Sanctions might not even be provided for, in order to avoid the risk of discretionary interventions, as this would in any case enable citizens to effectively compare and judge those parties that choose not to comply with the spirit of a constitutional law. Concerns about the necessary impartiality of judgements in the event of conflicts of interpretation could also be addressed by establishing the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court and excluding the involvement of other powers (Parliament, the government, the ordinary judiciary) that may be politically influenced.

Such an intermediate approach rejects both public-law and private-law maximalism. Moreover, it has been successfully tested in American democracy. There, as is well known, party organisation and the organisation of the state are governed, for certain key aspects, by two sets of constitutional provisions legitimised solely by the will of the people. The framework of our own constitutional system is also already partly compatible with its application. Moreover, in terms of substance, there is no doubt that the processes for shaping national policy pass through political parties. The decisions of their bodies form an integral part of the broader process of shaping the will of the State through the institutions established by the Constitution. Indeed, it would be anachronistic to view political parties as usurpers of a power that can only be challenged by completely overthrowing the system. Consistently, the issue of regulating party financing also falls within the aforementioned legal and constitutional framework. If we set aside extreme and unrealistic solutions, it is not impossible to establish a system for financing parliamentary and electoral groups,

with the simple requirement that their financial statements be published. This would strengthen the parties' independence from economic pressure, without eliminating additional sources of funding, and would reassure public opinion more than the current situation, which is fraught with suspicion regarding the ways in which the community ultimately bears the costs of political organisation. Contrary to what Prof. Maranini claims, this is not a question of forcing taxpayers to pay for party structures as they currently exist, nor is it a question of paving the way, as feared by critics from other political backgrounds, for discrimination, which would be impossible given that taxpayers are voting citizens who support one political party or another. More simply, it is a question of curbing a *de facto* situation. A regulatory framework, already trialled in West Germany, would enable indirect oversight and prevent undue forms of economic pressure, not to mention the clandestine creation of costly party structures that, through their multiple links, distort the true function of political parties in our constitutional democracy. This would not constitute a form of state control and interference in the free political initiative of the parties. However, no one can fail to see – for example – how important the mandatory publication of financial statements would be for the oversight of individual party members in terms of spending criteria, the distribution of funds, and the nature and extent of additional funding. This would curb tendencies towards favouritism, electioneering waste, and the abusive use of financial resources, which play a significant role in parties' internal difficulties and in the scepticism of the general public. It would also undoubtedly have educational benefits. In any case, it would ensure that essential functions within our democratic political system are carried out.

Therefore, we urgently need a coherent constitutional policy on some crucial points regarding the regulation of political parties, and along specific lines regarding the structure of the state. These include the regional system, a reassessment of Parliament and its working methods, relations between the legislative and executive branches,

planning institutions, among others. Such a policy would provide for the new institutional conditions to realistically envisage an effective renewal of the parties, a lifting of the tone of political struggle, and a positive reassessment of popular participation in determining national policy.

However, as has already been pointed out, we must not forget that creating a more conducive and orderly environment for political parties to perform their functions properly – which is impossible without considerable political courage and a consistent commitment to reform – does not solve the overall problem of renewing the parties themselves. If for no other reason than the limitations and precautions that must accompany any legal regulation of the matter, as a fundamental safeguard of the principles of freedom, there remains a wide area in which the parties need to mobilise a concrete commitment to self-reform.

The party must find the strength within itself to reduce the influence of the apparatus, which is at the expense of the circulation of ideas; to foster clear and sound decision-making; to ensure the training and selection of the ruling class; to increase the effectiveness of the party's various forms of presence in a changing society; and to promote constant moral and cultural enrichment.

The struggle in this area is not an easy one, because we are faced with considerable resistance, vested interests, a lack of ideas, power-driven compromises designed to preserve the status quo, and skirmishes over marginal and evasive issues. There is also a danger of reducing the need for renewal to a purely organisational dimension that is as illusory as it is dangerous.

Even if political action is aimed at meeting certain social needs in a climate of freedom and vague reformism, pursuing efficiency as its objective will not enable the party to overcome its crisis. As Jean Meynaud rightly observed, the democratic political struggle 'cannot be deprived of an ideological armour; it would remain unequal if, faced with moral ideas defended by a powerful organisation, it continues to set against them refrigerators, pairs of shoes, or yards of

cloth'.

It follows that, to achieve the desired self-reform, the party's structures, methods and tools must, in practical terms, be organised around the constant development of political ideals, supported by the necessary moral and cultural commitment. The efforts to develop a political class suited to the ends the party pursues in society and in the state must be measured against these same political ideals. In essence, it is this fundamental choice that must inspire the organisational models, technical solutions and operational structures of the modern political party in a free, democratic system.

Therefore, courageous constitutional politics and a deep, well-directed commitment to self-reform are the key elements of a process of renewal within political parties and the political class. This should contribute to the building of a democratic state with broad popular participation, against the drive towards oligarchy and paternalism.

6. How can the discussion on the renewal of the party and the political class be applied to Christian Democracy?

This question matters not only because it concerns our primary objective, ahead of the National Assembly convened precisely to identify a way out of the crisis. It also matters because Christian Democracy's role in national politics is such that its decisions, and above all its example, could have broader positive effects.

Indeed, it is up to the Christian Democracy party to take the initiative in launching a constitutional policy such as the one referred to. This should not fail to win the support of other parties that are genuinely reform-minded and concerned about the future of Italian democracy. It is also incumbent upon the party not to squander the opportunity offered by the convening of its National Assembly, by showing determination to launch, in practical terms, a far-sighted and coherent internal reform of the party.

To achieve both of these objectives, a strong political will needs to be built within the Christian Democracy party around a number of clearly defined points. These are preliminary conditions. Indeed, the

party is experiencing a crisis of exhaustion. Its shortcomings in terms of decision-making and operational capacity are becoming increasingly apparent, even in relation to the centre-left policy launched, after much effort, at the Naples Congress in 1962. It is rare for the party to be able to set out its position in a timely manner, especially on the most important issues (urban planning, the regions, planning, foreign policy, etc.). The reason lies in the deadlines of the coalition government's operational commitments. In fact, almost every attempt at initiative in this area is reduced to interpreting and partially correcting (with the help of a few willing experts chosen at the political secretary's broad discretion) projects drawn up in ministerial offices or through private compromises between small delegations from the coalition parties. The party's National Council, which is too large, and the Central Executive, which meets too infrequently, are increasingly at risk of becoming bodies that merely ratify decisions already taken or, at the most difficult times, finalise the tactical line to be followed. The Political Secretariat is often forced to act as a substitute, centralising extensive decision-making powers. These are clearly legitimate – after all, a political party cannot fail to identify with its leader – but greatly increase personal liability. There is a risk that parliamentary groups will increasingly be reduced to a purely supportive role in relation to the government's legislative initiatives, or that they will waste their energy on the production of minor, often clientelistic, pieces of legislation. At the same time, MPs with government responsibilities will be forced to make up for the lack of party direction or support by relying on individual judgements, within, of course, the commitments made to the coalition and to Parliament.

In addition to this, albeit on a different level, there is the lack of coordination between the operational offices, the burden of an excessively large central apparatus, the shortage of adequate local resources, the absence of tools for research and analysis, and the slowing down of the internal political debate. This has occurred especially since the issue of alliance choices – which had so energised

the party and given its political vitality in recent years – was deemed resolved. Furthermore, the changes in Italian society and the crystallisation of the internal situation – a phenomenon common to all parties – have, at a time when national politics requires the utmost commitment and greater energy, including on an individual level, increased the party's isolation from the new professional classes (technicians, entrepreneurs, trade union leaders, newly trained intellectuals, etc.) and from the outside world, understood as a vast, pluralistic reality that, while it must be respected in the name of autonomy, certainly cannot be politically ignored.

This is an extremely frank analysis, for all its brevity. It does not need to be accompanied here by the usual acknowledgement of the situation's merits and positive aspects; in any case, it is essential for identifying lines of action that respond to reality.

Overall, therefore, there is a worrying disconnect between the challenging tasks facing the party – tasks which also require a well-informed, broad-ranging vision underpinned by independent ideological convictions – and the party's practical approach, its operational structures and its political class. This disconnect becomes even more pronounced when, beyond the commitments related to centre-left politics – which should see the party in a stimulating, leading role – fundamental issues arise. These include state reform, economic planning, and the initiation of a new constitutional policy. By their very nature, these go beyond contingent arrangements of government and require an unusually demanding process of elaboration, including on the technical side.

This gap is the clearest sign that the party is not functioning properly. To overcome it, we need to be clear about the reasons for the crisis afflicting the Christian Democracy party. For sure, we cannot address them with a few marginal tweaks to the party's constitution or with purely organisational revamps.

In order to highlight the constructive intent of our critical contribution, let me clear the ground of any potential misunderstandings that might give rise to controversy: we are not

interested, at least in this context, in examining individual responsibilities for the sake of making gratuitous distinctions between individuals or groups. In the end, in our view, the causes of the party's crisis are long-standing and affect everyone to a greater or lesser extent. After all, it is our duty to engage in calm and frank reflection in difficult times. We hope that certain outdated stereotypes will not exert any influence, at least in this regard.

Giuseppe Dossetti raised the issue of the party – namely, the need to better define its tasks and structure – with great rigour, despite certain limitations in its overall political approach. He did so through the campaign led by Cronache Sociali, which found its practical testing ground at the Venice Congress in 1949. Subsequent events are so well known that no historical reconstruction, however instructive, is necessary to demonstrate that the problem remained unsolved. After the crisis of 'Dossettismo' and the disappearance of De Gasperi and his associates from the political scene, the groups that took over the party leadership attempted to strengthen and revitalise it by different methods. However, the results achieved were clearly limited. In fact, the problem is on the rise again and taking on more serious forms. We should not forget that, in the years following the Naples Congress of 1954, at which the Democratic Initiative group took on responsibility for leading the Christian Democracy party, the predominant issue was the search for a new political direction and new alliances. They were trying to overcome the increasingly evident crisis of the old centrist line. In fact, if we set aside a few vigorous attempts at revitalisation, linked more to illusory hopes of an electoral comeback or to reformist relaunches in an integralist vein, the party problem was never addressed in its general terms – which are both political and structural.

Crises that struck the leadership – above all with the 'Domus Mariae' split – also played a role. First came the Vallombrosa National Council, where the Hon. Fanfani set out the need for a shift to the left in the party's political line. Nor the Naples Congress of 1962 – when, under the leadership of the Hon. Moro, the party opted for a

centre-left policy – nor the Rome Congress of 1964, which ratified that line and confirmed the Hon. Rumor as secretary, succeeded in breaking out of the stalemate. This is not the place for analysing all those phases (in any case the analysis has already been carried out through the difficult, sometimes misunderstood internal battles of recent years). The point of recalling them is simply to stress that, aside from individual merits on other fronts, neither Fanfani's activist drive, nor Moro's liberal and politically enlightened stewardship, nor Rumor's plans for revitalisation – which we cannot yet assess fully – have marked the concrete beginning of the genuine renewal that the party needs.

On this specific issue, the struggle waged by minority groups also stopped short of a clear political commitment. In the absence of such a commitment, it was easy to slip into contradictory and inconsistent positions. Indeed, the groups opposed to centre-left politics went no further than adopting a moralistic, legitimist approach against certain forms of internal degeneration – certainly important from the point of view of democratic procedure, but irrelevant in broader political terms. Meanwhile, left-wing minorities, attuned to party issues, were primarily engaged in the tough battle to shape the evolution of the centre-left political line. As a result, they ended up neglecting internal problems, which are among the causes of the loss of momentum in the political course that had been embarked on.

Even the party's grassroots – its more attentive cadres – who today feel a strong sense of unease, have not yet managed to bring out that innovative drive, which nevertheless exists, potentially, to a large extent. This is partly because of the factions' increasingly top-down drift and the schematic nature of internal divisions that no longer reflect any real political debate. The formation of a leadership that, as regards internal relations, is wholly devoid of political substance and reflects no commitment to a reform programme within the party, brought indeed to a unitary truce. But beyond an illusory sharing of internal power, this does not represent anything more than a coexistence pause. And this pause reinforces the

tendency towards immobilism – at odds with the significant tasks awaiting the Christian Democracy party in the short and long term.

In this climate, it is understandable that expectations are focused on the party's National Assembly. It should bring an end to an evasive phase in addressing the problems of internal renewal and open one of clear and well-considered commitment.

That is why the Christian Democracy party must express a strong political will on a series of specific points. If not, even the opportunity presented by the National Assembly could be wasted, with serious consequences for the future of the party.

The aforementioned points can be set out as follows: 1) the formation of a coherent internal political will; 2) the concrete launching of reforms within the party; 3) a clear commitment to renewing the political class. An open and responsible clarification on these points and, above all, on the basis of that clarification, a firm commitment to adequately mobilise all available internal energies, would provide the party with a chance. Then it would be possible to envisage, in terms of constitutional policy and self-reform, a gradual but irreversible revival of Christian Democracy within the framework of a broad renewal of the party system and the democratic state.

7. Unity is a prerequisite for a party to have an impact on the real world. However, unity can never be a merely formal matter determined by emotional or artificial factors. A political party is systematically confronted with practical decisions that often give rise to conflicting positions. While these positions do not clearly call into question the party's core beliefs, they do represent different stances on its political line, its programmes, its methods and its internal organisational models.

The principle that political will is formed with respect for dissenting views, which may in turn prevail, is key to the democratic conception of the party. This principle stems from the equal rights and duties of all party members, who shall not be subject to any discrimination in this regard, and from the application of a

democratic method in the process of shaping political decisions. Within this framework of legal certainty, the function of factions of thought is also recognised. They are undoubtedly indispensable as a means of developing the party's political direction and refining its programme. These factions also have the opportunity to prevail democratically and take on concrete responsibilities in the governance of the party. Their constructive role of criticism and oversight should be subject to no limitations other than those of party discipline and respect for the party's ideology.

Clearly, we are referring to a principled approach that needs to be applied in practice. There may be exceptional moments when the need to defend an essential and primary interest – the party's survival, for example – overrides all differences. Conversely, a split or an understanding between groups can arise based solely on considerations of power or control of the party, built around artificial factional frameworks rather than genuine issues of choice.

In either case, if anything, these would be temporary solutions or dangerous oligarchic regressions. Instead, the proper functioning of the party requires the free unfolding of a dialectical relationship between the majority and the minority, allowing genuine unity to take shape, along with operational coherence and a culture of respect for dissenting positions.

Without this, unity is reduced to uniformity, which amounts to political confusion and constant exposure to potential ruptures. Internal relations become a power struggle; that is, mutual control over part of the apparatus, and the party remains trapped – both in terms of its political initiative and as regards its internal problems – in a deadlock with no way forward.

As a matter of method, a return to normal and fair conditions for forming a coherent political will within the majority, around specific commitments made publicly, is essential if we want to carry forward centre-left politics with determination and begin, in concrete terms, a process of party renewal.

There is nothing wrong with seeking to form representative

bodies that include all existing positions within the party – and are, in that sense, unified – to avoid radical divisions and to encourage calm, constructive dialogue. The mistake lies in the way it was claimed this problem could be resolved: by replacing the formation of majorities and minorities – not on the basis of labels but on the basis of political and operational choices – with the principle of the proportional distribution of party posts. This has, in practice, diminished the authority of the leadership and the reputation of those who, out of respect for their own convictions, are duty-bound to provide encouragement and oversight.

This state of affairs is one of the causes of the party's decline (it is no coincidence that this misguided and counter-educational approach of making power deals without any political substance is spreading to the grassroots, to the serious detriment of the party's democratic vitality). We need to find a way out of this situation calmly and without acrimonious divisions.

In this regard, I still consider valid what I wrote to Piccioni, President of the National Council, due to my absence through illness from the debate that led to the unanimous election of the current unified leadership: 'Being fully favourable of unified arrangements to ensure equality, while at the same time clearly distinguishing, within those arrangements, between the staunch and unconditional supporters of centre-left policies and those who oppose them by raising objections or proposing changes of direction, is not discrimination at all. I therefore do not mean any distinction between pre-existing groups, or between majorities and minorities that opportunistically form from time to time. Putting aside momentary psychological reactions, unity amid political confusion does not benefit the party and would be a pseudo-solution'.

The difficulties in overcoming the current situation are, first and foremost, political and touch on everyone's responsibilities. They could, however, be partially overcome by an amendment to the party's statutes establishing the principle of limited voting for the election of all the party's governing bodies (from the national

leadership to branch executive committees). This would in any case guarantee the presence of minorities as such, removing any element of bargaining or compromise on questions of unity and respect for the right of representation.

Of course, laying down a sound method is not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee a successful political solution to the party's problems. To achieve this goal, we need to reopen honest, sincere internal debate and the exchange of views, and in this way move beyond top-down formulas that have not, for some time now, reflected a genuine dialectic between political positions. Progress in this direction can only be slow and gradual, but to set it in motion, we all need specific choices in the aftermath of the National Assembly. I do not mean any tactics, but the substantive issue of setting out clear and well-defined political and programme commitments, especially with regard to the reforms to be introduced in the party.

'The closed-minded mentality of the largest faction,' I wrote in the aforementioned letter to Piccioni, 'and the systematic tactical manoeuvring of other groups must give way to a different conception of the party and to a more precise definition of political positions. The party's organisational and operational structures, especially at central level, its management methods, the tools it uses to ensure ongoing debate, and its links with local party cadres, must undergo far-reaching, simplifying revisions, free from any short-sighted notion of carving up internal power between factions. Party members are tired of witnessing the continuous devaluation of the party organs, which have now been reduced to venues for ratifying decisions often made by a very small number of figures, however authoritative; of having to piece together the positions of individuals or groups from leaks or press releases that always respond to tactical needs; and of being excluded from direct participation in the formulation of the party's decisions, which are increasingly the preserve of a small leadership group whose dealings take place in an atmosphere of secrecy that leads to splits or compromises without anyone knowing the reasons behind them.'

There seems to be little to add to this diagnosis, other than to underline the need to address the issue of how the party's political will is formed and how dissenting views are respected. I would also note that – contrary to the hopes or illusions of many – the situation has worsened further and requires a clear reversal of the trend before it is too late.

8. As has already been said, a proper and efficient solution to the problem of shaping the party's political will, based on democratic principles and the rejection of all forms of exclusivism, must be accompanied by clear commitments to action.

Let us leave aside here the underlying political issues concerning the substance and the way in which centre-left politics is understood, as well as the broader problems relating to state reform mentioned in paragraph 5 – which must form the basis of the party's revitalisation in order to avoid slipping back, once again, into sterile activism. Let us limit our examination to the equally defining issue of internal reforms.

Here too, we need a few key objectives, rather than a myriad of issues raised piecemeal and without any indication of priorities to define a clear reform agenda. These objectives can be summarised as follows:

a) *Changes to the membership criteria and streamlining of the internal electoral systems.* Ensuring the integrity of membership forms the basis of the representativeness, and therefore the legitimacy, of the party's decisions. It requires, in addition to rigorous forms of control, an external corrective measure to break the cycle of membership inflation. This is currently based on the ratio between the number of members and the votes received by the party when determining the weight of the various representative bodies. Electoral systems should be unified on the basis of consistent principles that apply at all levels. The adoption of proportional representation, which can reduce the phenomena of exclusivism and agreements formed purely for the sake of power, must be defended and made the norm. However, this should be done by modifying the system of rigid policy motions,

which creates a strong oligarchic influence even within the party factions. We need corrective measures to allow for an assessment of personal qualities as well as political orientation. In this context, it makes no sense for the congress to elect the national secretary directly, not least because the issue of strengthening the secretary's authority – which does indeed need to be addressed – lies on a different plane and cannot be resolved on the basis of personal considerations or at the expense of the powers of direction and decision-making that the party's National Council holds between congresses.

b) *Reduction of the party apparatus, functional reorganisation, and re-evaluation of the political bodies.* The number of central offices has gradually increased to circa thirty. This has led to a rise in jurisdictional disputes and a decline in their importance, resulting in a significant loss of effectiveness of the party's presence. It is therefore necessary to drastically reduce the number of these offices to a maximum of five or six. We should strengthen their capacity for political work and policy development in order to avoid a slide into bureaucratic routine. Within this framework, it is necessary to carry out a functional reorganisation of certain key tools (the press, a party magazine, study and research bodies, channels of liaison with parliamentary groups and government representatives, etc.). These should be modified or created from scratch, in order to achieve a greater presence in public debate, to enable immediate operational action, and to develop concrete proposals based on the party's decision-making bodies' work. Each office, headed by a member of the leadership, should be linked to a specific committee of the National Council to ensure that its operational work is in line with the agreed political guidelines. Once the functional structure has been defined, it should naturally be reflected in similar arrangements within the local organisation, in order to enable simple and effective links. Finally, we need to reassess the party's decision-making bodies in order to strengthen their authority and their role in guiding the work of the offices and political representatives. With regard to the National Council, in addition to reducing the number of members

and eliminating the many ex officio members, it would be advisable to improve the regulation and effective functioning of the committees' work. For the Leadership, it would be necessary to set a regular meeting schedule and to ensure that these meetings play an effective role in guiding all the party's activities. As for the Political Secretariat, it is necessary to address the issue of strengthening its authority and its role as a leader, for example by abolishing the position of deputy secretaries, without, however, ruling out the possibility of direct collaboration without formal political appointment or decision-making powers.

c) *Regionalisation of the party structure and strengthening of local autonomy.* We are overcoming state centralism through the establishment of the Regional Authority. Accordingly, we must provide, in good time – including in order to draw up the necessary policy guidelines for the Christian Democrat members of the C.R.P.E. – for an appropriate regionalisation of the party's political and organisational structure. This key aspect of internal reform should involve developing a more coherent system of autonomy, relationships and functions for provincial committees, municipal committees for provincial capitals, areas and sections. In addition to addressing the new tasks facing the party in the context of regional and local self-government (framework laws, planning, government functions, etc.), this restructuring should take into account the foreseeable administrative bodies (consortia, urban planning districts, inter-municipal plans, etc.) that will operate across the country in future. Regional committees will have decision-making and guidance powers, moving beyond their current role of mere coordination. Hence, it is necessary to replace the criterion of equal representation of the individual provinces, which takes into account neither the party's strength nor the size of the various urban communities. A new criterion of representation should take into account, on a proportional basis, the votes secured by the DC and the resident population. Members of the committee should be elected directly by the congresses using a proportional system, following a debate on regional issues. A small number of co-opted members would enable the direct participation

of individuals with particular technical expertise or representative standing. The Executive Committee and the Secretariat should be elected using the same criteria as those applied to the other governing bodies.

d) *Enhancement of parliamentary groups and administrative representatives.*

As part of a reassessment of the role of Parliament (relations between the legislature and the executive, committees, planning bodies, etc.) and of a strengthening of local autonomy (establishment of the regions, municipal and provincial law, etc.), we need to address the issue of enhancing the role of parliamentary groups and administrative representatives. For this reason, we need to regulate their work more clearly and establish better relations with the party. Ways could be explored to increase the involvement of individual MPs in the drafting of bills of general application, to scrutinise legislative initiatives concerning particular interests, and to produce regular reports on the work of parliamentary committees, thereby enhancing the internal vitality of parliamentary groups and their direct contribution to shaping the party's political line. A similar approach should be taken for local administrators, heads of public bodies, regional councillors, etc. These should be offered regular opportunities for consultation within the party (e.g. consultative bodies, ex officio participation in executive bodies, etc.) so that they can use their experience to help shape the party's positions and better support its political direction.

e) *Democratic guarantees and the administration of internal justice.*

Experience over the last few years has revealed an urgent need to ensure the rule of law and the power of scrutiny within the party, especially with regard to organisational matters and the use of financial resources. It is appropriate to carry out a comprehensive review of the central and local arrangements of the Ethics Committee, clarifying in greater detail the procedures for their composition (abolishing the electoral criterion that makes them an expression of the majority), the levels of jurisdiction, the matters subject to disciplinary sanctions, and the timeframes for proceedings. This step would promote swift and objective judgements. The

proposal to introduce, at least on a trial basis, the role of a Small Claims procedure, while reserving matters of greater importance for the Ethics Committee, could be an interesting simplification measure, also with a view to distinguishing the scope of infringements and making judgments on serious misconduct more stringent and authoritative. Greater rigour is also needed when defining incompatibilities, with no possibility of exception, and when prohibiting the holding of multiple offices: to this end, the principle could be that, in non-elected public bodies, a term of office may not be renewed more than once consecutively. Finally, the party's statutes should stipulate the obligation to set up small joint committees with equal representation for organisational management, operating alongside sector leaders at all levels, with the possibility of immediate recourse to higher bodies in the event of breaches of the established rules. The same obligation should be stipulated for the annual written reports of the administrative secretariats and for a substantive assessment of these reports by the auditors.

Once the key objectives of the plan to reform the party's structure have been clearly set out, and once decisions have been made in relation to them to bring about a clear change of direction, it will also be possible to address other specific issues (the creation of club branches in large cities, experiments with milieu-based branches, changes to the roles of specialised movements, ways of being present in the technical, cultural and professional sectors, etc.) and to specify the individual reform measures more coherently, in their organisational-technical details. Here too, however, what matters most is the overall vision of the process to be initiated, the mobilisation of the energies available for its development, and the political will to go against the tide without stopping in the face of entrenched interests, existing structures, or the risks implicit in any genuine process of renewal.

9. In paragraph 2, we explained why, in a modern democratic system, the true test for political parties increasingly becomes the

formation of an adequate political class. By this, we mean not so much an extension of party control over power as the ability to create opportunities for civic engagement and collaboration in the public interest, including in areas outside direct political action. From this follows the need to conceive of the party's function not as something closed in on itself, and therefore detached from the living reality of the country, but as something that is constantly open to the creative input of the best personal energies, respectful of the various spheres of autonomy, and able to draw on, in terms of political synthesis (rather than corporatist representation), the positive contributions that emerge from cultural, scientific and technical research.

However, none of this can come to fruition, or at the very least it will be reduced to an instrumental approach without the fulfilment of the following conditions. First, in addition to reviewing its internal methods and reforming its structures, and as part of its recovery, the party must grow its political class. Alongside openness to the new social strata stemming from development and civic growth, the party should guarantee greater mobility among its representatives in Parliament, in local authorities and in the institutions of government. In a pluralist society, the party filter cannot and must not be the only gateway to selecting the political class. It is clear that neither purely technical expertise nor force of personality can be sufficient, since political action must always be guided by precise ideals, including moral ideals. However, this is where the pluralist commitment to forming a political class can manifest itself in concrete terms. Hence, we should go beyond the limited perspectives of the narrow party cadre or the deceptive allure of technocracy, and find a class which, by steadily increasing its prestige, also strengthens our institutions.

For example, the party could use safe Senate seats, which do not expose candidates to heated personal battles, to enrich Parliament with individuals of standing who have particular technical expertise.

The party could appoint people to government positions who are particularly qualified for certain tasks, for example tax reform. Who cares if they have not served three parliamentary terms or have never

been an undersecretary of state?

The party should not draw on the experience of a minister who has exercised government functions for too long, with the limitations that such continuous service can entail, in prominent legislative and party roles. Conversely, the government should encourage greater mobility in taking on government responsibilities, which are an essential part of political experience. The party should strive to demonstrate to the country its commitment to renewal and its genuine pluralist openness by increasing the turnover of its elected political class, on grounds of merit rather than merely age or internal balance.

The party needs to overcome the mindset that political commitment is an irreversible career path. It needs to break the trend of impersonal power-sharing, whereby membership of a party or faction is a sufficient qualification to take on certain responsibilities, without any assessment of individual abilities. Everyone is aware of the significant difficulties involved in moving in this direction. However, it is time to recognise that part of the widespread distrust and scepticism in the country towards democracy and its institutions stems from the observation that, while political formulae, programmes, and the objectives of public action change, the same people remain in place – and indeed move from one commitment to another with sometimes excessive ease, almost as if to show that, in essence, there is no intention to change anything. Clearly, this is not about falling into the opposite error of undervaluing experience, continuity, and the political class, which is a valuable and irreplaceable element of democratic progress. Rather, it is about linking the safeguarding of these values to a courageous process of turnover in public responsibilities. We must reduce the divide between society and its political institutions in this area as well.

Here too, the parties' determination to relaunch and strengthen their role must be demonstrated in concrete terms, both in how they shape their relations with the outside world and in offering genuine opportunities for participation in public life to ever broader and

better-qualified sections of the population. Above all, a party such as Christian Democracy, which is pluralist by vocation and doctrine, must lead by example, thereby also reasserting the moral, selfless nature of political service.

A comprehensive overview of the problems involved in renewing the party system, within the framework of state reform, in order to achieve genuine political democracy in Italy – and of the tasks of initiative, reform and modernisation that fall to the Christian Democracy party in this context – may perhaps seem daunting. This, even when restricted to a brief summary, like my communiqué is. However, it is only by tackling these hard problems with moral and political rigour that we can avert the dangers of oligarchic degeneration and the crisis of authority in representative political institutions, and adapt them to the new tasks posed by a changing society.

*National Conference on Emigration**

The National Conference of Italians Abroad, organised for the first time by Granelli in his capacity as Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and Chair of the Advisory Committee for Italians Abroad, was held in Rome from 24 February to 1 March 1975. It was entitled 'Less Emigration, More Integration'. The Conference was attended by numerous representatives of political and social groups, religious orders and organisations, observers from fifteen countries (including Patrick J. Hillery, EEC Commissioner for Social Affairs, and Roy Jackson, Deputy Director-General of the FAO), over twenty international bodies, and more than a thousand delegates representing nearly six million Italians living abroad. Pope Paul VI also sent his greetings to the Conference, which was attended by Monsignor Emanuele Clarizio, as an observer for the Holy See, and Monsignor Silvano Ridolfi, Vice-President of the Central Office for Italian Emigration. The debate took place from 24 to 26 February, and was divided into four thematic areas: 'The structural causes of emigration in Italy and how to overcome them'; 'Active labour market policies at the national and international levels'; 'The rights of migrant workers and multicultural: Community and bilateral instruments and related protection'; and 'Participatory tools for a new emigration policy'.

As Chair of the Organising Committee, it is my duty to recall the value, unprecedented in our national history, of a conference that addresses, at the highest level, the major and unresolved issue of Italian emigration. The participation of the most senior state officials, the substantial speeches by the Prime Minister and the Minister for

* ASILS, FG, series III, b. 2.

Foreign Affairs, and the presence of international authorities and observers from many countries, give the National Conference on Emigration an evident prominence. But this prominence becomes even more significant when we consider that, for the first time in over a hundred years since the unification of Italy, direct representatives of our communities abroad are meeting with representatives of all the social, trade union and political forces in Italy.

The profoundly democratic value of this discussion requires no further explanation. With frank self-criticism, a practical determination, and the direct involvement of those Italians who have borne the heaviest burden, democratic Italy is reflecting on the problems linked to the persistence – albeit in attenuated forms – of forced emigration, which has been, in various periods, a painful constant in our national history. Another Italy has taken shape beyond our borders, scattered across the world. This fact alone would be enough to justify, now that we are no longer a predominantly agricultural country or one artificially protected by a moat of autarky, a serious examination of conscience on our part to remedy a heavy legacy.

We have said it many times, and we repeat it here on this solemn occasion: the National Conference on Emigration is not merely an academic forum or a morally significant gathering. Above all, it is a political opportunity to launch, in a more coherent way than in the past, decisive and courageous action to protect our compatriots and their rights. Over the past few years, there has been a growing awareness in Italy that the issue of emigration – the forced exodus of millions of our compatriots – is a national issue that affects both the economic and social fabric of our country and our international policy. This very Conference is the result of the important initiatives that preceded it. From the joint proposal put forward by the major trade union organisations in 1960, through the valuable CNEL study in 1970, to the authoritative parliamentary inquiries, we have reached a long-sought moment. We have pursued this moment tenaciously over the past few years. With the National Conference on

Emigration, our aim is to implement a new policy in an area that could prove decisive for our very future. This turning point, this decision to place the issues of our emigration on the national agenda, is a tangible reward for the work of the Advisory Committee for Italians Abroad. Through its motions and by defending the vital interests of our communities, the Committee has helped to ensure that the problems of our emigrants are inseparable from our domestic and international policy. The press has highlighted the scale, the organisational complexity, and the difficult and contentious process of holding the National Conference on Emigration. However, based on my personal experience of over a year of intensive preparation, let me say that the discussions over the next few days will be rooted in the passionate conversations we had with thousands of our compatriots in Africa, Latin America, Canada and Europe, precisely in preparation for this important event. On those occasions, we encountered a deep sense of unease, bitter disputes, and complaints about unbearable conditions. All this is understandable. Indeed, emigrants have paid dearly for the traumatic rupture with their homeland. Yet, amidst all this, there remained a sense of admiration for the progress made by our compatriots in various parts of the world, often through great difficulty and relying solely on their own resources. They have set an example of solidarity that should serve as a reminder to those of us who have been more fortunate.

What struck us above all was the determination of our emigrants to break out of isolation, to revitalise relations with Italy, and to contribute directly to solving their own problems, and to support the growing development of our country, both domestically and in its international relations. These brief points are enough to shatter the tired cliché of Italian communities being frustrated, disillusioned, and in need of nothing but protection and assistance. Amid hardship and deprivation, our emigrants have gained a full awareness of their rights and a civic maturity that deserves the utmost respect. The assertive, highly critical way in which they put forward their demands is not so much the result of a general protest as it is a sign of their desire to

work with us to build a new and more just society. The image of communities that are closed in on themselves, politically apathetic, fundamentally nostalgic and prejudicially opposed to today's democratic Italy does not correspond to the truth. It is isolation, a lack of dialogue, and the sporadic nature of relations that have allowed such a misguided opinion to take hold. In our view, the most significant achievement of the preparations for the National Conference on Emigration was that they helped to break down the wall of mutual distrust and, even in the face of opposing viewpoints, opened a new phase of dialogue, research and collaboration between the world of emigration and contemporary Italian society.

This process has just begun. Over the next few days, it will be put to a test of great importance. In the future it will be accompanied by residual mistrust, contradictions and clashes. But it is the responsibility of all of us, and the ambition of the National Conference on Emigration, not to let the heritage of such an important reconciliation be dissipated, but rather to strengthen it. Moreover, the achievement of this objective is aided by the genuinely self-critical effort made by Italian society in recent times to address the issues surrounding our emigration. The enthusiasm behind the initiatives that have accompanied the preparations for the National Conference on Emigration in Italy provides clear confirmation of this statement. Parliament, the regional governments, the CNEL, the major trade unions, associations, political parties, academics and public opinion show the gradual realisation that, in the face of emigration, it is not enough to make amends for past wrongs. Above all, we need to think differently about our approach to development, take more effective action in our bilateral and multilateral relations, renew and strengthen the instruments of our presence abroad, and create new bodies for direct participation and contact with our compatriots around the world. This new way of looking at the problems of emigration, with the aim of saving future generations from the suffering endured by previous ones, is in itself an encouraging result. We can attribute it to the open, genuinely democratic nature of the

preparations for the National Conference on Emigration in Italy. The difficult economic situation that is currently affecting the global economy, which is a source of great concern for us, has once again brought to the fore, in a stark manner, problems that require fundamental solutions. These problems highlight the continuing imbalances within various countries, the worrying gap between those rich in resources and capital and those with an underutilised labour force. There is a delay in establishing – both internationally and within the European Community itself – regulations and institutions capable of eliminating both overt and covert discrimination and achieving genuine social, economic and civil equality. The forced return of emigrants to their countries of origin must be tackled in the short term by reversing recessionary economic policies, by firmly upholding existing agreements and treaties, and through emergency and support measures put in place by national governments. It is also a stark reminder of the need to reform the structures that lead to the return of workers who have already gone through the bitter experience of emigration in the past.

This is the latest demonstration of how flawed the theory of emigration as a ‘safety valve’ is. In our view, each country needs to learn that achieving full employment and rationalising the use of its resources –starting with the irreplaceable resource of labour – is essential and non-negotiable, even in an increasingly interdependent global economy. At the same time, four million unemployed people in Europe show that a one-way free movement economic community needs a decisive sectoral and geographical rebalancing. It is necessary to achieve overall parity in working conditions, social integration, education and vocational training, family reunification, and civil and democratic rights if we want to solve the problems that arise time and again as a result of economic growth or recession. Countries like Italy do not want to shut themselves off in an anachronistic, autarkic position and do not reject mobility based on free choice. Therefore, they must put in place more adequate safeguards abroad to defend their nationals effectively from the consequences of continuing

discrimination against them and their families.

This necessarily schematic overview of all these issues explains why the Italian government and the organising committee have structured the Conference around four core reports and communications. Despite the diversity of viewpoints, this will allow a free debate over concrete and specific issues without losing sight of an overall strategy. It is not my place to anticipate what the various speakers will say, with their expertise and the breadth of their arguments. However, I feel it is my duty to highlight, from a political perspective, the common thread that links the various issues and that should inform, through a vigorous and constructive exchange of views, our general debate and the in-depth work that will be carried out in the various committees.

Let me express in clear, simple terms the central objective of the National Conference on Emigration, which we have sought to highlight since its inception. Our ambition can be summed up by the following goal: less emigration, more integration. This is a challenging goal that requires concrete policies, not just declarations of intent. It also applies to other countries, welcome as observers at this Conference. Although they face it in different ways from Italy, they too have the problem of using their human resources, as well as their raw materials, for national economic development.

For Italy, less emigration means a vigorous resumption of economic planning aimed at eliminating, especially in the South, the structural causes of unemployment, which is a source of depopulation and forced emigration. We are well aware that the progress made in the post-war period, which transformed us into an industrial country, prevented a repeat of the dramatic exoduses of the early twentieth century. However, the phenomenon of emigration persists, despite our committed participation in building a European Community whose task was, and remains, to achieve a more balanced use of each country's resources. For this reason, in our country today, less emigration means reducing private consumption in favour of public consumption, combating waste and vested interests in order

to boost productive investment. It also means establishing a new relationship between industry, agriculture and services, as well as committing to austerity in order to achieve full employment and, in areas affected by emigration, to create additional jobs for those of our compatriots who are forced to return or who freely decide to return to their homeland, making effective use of the opportunities now offered by the European Regional Development Fund. In order to reduce the number of workers we send abroad and boost our prospects for development, we must find a solution to the issue of remittances. As well as being guaranteed to safeguard the savings of our emigrants, these remittances should be used not only as a means of rebalancing our external accounts, but above all as a tool for an economic policy aimed at eliminating the causes of forced emigration and supporting the reintegration of our compatriots who return to Italy.

Less emigration is undoubtedly a medium- and long-term prospect. In the meantime, a significant number of Italian migrant workers – both in Europe and in other parts of the world – together with their families, will keep making a valuable contribution to the development of other countries. Therefore, we have a duty to use appropriate means to achieve effective integration. Experience over recent years shows that, even in Europe, where the introduction of legislation on free movement has helpfully removed the ‘foreign worker’ concept, the majority of the migrant population remains largely marginalised. Equality, which has been achieved in terms of pay and working conditions, must now be extended to housing, to family reunification, to inclusive schooling that enables migrant children to integrate into the education systems of host countries without losing their language and culture of origin, to the protection of women, who bear the brunt of marginalisation, to the full participation of migrant workers in the life and leadership of national trade unions, and to the exercise of the most basic civil and political rights, especially at the local government level.

For this reason, Italy must fully support both the EC’s social

action programme – drawn up by Vice-President Hillery, who has honoured us with his presence, and which, albeit with limited resources, moves in this direction – and the proposals for a ‘Charter of Rights for Migrant Workers’, submitted to the European Parliament, which, to be effective, must be accompanied by far-reaching revisions to individual national legislation. We are a pro-European country, and we believe in the importance of political unity on the continent and the election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage. Accordingly, we are committed to the removal of the barriers that effectively reduce migrant workers to second-class citizens by depriving them of their civil and democratic rights. We therefore support, both bilaterally and multilaterally and on the basis of the principle of reciprocity, any concrete steps towards the participation, under conditions to be defined, of EC citizens in local elections (not double voting, which would be difficult to envisage). It would be an unacceptable anachronism to leave on the margins, in the social and political process of building the Europe of tomorrow, millions of migrant workers of various nationalities who make an irreplaceable contribution to the EC’s economic and productive development.

The issue of the full range of rights of migrant workers also arises, albeit in different forms, in non-EC and overseas countries. There, the problems of dual citizenship, education and culture, the accumulation of social security benefits, and full integration into societies in which our compatriots tend to settle are of significant importance. In this context, we should focus on the precarious situation of seasonal and cross-border migrant workers who, as the complex case of relations with Switzerland demonstrates, cannot rely on EC law or on appropriate bilateral agreements to defend their rights. Indeed, such agreements frequently encounter significant negotiating difficulties. We must not forget the problems faced by our compatriots who, particularly in Africa, return to Italy as refugees and are entitled to a dignified integration. Alternatively, if they wish to remain, they must be supported in actively integrating into newly

independent states that are emerging, amid considerable difficulties, from long periods of colonial subordination. In these cases, the means of intervention are more complex. In fact, this requires to implement updated bilateral agreements based on innovative and open principles, meaning the contracting states must first reach a not always easy understanding. But also because it is necessary to increase the scope for intervention and mediation by international organisations, including the ILO and the UN. These bodies must step up their commendable but often powerless work to defend migrant workers and their rights.

The phenomenon of emigration is nowadays linked to global economic interdependence and to the inexorable march of mobility. It is therefore clear that a new kind of ‘strategy’ to address this phenomenon requires an increasingly targeted foreign policy initiative. Now, any policy aimed at achieving tangible results raises the question, both domestically and internationally, of the tools needed, the means to be employed, and the forces to be mobilised in order to overcome the foreseeable difficulties. With an eye on these new challenges, Italy – a country that, thanks to its past and ongoing experiences, can play a ‘leadership’ [in English in the original text] role in the field of a modern, democratic policy on emigration – must address the following issues: bringing its insufficient and poorly distributed consular network up to standard; increasing funding for schools abroad and for all the extracurricular and support activities needed to link up with education systems in other countries; revising national legislation and updating agreements and treaties; and fostering economic and social cooperation that does not neglect the human factor at the international level.

Even the harshest critics have acknowledged that, in recent times, a turnaround has indeed begun, and this National Conference on Emigration is a clear sign of this. Significant measures have been taken, such as the aforementioned establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Emigration and the doubling of budget allocations for the protection of our compatriots. There is a

commitment to pass legislation in Parliament as soon as possible to regulate the legal status of teaching and non-teaching staff employed abroad, and to ensure – in accordance with an existing law – that their pay is at least equal to that of similar staff in the host country. There is also an increasing push for a more effective European policy, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is preparing comprehensive measures to revise the laws on citizenship and refugees, which, following ongoing consultations with the other relevant ministries, can then go through the parliamentary process. However, to move forward on this path and to address the underlying problems we have mentioned, we need a major effort of national solidarity and participation, both in Italy and abroad.

This Conference is based on broad criteria for participation. It can make a significant contribution if, as I believe, a constructive spirit and a willingness to engage in honest self-criticism prevail. However, its importance cannot and must not end with these days of discussion. The task now is to institutionalise the participatory process that the National Conference on Emigration has strongly promoted. For this reason, the Government has made a commitment to Parliament to discuss the various bills tabled for the establishment of democratically elected Consular Committees. Based on the recommendations that emerge from the debate, it is open to a comprehensive reform of the current Advisory Committee for Italians Abroad in order to broaden its representativeness, clarify its powers, and strengthen its operational links with Parliament, Government and the regions. What matters is to stabilise the link between Italian society as a whole and our emigrant communities over time, and to make this link increasingly effective. Only through a united effort, despite our different roles, can we gradually but decisively resolve the issues raised. There are certainly significant obstacles to overcome. In a recent speech to Parliament, President Moro recalled, with great moral conviction, that in difficult times, the Government and the people, through Parliament and the social and political forces, must find in dialogue a reason for shared

commitment. This important appeal is all the more relevant when it comes to bringing back together the two Italies that were forged in the turmoil of difficult historical periods, without losing the bond of their shared origins, the value of their traditions, or their commitment to emancipation and progress. Indeed, a spirit of fruitful solidarity has always been at work at the most pivotal moments in our national history. During the Risorgimento, in the anti-fascist Resistance, in the conquest and defence of freedom, and in the desire to make further progress, we have seen – and continue to see – a positive drive to seek out what unites us, while respecting what, in terms of ideals and politics, may divide us, within a healthy and vital democracy.

The National Conference on Emigration is a valuable opportunity to strengthen genuine solidarity with those who have paid the price in painful ruptures, isolation, and frustration, for a political unity that has yet to be complemented by true social and economic unity, both within and beyond our borders. The scope is vast. Emigrant associations and trade unions, political parties and social groups from all backgrounds, Parliament and the regional governments, the Government and the public administration, with their diverse roles, can and must make a decisive contribution. This holds especially true in that test of facts that will begin in the aftermath of the National Conference on Emigration. The effort that went into organising this politically engaged meeting, the inevitable lingering polemics, and the difficulties we overcame thanks to the active collaboration of the Organising Committee – which has my deep gratitude – will be amply rewarded if, together, we can develop a new, comprehensive policy on behalf of the whole of Italian society, to serve our compatriots scattered across the world.

*Italy's Foreign Policy**

It is difficult to determine the date of this speech by Granelli or the occasion on which it was delivered. Presumably, it can be dated to 1973–74 and was delivered at a conference on foreign policy. The subject of the speech, which Granelli gave in his capacity as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was Italy's foreign policy. Granelli did not speak in favour of the 'albeit generous utopias of neutralism or an equidistant "Third Force" position' that had been the subject of lively debates within the Christian Democracy party in the late 1940s and 1950s. In his view, the issue was the overall development of international relations, not some vague and unrealistic form of neutralism. Granelli was certainly aware of the ideological struggles of some Catholics and their sincere pacifist convictions, which, however, proved powerless in the face of the harshness of relations between states, the reality of conflicting interests, the weight of profoundly different ideologies and systems, and the coercion of a law of power that often effectively overrides the rule of law. Granelli was also aware of the risk that Catholics holding public office could become absorbed by an excess of political realism and a misconceived notion of raison d'état.

I will not provide an analytical account of our country's specific international actions to address the topic assigned to me. Rather I wish to offer an open reflection on the more general issues of international balance. Indeed, I am convinced that we need to look beyond the current situation and the individual actions that shape the foreign policy of different peoples. This, precisely because I believe

* ASIS, FG, series VIII, 2, b. 25.

that the era in which foreign policy was the exclusive domain of governments and diplomatic services is now over. Instead, the active protagonists in foreign policy today are the peoples, the emerging nations, and all the young people and working classes in our Western countries, who have shaken off a long history of provincialism. I am talking about actors in terms of their consciousness, their awareness and, in some cases, also in terms of exerting real pressure on government policy. This means that the spaces of democracy and freedom that exist within a country are also reflected in its foreign policy, just as, negatively, any authoritarian backsliding or situations of precariousness and instability are also reflected in it.

When it comes to Italy's role in international relations, we need to be realistic and bear in mind that Italy is a medium-sized country. As such, it cannot aspire to a leading role in the global balance of power. However, the policies of the great powers tend to further reduce the room for manoeuvre of small and medium powers, subordinating them to their interests through political, ideological or economic hegemony. Ultimately, they fail to recognise the right of peoples and states to act as subjects of the international order.

Although Italy has no megalomaniacal aspirations or pretensions, based on its democratic balance, its geographical size and its regional position, it must first of all be aware that *détente* and peace represent the development direction of its foreign policy. This direction is also a prerequisite. In fact, only through a policy of *détente* and peace – by abandoning ‘confrontation’, as the Americans say – small and medium-sized countries have a chance to emerge as active actors in international relations. During the Cold War, when the world was divided into ‘opposing blocs’, smaller countries had little or no opportunity to take independent initiatives at the international level. Therefore, Italy has a strong interest in moving beyond bloc division and in promoting dynamism, dialogue and plurality within the international order.

We would be naive if we believed that the transition from the Cold War to *détente*, or even to an understanding between the United

States and the Soviet Union – and more recently also between the United States and China – represents an irreversible progress in the consciousness of peoples, a genuine fulfilment of the aspiration to peaceful coexistence within the international order. In reality, the transition from the Cold War to so-called ‘peaceful coexistence’ was driven by the major powers’ realisation that the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons was practically unusable. In fact, if these weapons had to be used to destroy an adversary, the country using them would inevitably also be destroyed. Paradoxically, technological progress aimed at developing ever more sophisticated instruments of destruction, and the growing tying-up of enormous economic resources in unusable armaments, have introduced an element of weakness into the arms race, the policy of deterrence, and the balance of terror, leading to a less dangerous situation, a climate of *détente*, and a search for agreements on outstanding issues. This is certainly preferable to the previous one.

However, the fact that *détente* arose from the needs of the great powers, rather than from a desire to build a different kind of global balance, did not allow the removal of the root cause of the Cold War: the division of the world into spheres of influence, drawn up at Yalta by the great powers that had defeated Nazism. This division stifled the autonomy of individual peoples in their quest for peaceful coexistence, even between different political and economic systems. The situation in which we now live is certainly less fraught with risk and danger than it was during the Cold War, but it became static. No new global balance is emerging that differs from the one drawn up at Yalta and crystallised during the Cold War period. Above all, the vision of a different world – based on justice, the rule of law, diversity, and the primacy of popular forces over major economic interests – that had begun to come into view when Kennedy and Khrushchev were at the helm of the two superpowers is not taking shape.

Indeed, these two statesmen had realised that the transition from the Cold War to coexistence could not consist simply of a peaceful consolidation of the status quo, otherwise the main problem would

remain unresolved. That is, problem of the gap in active presence in the world between industrialised countries – even those with different ideological, social and political systems – and Third World countries. These latter were painstakingly emerging from a long period of colonial dependence and, through their struggles, sacrifices and suffering, were winning the right to participate autonomously and independently in the international order.

In this context, as mentioned, Italy is aware of its limitations. And yet, it must contribute, through every initiative, to consolidating *détente* and to rejecting any temptation towards radicalisation and confrontation. Italy must work to ensuring that *détente* is not the end point of global balance, but the starting point – the prerequisite – for moving beyond the power balance set out at Yalta and the more recent divide between the industrialised world and the developing world. Indeed, our country's popular and anti-fascist conscience has been consistently expressed through the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – a clear decision to renounce this type of weapon – and through the intensive work to prepare the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, aimed at creating a climate of trust and refraining from the use of force in Europe. I also think it is important to recall the official proposal made by the then Foreign Minister, Aldo Moro, to hold a conference on security in the Mediterranean following the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (which is due to conclude this year, ensuring improved East–West relations on our continent). Such a conference would represent an original contribution by Italy to a broader process of assessing the true substance and robustness of the policy of *détente*.

In our view, therefore, *détente* cannot be separated from an active policy aimed at bringing local conflicts to an end. By contrast, the cynical logic of the great powers avoids nuclear war inasmuch it would be a disaster. Yet they keep the fires of military tension burning, causing suffering and horror to the populations caught up in these conflicts, who are nevertheless entirely lacking the capacity

or the means to resolve the problems that caused them. The tragedy of Vietnam is perhaps the clearest demonstration that there is no conventional military solution, not even for local problems; and that the ruthless game of the great powers in stoking tension in certain areas of the world is contrary to the true goal of world peace. Indeed, the latter can only be achieved through political negotiation.

I believe that small and medium-sized nations should take a stronger initiative in the genuine process of *détente*. Such an initiative is not incompatible with maintaining a special relationship with one or other of the superpowers, or even with a military alliance. To put it plainly, we can say that Vietnam and the Middle East lie outside the geographical remit of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. However, this does not mean that these issues are of no concern to a country that belongs to one or the other of these defensive military pacts, or that any of these countries is prohibited from taking a political initiative in favour of peace. Of course, the lack of initiative in foreign policy is often influenced by domestic political pressures. For example, I recall that when Aldo Moro, after the outbreak of the oil crisis, spoke in the Senate of the Republic on the Palestinian issue, explicitly calling for Israel to withdraw from the territories it had occupied during the Six-Day War, such a clear stance appeared to be tinged with opportunism, given the economic repercussions that the oil crisis was having on Italy and other Western countries. In reality, this foreign policy position had already been developed some time earlier, including through diplomatic channels. It had in fact remained on hold due to opposition from certain parties needed to form a stable government (the Social Democrats and the Republicans, as well as significant sections of the Socialists and Christian Democracy). These were committed to uncritical defence of the State of Israel and its foreign policy.

The failure of Kissinger's step-by-step policy shows that diplomatic skill has objective limits: if, in the Middle East, the Palestinian people's rights – including their political rights – are not recognised; if the serious violation of the principle of international

law that no state may acquire territory by force, that is, by deriving its right from force, is not eliminated; and if collaborative relationships are not built between all the peoples of that region, going beyond the international guarantee of borders, then the resumption of open military conflict will be inevitable. Italy has expressed its view on the Middle East issue in these terms, and in Parliament, even the left-wing opposition agreed with this position. However, a declaration of intentions is not enough to achieve a lasting solution to the relations between the countries of the Middle East; it must be accompanied by a coherent political initiative. In reality, Italy, and the whole of Western Europe, bear a historical responsibility for having missed such a significant opportunity to play a leading role in a genuine peace effort in a region that is both geographically very close and linked by long-standing and recent economic and cultural ties.

The dramatic news coming from South-East Asia in recent days further confirms the illusory nature of a policy of ceasefire, of an armistice somehow orchestrated to appease consciences, of freezing active hostilities, without addressing the root causes of the conflict between the peoples involved. Today, the mainstream press is complaining about the violation of the Paris Peace Accords, but it fails to mention that this violation began the day after the agreements were signed, when South Vietnam failed to fulfil its commitments to release political prisoners, to allow the neutralist third force freedom of political expression, and to initiate a process of democratic consultation in the country. Large sections of the public in Europe, and certainly in Italy too, were in favour of their governments taking a more active political stance, both towards the American power and towards the peoples directly involved in the conflict in order to put an end to the carnage and initiate genuine peace negotiations. However, these governments never went beyond fairly general statements, with the possible exception – to be fair – of an Italian mediation attempt in the early years of the conflict.

Within the context of local conflicts, understood as episodes of widespread violence in a limited geographical area, we can also

include attacks on the freedom and independence of peoples carried out through military 'coups', the most striking of which was undoubtedly the coup in Chile. Without any triumphalism, but in the awareness that we have convinced even the hesitant of the political validity of a particular choice, we can say that Italy is the only European country that did not recognise Pinochet's regime. Italy rejected the hypocritical concept developed long ago to justify the requirements of 'realpolitik', according to which international relations are established between states and not between the regimes that happen to be in power at any given time.

At this point, we have to admit that the difficulty faced by small and medium-sized countries in proposing an independent initiative in the field of international relations does not depend on their position in one bloc or the other. In fact, even countries that are building socialism along a national path or according to imported models have no more room for initiative in relation to the Soviet Union's power politics than do small or medium-sized countries situated in the Western sphere under American hegemony. Western communist parties themselves are sometimes embarrassed by the hard-nosed pragmatism of some of the Soviet Union's support and tactical alliances (one need only think of the diversity of political regimes in the Arab world). On the other hand, a 'non-aligned' position is not in itself a sufficient guarantee of autonomy and initiative in international relations. I recall that, at the height of the controversy over the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, it was argued that only from a position of neutrality, of non-alignment, would it be possible for our country to take independent action in the international order. Historical reality has since shown that even non-aligned countries have had little chance of influencing the global balance of power in the direction of détente, even though they have maintained respectable positions that could potentially evolve further.

Beginning in the autumn of 1973, however, a revolutionary change took place in international relations, as the nations of the

Third and Fourth Worlds became aware of their strategic importance for the development of industrialised countries. A large section of public opinion, including in our country, failed to grasp the significance of the lesson learned from the oil crisis. It is not, in fact, a simple act of retaliation or a deterrent aimed at resolving the Middle East issue in a particular way. The oil crisis marked the end of the era of cheap raw materials – or, at least, of raw materials at prices set by consumer countries – on which the industrialised countries had based their development. The OPEC countries' use of oil as a weapon has exposed the political and, above all, financial vulnerability of Western countries, disrupted balance-of-payments positions, altered financial flows, and accelerated global inflation. What has happened with oil could happen with copper, lead, tin, and monocultures, whose selling prices have always been set by consumer countries. The division of the world into two parts – one forced to sell its raw materials instead of using them for its own emancipation and development, and the other that has built its prosperity on the colonial or neocolonial exploitation of the former – will no longer be possible on the same terms. Of course, it would be naive to think that oil-producing countries use these resources solely for the well-being of their people: on the contrary, it is likely that the imbalances caused in traditional financial markets will, for a number of years – perhaps even decades – end up harming both industrialised countries and those Fourth World countries that do not have oil resources. These countries will pay an even heavier price for the rise in commodity prices.

It is, however, likely that we will no longer be able to return to a neo-colonialist economic relationship, or indeed to exporting the development model and the way of life that follows from it. This latter issue relates more to the domestic policy of each state than to international policy. However, there is no doubt that the glorification of the myth of maximising gross domestic product (on which international rankings and comparisons have always been based), and the ephemeral, superficial, resource-destroying consumerism that Western civilisation has promoted under the pretence of being a

superior civilisation, must now come to terms with other realities that are painstakingly becoming aware of their cultural and historical identity, and of their distinctive and indispensable values.

So, *détente* does not just mean resolving local conflicts and recognising and guaranteeing the independence of peoples. It also means abandoning the arrogant myth that 'civilisation' exists only in industrially advanced countries, and acknowledging that global civilisation is pluralistic, so that every people – with its own culture, history, way of life, and way of using natural resources – can contribute to peace through international cooperation.

Peace in the active sense – which is very different from the absence of conflict brought about by the fear of a nuclear catastrophe – is therefore fundamentally based on international cooperation. In the history of democratic Italy, we can say that there was a period when this understanding of international relations was pursued with clear-eyed determination: I am referring to Enrico Mattei's approach to the oil-producing countries in the Third World. Putting aside his personal flaws, which he certainly had, I can say from my own experience of contacts in emerging countries that Mattei's image is linked to a new way of understanding relations between industrialised countries and raw-material-producing countries: a new way of 'making joint use of resources', and of paying for those resources with technology and services – in other words, with tools that would enable those countries to escape subordination and create an autonomous model of development.

After Mattei's death, Italy also fell back into the seemingly more convenient mercantilist system, buying oil at low prices instead of pursuing cooperation on an equal footing with producer countries. It was only when the oil crisis erupted that it realised the mistake it had made. However, Italy and the Europe of the Nine as a whole missed another historic opportunity when they tried to abolish internal customs barriers and erected a wall of protectionism at their external borders, which was particularly damaging for food products, raw materials and manufactured goods from Third World countries.

Peace based on cooperation means giving countries rich in raw materials the opportunity to develop independently. It means setting them free from the pressure of a resurgent neocolonialism, such as interest-bearing loans or loans conditional on purchasing capital goods from the country providing the loans. In fact, as the United Nations organisation specifically focused on the interests of less developed countries (UNCTAD) has shown, these loans are unlikely to bring progress. More often, they actually increase indebtedness and impoverishment. Above all, less developed countries need fair prices for their products, as well as technical and organisational cooperation, so that they can develop in a way that reflects their unique characteristics. I believe that Italy, and Europe itself, could play a role of this kind, using the economic space created by détente for genuine international cooperation initiatives, rather than for a mere scramble to secure contracts from Arab countries, which is what we are currently witnessing. Of course, we need to envisage a Europe that can act as a bridge to the Third World, rather than a Europe that is one of the five poles into which the Kissinger doctrine aims to transform the current bipolar order.

When I talk about a Europe that wants to and can become more independent from the great powers, in order to pursue a policy of international cooperation, I am not thinking of a Europe surrounded by walls of mutual incomprehension. Rather, I envision a greater Europe, where different political and social systems coexist. Any European country that wants to leave Yalta and the Cold War behind has a clear interest in strengthening the UN, regardless of its political system. I am convinced that even those Eastern European countries that want to build socialism in their own way could strengthen their autonomy if the United Nations were an authoritative international forum where every people's right to exist and to be sovereign was recognised, not just formally. With the entry of newly independent countries, the UN has changed significantly since its founding, and there is no doubt that it provides a platform where issues of decolonisation, the independence of peoples, the fight against racism,

and scientific, economic and technical cooperation are readily heard and solemnly proclaimed. However, even in such a broadly representative forum, it is still the great powers that retain effective power, both formally, through the right of veto, and, in practice, through the weight of their spheres of influence. Therefore, it is at the substantive level that Europe should demonstrate greater autonomy in taking the initiative, in order then also to achieve, at the formal level, greater authority for the UN as a forum for the peaceful resolution of international disputes.

I believe that all the issues I have outlined are essential for defining the foreign policy of a country like Italy. Italy is interested in peace, and therefore in an active policy of *détente*; it is interested in the emancipation of the peoples of developing countries, and therefore in a genuine policy of economic, technical and scientific cooperation; it is interested in cultural and civil pluralism, and therefore in the coexistence of different political, social and cultural systems. It would be a stretch to claim that our country has, up to now, pursued a foreign policy at odds with these major issues; rather, we must acknowledge that it has pursued a timid, weak policy, with little follow-through. To conclude this analysis, I would like to put forward three reflections that relate not so much to the substance of Italy's foreign policy as to the conditions that, in the future, could make our foreign policy less timid, less clumsy, and more consistent with the full range of our people's aspirations. The first condition relates to domestic politics: undoubtedly, if the current precarious state of Italian political life were to lead to a further, dramatic authoritarian backsliding to the right, Italian foreign policy would close in on provincialism, intransigence and bloc confrontation. Over the course of all these years, the process of *détente* has led to the development of a more modern and independent view of international issues across all Italian political forces, not just those in government. Since Italian communists have been represented in the European Parliament, several moves have been showing that an ambitious Italian foreign policy can count on the convergence of

broad democratic and popular forces, regardless of whether they are in government or in opposition. Just consider the Italian Communist Party's stance on European issues; the argument also put forward by the left-wing opposition regarding the need to move beyond not only NATO but also the Warsaw Pact in order to create a broader process of emancipation for peoples; and the PCI's advocacy of national paths to socialism, independent of Soviet hegemony.

For a long time, it has been said that foreign policy was an obstacle to convergence between democratic forces in government and the left-wing opposition. However, I believe this argument should be reversed: there are problems inherent in our foreign policy – problems of national independence, and problems of a more dynamic and incisive action in the world – that require a broader internal equilibrium if they are to be implemented. Italy's foreign policy will not become more coherent and courageous by changing a few ambassadors or even the foreign minister, but when backed by a wider solidarity of political and popular forces, of public opinion, and of the national consciousness.

The second condition, which I was able to observe extensively over a year at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the impossibility of pursuing a modern policy without modern tools. If we want the policy guidelines that emerge from the government and parliamentary committees to be implemented, our entire diplomatic structure needs to be fundamentally overhauled. A first step could be a different approach to staff recruitment, which is currently based on competitive examinations in which knowledge of foreign languages is a decisive qualification. It is now clear that, due to their long periods spent abroad, the children of diplomats have a good command of languages, but modern diplomacy also requires other qualities that cannot be improvised, whereas language skills can be acquired, or improved, at a later stage. The internal system of careers and promotions should also be more aligned with the needs of the service. But above all, the state should adopt a new structure for its presence abroad. In the traditional centres of diplomacy – Paris, London,

Washington, Moscow, and throughout Europe in general – we have highly prestigious diplomatic missions, sometimes even with large numbers of staff, and almost always with intelligent and well-trained staff. However, this does not make Italy's voice any more authoritative. In contrast, in the countries of the Third World, which are the countries of the future for our foreign policy, our diplomatic missions are severely understaffed, and the staff are often ill-prepared to handle the new relationships that need to be established with these countries. I have had the opportunity to observe that, in these countries, more Italian foreign policy has been carried out by ENI technicians or representatives of large Italian private companies than by our diplomatic missions. This shows that there is openness and goodwill towards Italy (probably also due to the fact that our country 'does not inspire fear'), but that we mainly know how to exploit this for commercial and industrial purposes. Again, in terms of the means to implement a more effective foreign policy, it is important to highlight the extremely limited budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Just over one hundred billion lire is barely enough for a purely administrative budget, to pay salaries, and it leaves no room for initiative, whether for a more active foreign policy or for effectively protecting our compatriots abroad.

The third condition is greater public awareness. This, too, is something that cannot be improvised and requires an appropriate process of information and education. In this regard, a simple comparison between our press and the foreign press, and between our radio and television news programmes and those of other countries close to us in terms of culture and historical traditions, reveals how much provincialism, how much conformism, how much fear there is of adopting an independent and responsible stance that might displease those who matter. Now, one cannot imagine that a government, with the support of Parliament, could pursue a more dynamic and open approach to foreign policy than has been the case so far without the backing of public opinion. However, a democratic approach to foreign policy – one that is no longer the exclusive

domain of diplomats but is extended to the people, to the social forces, to public opinion – cannot be improvised; it requires determined and in-depth action to raise awareness and support maturation.

A genuinely democratic domestic political balance, reform of the traditional structures of our diplomacy, and public support for international policy issues are the fundamental conditions for overcoming the timidity, inconsistency and lack of courage that have characterised our foreign policy in recent years. However, we must also be aware of the limited scope for influence open to our country, given its size. Such a limited scope, nevertheless, should not be used as an alibi for avoiding any initiative. That is why I consider our discussion this evening very positive too, because the doubts, disappointments and bitterness we have expressed are not a sign of resignation and mistrust, but of taking responsibility, each of us at our own level, so that things can change.

*Establishment of the Italian Space Agency**

Granelli was Minister for Scientific and Technological Research from 1983 to 1987, under the Craxi and Fanfani governments. The previous political class had paid little attention to the ever-greater role of technological innovation, and the governments that had followed one another until then had confined themselves to occasional interventions, delegating the study and organisation of the field to the National Research Council (CNR).

Granelli's activity as Minister for Scientific Research significantly and diversely contributed a greater awareness of technology from the 1980s onwards. He was convinced of the need to provide the country with technological infrastructure capable of competing in Europe and worldwide.

In 1988, the Italian Space Agency (ASI) was established, and it went on to become the reference point for Italian scientific and technological excellence. The ASI brought together the activities carried out by the CNR, the management of the national programme, and the safeguarding of Italy's interests within the European Space Agency (ESA).

Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in the use of space technologies, both for the scientific exploration of the universe and for applications in telecommunications, meteorology, live television broadcasting and Earth observation. They also open up opportunities for the mechanical, chemical, electronic and optical industries through the production of new advanced materials in microgravity.

* ASILS, FG, series IV, b. 13.

Recent space missions, such as the retrieval of two US telecommunications satellites from orbit, clearly demonstrate that space activities have moved beyond the exploratory and experimental phase. They are increasingly becoming a key sector for industrial activity in modern nations, with the capacity to attract private capital to supplement the public investment initially required.

Following the successes of the new reusable space transport system, the Space Shuttle, the United States will, by 1992, build the first, evolving core of a space station that will be permanently inhabited. This station will essentially serve as a 'service station' for satellites and orbital platforms, as well as for the construction of large structures, the production of advanced materials, and the development of significant scientific and technological research activities in microgravity.

Similar initiatives are under development in the Soviet Union.

These perspectives suggest that the future colonisation of space could have social and economic consequences for humanity. They may be similar to – and perhaps even more significant than – those once brought about by the exploration and colonisation of the Americas.

Over the past decade, Europe has launched major initiatives to secure its significant role in the future of space activities. In particular, following the 1973 Space Conference, the European Space Agency (ESA), of which Italy has been a member since its establishment, has achieved significant successes in the field of scientific and applications satellites. It has also begun a process to achieve autonomy and develop commercial potential in space transportation, including through the development of the ARIANE launcher.

Europe is now considering, with interest, not least in response to President Reagan's proposal, the possibility of collaborating with the US on the construction of the Space Station. It has already taken concrete steps by signing agreements with NASA, without neglecting the development of its own autonomy in the field of launchers in order to guarantee its industry a significant presence in the future

market for space activities.

The recent (30–31 January 1985) ministerial meeting of the ESA Council, convened by the Italian Minister for Scientific and Technological Research, then holding the rotating Council presidency, approved the Long-Term Space Plan (for the next 10–15 years). The plan aims to ensure Europe achieves significant technological progress in both science (a mandatory programme) and applications, by exploiting space through orbiting stations and by achieving autonomy in transport, including manned transport.

More specifically, a number of programme actions have been established, aimed at:

- a - ensuring the participation of as many ESA member states as possible in the Columbus programme, an Italian–German initiative involving a fully independent orbital complex to be integrated into the broader space collaboration programme proposed by the US;

- b - supporting the development of the Ariane 5 launch vehicle, with a cryogenic engine, with a view to strengthening European autonomy in this field too;

- c - advancing research into space telecommunications, microgravity and, more generally, geophysical observation.

In terms of cost, Italy's participation in the ESA programme will amount to around 2,000 MAU (million accounting units), equivalent to approximately 2.8 trillion Italian lire. This expenditure will be staged over time, with an initial rise up to the end of the 1980s of around 10%, from about 180 billion Italian lire in 1985 to 290 billion Italian lire in 1995.

Within this context, Italy's political, business and scientific stakeholders all agree on the need for increased Italian involvement in a cutting-edge technological sector such as space, in order to ensure a significant presence in the future market.

The efforts made in recent years in space activities are undoubtedly a step in this direction, both through Italy's cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) and through the launch of a national space plan to better equip our industry for a fuller role and

greater responsibility in major international initiatives.

Currently, Italy's participation in ESA activities is approved by a CIPE resolution and handled directly by the offices of the Minister responsible for coordinating scientific and technological research initiatives, while the management of these activities is ensured by the Agency's operational structures.

As for the National Space Plan, in 1979 CIPE tasked the CNR with its temporary management.

To this end, the CNR set up an ad hoc structure to oversee:

a - the drafting of multi-year activity plans, taking into account Italy's commitments within ESA and the global context of space activities;

b - the detailed specification of the technical and operational content of the programmes, to be entrusted to individual firms under suitable contracts;

c - the technical and administrative management of these contracts;

d - the maintenance of technical and operational relations with other space agencies and organisations in other countries, or international bodies, with which collaborative activities are carried out.

Public funding for the space sector is already far from negligible. The activities under the National Space Plan entail a spending commitment, over the coming years, of 200 billion a year. Italy also makes an annual contribution of the same amount for activities carried out through its participation in European Space Agency programmes. Recent developments linked to the construction of NASA's space transport system, the development and future prospects of the European ARIANE launcher and, last but not least, the US administration's offer of international participation in building the Space Station, suggest that, in the coming years, Italy may be called upon to play a more significant role among the countries that produce and supply technology for the growing industrial and commercial use of space.

Indeed, when comparing Italy's potential for large-scale space initiatives with that of other technologically advanced countries, one finds that Italian operators have strong capabilities in the scientific, technological and industrial sectors. However, Italy still lacks the organisational structures that are now essential for managing the large-scale research and development projects that are typical of the most advanced areas of science and technology.

We should also bear in mind that, except in rare cases, the high cost of these projects and the high level of economic and scientific risk do not allow the private sector to play an independent role, given the operational and management structures of our industries and the long timescales (sometimes 10 or 15 years) required to obtain direct returns on these investments. On the other hand, the current forms of public intervention in applied research and industrial development involve the direct award of financial incentives to industrial companies. This happens through sector-specific initiatives that are generally aimed at solving immediate technological problems, in order to improve Italy's competitiveness in the strategic sectors for the immediate future.

Even the management of CNR's targeted projects, in accordance with the compatibility rules governing semi-public bodies – and therefore also the current management of the National Space Plan – has its shortcomings. They are poorly suited to the need for agile, flexible management in a rapidly evolving global context.

In fact, we should bear in mind that the CNR's own management procedures are governed by the administrative and accounting rules for public-sector bodies.

Therefore they are ill-suited to space activities, which require swift decisions and the rapid disbursement of funds and signing of contracts.

From these considerations, it emerges that the institutional arrangements for managing the various ongoing space initiatives require urgent and rational measures, capable of enabling timely, business-oriented implementation, including mechanisms that allow

the deployment of highly specialised personnel.

With this in mind, it is clear that there is an urgent need to act through legislation to set up a dedicated governance structure, such as an agency, capable of ensuring the greatest possible efficiency in public expenditure.

This bill addresses the issue by proposing the establishment of a body that is organisationally flexible but possesses technical and scientific expertise at the highest level. Such a body should be capable of overseeing the drafting, management, and technical and economic control of scientific, technological, and applied programmes for the exploration and peaceful use of outer space. At the same time, it assigns supervisory authority to the Minister responsible for coordinating initiatives for scientific and technological research, and entrusts the CIPE with defining the overall policy framework.

An analytical review of the bill suggests the following specific observations.

*Regulation of the Public and Private Broadcasting System**

Law No. 223, 'Regulation of the Public and Private Broadcasting System' was passed on 6 August 1990. This instrument is commonly known as the 'Mammì Law' after its first signatory, the then Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, Oscar Mammì.

The law underwent a long and complex process of development, with a large number of amendments. It formalised the existing RAI-Fininvest duopoly. Granelli, who had served on the RAI-TV Supervisory Committee, opposed the request for a vote of confidence, as he believed the legislation required a broader and more open debate. He defended his position on the limits to be placed on the advertising sales system, arguing that this was a prerequisite for greater pluralism and for giving more operators the opportunity to enter the market for radio and television broadcasting frequencies.

In fact, the most contentious article of the law was Article 15, which concerned the prohibition of dominant positions in the mass media and the date on which the legislation would come into force. More than fifty amendments were tabled on it, some of them proposed by forty-six senators from the Christian Democrat left, including Granelli himself. Granelli called for the new law to come into force on 3 October 1991, in accordance with European Community directives, rather than on 1 January 1993. Such a delay, he argued, would allow the duopoly to consolidate and lead to 'the unchecked occupation of space by a private entrepreneur'.

Mr President, Prime Minister, Ministers, colleagues, I think

* ASILS, FG, series I, b. 18.

everyone should acknowledge that we have always been very critical of the idea of calling for a vote of confidence during the debate on the bill under consideration. We made this point clearly and achieved a favourable outcome at first reading in the Senate, where a confidence vote was not called; others repeated this in the Chamber of Deputies, where a confidence vote was instead tabled; and we have repeated it again in recent days: I also appealed to the Prime Minister's wisdom so that a test of strength could be avoided on issues of such sensitivity.

I must say straight away that we consider the decision to seek a vote of confidence to be disproportionate. This is true both in terms of the substance of the amendments that have been tabled – which are certainly not maximalist amendments or amendments that undermine the overall philosophy of the legislation under consideration – and in terms of Parliament's prerogatives, which, on such sensitive matters, should be able to decide in complete freedom.

Therefore, we do not share the opinions that have been addressed to us even outside the Senate, namely that the resignations of five ministers from your Government, Hon. Andreotti, and those of the undersecretaries, were disproportionate. Furthermore, we do not consider the tenacity of our own battle in the Senate to be disproportionate either.

The resignation of five ministers is an act of integrity and dignity in response to a decision not supported by the Cabinet. Retabling our amendments is allowed by the Rules of Procedure – not only those of Parliament, but also those of our Group.

Therefore, we have no particular desire to stir up controversy on this point. On the contrary, we believe that decisions that have been hard-won and are motivated solely by political integrity must be respected. This applies to the ministers who have resigned and to the undersecretaries who have freely made their choices. We hope that, perhaps less promptly than in the case of the ministers, the Government will also, in this respect, bring itself as soon as possible to full representativeness in its dealings with Parliament.

Despite all this, a vote of confidence has been put forward, and we are obliged – yes, Mr President Andreotti – to vote confidence as a matter of party discipline, even though you know that we have very clear convictions on this issue. We have great respect for the personal decisions of our colleagues, Mr Lipari and Mr Moro, but we have never thought that our aim was a government crisis, a destabilising objective. So we are voting in favour of the confidence motion with a clear conscience because this does not form part of our objectives. We would have preferred to vote without the constraint of party discipline, but we have been compelled to do so by the procedures that have been adopted.

Therefore, we will be voting in favour of the motion of confidence. I would like to say to my friend Pollice, who has underestimated our decision and, to some extent, has also taken issue with it, that this is by no means a tactical move. Those of us who have decades of activism in the service of the party know perfectly our duties when questions of general solidarity arise on certain matters. Let me add that it is precisely because we are highly aware of our duties as members of the party that we derive from this the right to use all our procedural and political prerogatives to ensure that our arguments and our views prevail when this is necessary.

We do not scoff at activism; activism within parties is a serious matter, not to be confused with corrupt partitocracy. It is a key element of the right we acquire to go on to fight, elsewhere, the battles that are necessary to change the political orientations of parties as well. Understood in this sense, our vote of confidence is crystal clear. Of course, we would have preferred an open discussion on the substance of this bill, whose focus is not advertising spots. Indeed, this is a bill on the right to pluralistic information, based on the principles of the Constitution and on EC directives. We cannot discuss it because the vote of confidence has cut off that possibility; but I want briefly remind my colleagues in the Senate that, on the substance, we strongly dissent from this refusal to enter into the matter and find a solution that was not, and is not, maximalist, but

rather reasonable and constructive.

I would like to start with the very first amendment, Amendment 15.48, in which we propose replacing the date 1 January 1993 with 3 October 1991. This is expressly provided for in Article 25 of the EC directive. This reference to dates is not an exercise in sophistry; for us, this reference to the relevance of a date, set out unequivocally in an article of an EC directive, represents consistency with a pro-European commitment that our country has always honoured and that it should, all the more so, honour at a time when it holds the rotating presidency of the EC. I would like to read this article verbatim, or at least the part that concerns us.

Someone said during the debate that, of course, Member States – the Hon. Intini often lectures us on this point – can regulate the matter on the basis of their legislative autonomy (we are well aware that this is not what we are discussing). They added that the philosophy of the directive encompasses both the strict, restrictive approach we proposed in our amendment, which cannot be put to the vote because of the confidence vote, and the broader, more extensive, more ‘Italian-style’ approach proposed by the Government. Now, that is not the point. The point is that any legislative measure adopted independently by an EC Member State must be implemented no later than 3 October 1991. This is stated explicitly in Article 25. On this point, I would ask the Hon. Minister Mammì to be a little more cautious in his statements when he accuses us of falsifying references to the literal wording of acts that we have merely reproduced. However, in addition to this direct reference to Article 25, I would like to point out that, over the past few days, first the Constitutional Affairs Committee and then the Senate’s Committee on European Affairs have explicitly referred to the mandatory and binding nature of this date with regard to the entry into force of the decisions that Parliament, in its sovereign capacity, adopts on this matter. Therefore, with this amendment, we are not proposing anything subversive. Frankly, Mr Prime Minister, I do not understand what is subversive, destabilising or extraordinary about

setting a date that is laid down for us by an EC directive.

There seems to be a lack of proportion here too. I would like to add an observation, perhaps a little harsh, but I feel in conscience that I must express it. On this point, many media outlets have engaged in an unacceptable distortion of the facts. They are almost giving the impression that, in the free debate in Parliament regarding two dates relating to a piece of legislation – which is certainly open to discussion – there is a stubborn refusal to allow for greater flexibility in the application of the rule. That is not the case, because the more flexible rule that Parliament adopts will not come into force until 1 January 1993. This means that, between now and then, there will be no law of the Republic. The current absence of a rule will continue. This very absence has allowed a private entrepreneur to occupy space in an uncontrolled manner and, therefore, to concretely alter a situation that the law of the Republic should, in essence, have regulated. (Applause from the centre and the far left.) In practice, this means that until 1993, it will be permitted to do as one pleases, while from 1993 onwards, a more lenient rule than that set out in the EC directive will begin to be applied. We see this as a contradiction and therefore reaffirm our dissent.

I will move on quickly in my speech to say a few words about the second amendment that I, along with many other colleagues, have tabled. This amendment concerns pluralism in information and in advertising sales. Here too, I would like – albeit schematically, since there is no time to set out the arguments – to dispel the false impression that, when we discuss matters as important as these, there are two opposing camps: the RAI camp and the Berlusconi camp.

For us, that is not the case. We do not want a more balanced division of a duopoly that, in any case, stifles pluralism. What we want is to introduce rules that pave the way to genuine pluralism, in which other players, in addition to those that exist at present, can enter the market freely. I believe that, in any democratic country, setting a 25% ceiling on each operator's advertising revenue is not a persecutory attitude. On the contrary, it is a very supportive attitude, with the

difference that, at least at this level, there is a well-founded hope that someone else can enter the market and assert their right to participate in the information landscape.

So, with this amendment, we were proposing a cap on advertising revenue to pave the way for greater pluralism and for more players to enter the market, and also – why not emphasise this once again? – to initiate a process that would gradually allow the licence fee to be abolished and replaced by a state contribution to the public service, as payment for services provided in the general interest. In fact, our aim was to liberalise the market, amidst all the rhetoric surrounding the 1992 changes to the European market, and to begin a process of rationalisation that would also lead RAI to behave like a business, albeit one with particular responsibilities. Again, it does not seem to me that the proposal was subversive or dramatic, or that it even required a vote of confidence, the opening up of rifts, or the creation of drama, in order to push through, with great urgency, a law whose most important provisions would be implemented in 1993.

That is why, Mr President and honourable colleagues, we had set out to wage a constructive battle over these two amendments, a battle to improve the law. Our country needs this law to clarify an area that goes beyond advertising. It is about freedom of information, the pluralism of operators in this sector and, consequently, guarantees for all. We wanted to move in this direction, but we cannot, because we are prevented from voting on these amendments and we will be voting in favour of the confidence motion.

Prime Minister, we have to say that, from a political point of view, it is not the existence of coalition politics that concerns us. You have known us for many years and you know very well that, from De Gasperi onwards, we have always valued coalition politics as a noble choice in a pluralistic democracy. Our criticism is not of the coalition itself, that is, of the fact that in a coalition, parties have to coexist and respect each other's views: what we object to, and this is not the first time it has happened, is the power of veto exercised by certain parties within the coalition, which prevents the coalition itself from finding

reasonable common ground and from freely engaging in debate with Parliament and the parliamentary opposition. Here we see a serious flaw emerging in the conception of the parliamentary relationship.

However, despite all this, we know what our duties are, and we must say the following (as my colleague Senator Cabras lucidly reiterated this morning; I believe my colleague Mr Aliberti did not fully understand certain parts of Senator Cabras' speech, especially when he referred to a certain solecism: we are not making an issue of aesthetics). We have tabled these amendments, honourable Members, and I tell you this very frankly, not because we are the sixth party in the coalition (we leave that sort of wit to Mr Altissimo): we are Christian Democrats who have fought for the Christian Democracy party for decades, and we know that, when it comes to major issues, the position of the party takes precedence over our own interests or our own positions. We are Christian Democrats who dissent when we need to dissent and who know how to respect party discipline when it needs to be respected. However, we must say that, when we collected the signatures in support of these amendments, we did not carry out any numerical calculations; we did not do the calculations that are attributed to us. We collected the signatures freely; they came, full stop. These signatures include colleagues who disagree with us on the confidence vote; colleagues who have nothing to do with the left's battle within the Christian Democracy party. These are colleagues who have given their support freely, and I believe they have done so for one reason: because we must restore transparency, integrity and seriousness to politics. Nor has the succession over recent weeks of corridor rumours and advice, which has almost amounted to warnings against anyone making a free decision on such a sensitive issue, been of any help.

I was very disappointed to see, in the 2 August edition of the *Corriere della Sera*, the evening before we collected signatures for these amendments, a report – even put in quotation marks (without saying who the author was; I believe that to be impossible, and I shall note why in a moment) – stating that one of the rumours circulating

in the Senate was this: 'Those who dissent can forget about the safe constituencies that would ensure the re-election of many of them.' That's the quip most often heard in the corridors of Parliament. The author is not named, and I do not believe anyone in the Christian Democracy party would think of such things, but this is a sign of the degradation of our institutions.

I would like to remind everyone that, both here and elsewhere, our aim is to restore to political parties a certain ability to counter the negative aspects of *partitocracy*. We believe that, whatever their ideas, political parties must also safeguard a moral heritage that is important if young people are to believe that democracy still has effective tools at its disposal. We want to ensure that this heritage is not lost, and that people know that, even within the Christian Democracy party, there are individuals who say what they think and do what they say, without looking out for their own interests. We want it to be well known that, among Christian Democrats, there are people who may not be allowed to hold the positions of minister or councillor, and who may even be denied constituencies, but who cannot be deprived of that freedom of judgement that puts ideas before personal interests and personal conventions. I believe that the number of signatories to these amendments also represent an indignant response to an attempt at intimidation that is not credible and that we do not accept.

In fact, the battle doesn't end here. It is not just a battle over this law, but a fight for democracy, for media pluralism, and for the defence of our institutions, which we will continue elsewhere too.

We humbly believe that, through our consistency and resolve, we have made a modest contribution here to such a struggle. We seek to have the Christian Democracy party take up once again those great initiatives in the battles for civil rights and freedom that Aldo Moro taught us to wage. We have the honour and the duty to wage them still. (Applause from the centre and the far left. Congratulations from Senator Cabras.)

*Rebuild, Do Not Shelve, the DC**

In the 1992 general and local elections, the Christian Democracy party lost eight and five percentage points, respectively. In July 1993, a constituent assembly was held, which voted to transform Christian Democracy into the new Italian Popular Party, formally established at the beginning of 1994.

Granelli expressed his opposition to the party's new name, drawing on the experience of Romolo Murri and De Gasperi regarding the value of democracy and the importance of the party retaining a reference to this concept in its name. In this stance, too, we can recognise the political hallmark of Granelli's work in building the democratic state. In this respect, as Granelli said, the insights of Sturzo, De Gasperi and Moro were still alive and relevant.

A democratic party can discuss anything as long as the legality of decisions is respected. For example, it cannot be taboo to propose radical changes that affect not only a political party's programme and organisational structure, but also its name and symbol. However, it is first necessary to distinguish between discussions held with a view to forming a party, as was the case in Sturzo's time, and the very different discussions that take place on the basis of an established organisation, the DC, with decades of historical experience behind it. In the post-war period, when the name DC was chosen, this was done at De Gasperi's insistence. Primarily he wanted to give young people coming from the Azione Cattolica training school, and with no

* L. Granelli, *Perché ho difeso la Democrazia cristiana* [Why I defended Christian Democracy], Ed. *La Base*, Rome, 1994, pp. 12–13.

political experience due to Fascism, a new instrument. This was to be open to their original contributions, as against a party which, with Sturzo's 'popularism', had nevertheless given exemplary proof in the years around the 1920s.

At the time, when the name DC was chosen – a name that Romolo Murri had already adopted – two factors carried great weight: first, the importance of democratic principles in the face of the disaster of dictatorship and war; and second, Christian-inspired values, which offered hope for profound change, in the wake of ideas that had found wide resonance among Catholic democrats, with the rediscovery of Sturzo, Maritain, and Mounier in France and the reflections on the Camaldoli Code in Italy. Now, changing the name of an existing party that has played a decisive role in the country's history and development is a different matter. Despite mistakes and wrongs that need to be put right, it belongs morally and politically to those who have built it and served it over decades of ideological struggle and selfless commitment. These people do not intend to give up now, not even in the face of the humiliations they have suffered as a consequence of the betrayal of those who have been swept up in the perverse intertwining of politics and business.

In defence of the meaning of the name DC, versus the actions that have damaged its credibility, we could also recall both the importance of its reference to democracy, at a time when ideological pretensions are collapsing and the most powerful forces are gaining momentum, and the extraordinary relevance of Christian values. These stand in the face of the anxieties of contemporary humanity, the need for justice and solidarity among the most vulnerable, and the growing demands for rights, the rule of law, and peace in a world shaken by violence as well as the resurgence of racism. Even the fact that the name DC does not formally include the word 'party' seems to carry some significance at a time when there is controversy about degenerate partitocracy. We will need to discuss this issue with the utmost seriousness, as by no means this is a mere question of nomenclature. For the time being, however, let us accept the view that it might not be inappropriate today to reinvigorate the party,

perhaps even with a new name.

First and foremost, this choice should be the result of a discussion held in forums that are authorised to make decisions on the party's political role, programme and structure, and not the *a priori* starting point of a preconceived position. The superficiality of the current debates is striking. It feels more like we are witnessing a mediocre competition to find a brand that supposed customers might like, rather than a search – even if we accept the logic of marketing – for a good product that can succeed on the strength of its own merits. Behind each proposed name lies a different vision for a party, a movement, or an electoral instrument. In order to quickly regain support and power, some people want an electoral alliance open to liberals and moderates, in a form that harks back to Count Gentiloni rather than to Sturzo or De Gasperi. Others are considering a Christian-social party, with as few former Christian Democrats as possible, in the hope that, once the DC has been erased, the centre will once again be able to win and avoid any openings to the right or the left. Others want change by rebuilding the wall to contain the left, so that – unlike a DC that tends to be centre-left – they can reach an agreement with the Lega and other right-wing forces. And there are also those who, on the contrary, defend the DC and see it more as a means of opposing the change they fear than as a healthy return to its roots, a profound renewal of its political culture, its programme and its leadership.

Few of these strategists seem to be interested in the party's fundamental Christian inspiration, which, as well as being the most important motivation for making significant changes to political habits, is also a binding moral constraint. Nor, in the footsteps of the throwaway politics as spectacle, do they seem concerned about the risk of cutting off, along with its roots, the link to the ideal and political traditions that the DC, at its best, embodied. In all this confusion, they do not realise that any unilateral decision to move beyond the DC will, amid fierce disagreements, lead to the dissolution, into insignificant fragments, of an important and vital political

experience of Italian Catholics that has shaped the country's history.

But by what right, and on what legal basis, could someone who does not belong to the DC, or who has not held mandates as one of its leaders, decide, based on unilateral conjectures or top-level reserved agreements, to dissolve a democratic party? That would be an intolerable act of arbitrariness. No one can be allowed to carry out a hijacking that, in addition to being politically unproductive, would entail serious moral responsibility. The DC is the product of a history built through struggles, sacrifices and the commitment of multiple generations. No single leader, not even its secretary, can dissolve it at will, as if it were their personal property. Only those who are registered members of the party and who support it in a transparent manner, rather than as a result of manipulations reminiscent of the old and deplorable practice of membership registration, have the right, in accordance with democratic principles, to decide together on changes to the party, its transformation and potentially even the choice of a different name. In any event, the procedures must be such as to allow those who disagree to express their dissent and, following a public and in-depth debate and in the light of decisions taken legitimately, to freely choose whether to remain members or to withdraw from the party. A composite Constituent Assembly, rightly open to input from those who are not DC members and formed through discretionary co-option by the leadership, can be of great use in freely defining and proposing to the party its programmes, new organisational structures, and changes – including radical ones – to its political methods and strategy. However, it is then up to a proper, transparent congress to decide independently and formally endorse – including, if deemed useful, through an internal referendum with the necessary safeguards – the changes that can legitimately mark the start of a new phase, in all its aspects, in the life of the party.

Without this path of democratic legality, any rupture would be justified, and anyone intent on presenting a *fait accompli* would bear full responsibility for it. Martinazzoli has repeatedly stated with conviction that the DC must be changed, not liquidated, and that the

decision will be taken together, in accordance with a democratic rule. For this reason we must avoid rifts or partial and devastating premature moves. We must beware of mistakes, which could be tragic, and mobilise, inside and outside the party, all available energies not to shelve a valuable historical experience, but to free it from mistakes and degeneration. We need to build a new DC that deserves the name for its programme, ethos, democratic vitality, organisational structure and leadership, and not for the apparent novelty of a short-lived label.

*In Other Words: The Cowl Does Not Make the Monk**

This is not the first time I have written in the party's newspaper to defend keeping the name Christian Democracy. However, I now intend to use a series of articles to set out the reasons behind my voting choice in the referendum that has been called belatedly and with questionable procedures after the Constituent Assembly. It is hard to have an in-depth debate on this matter. People are being asked to choose not between two party names, conceptually presented as being of equal value, but on the secretary's proposal in favour of the PPI. This puts many in an awkward position due to their fear of withdrawing the confidence in Martinazzoli that is absolutely necessary.

It should also be added that everything has to be done, more or less within thirty days, with the organisation delegated to the regional level and in a peripheral context. In some cases, the process of changing the party's name has been rushed through, without waiting for the referendum, following a *fait accompli* logic and even at the risk of splitting the DC. The goal is to anticipate a choice in favour of the PPI that is considered irreversible. A highly questionable rule was then laid down – one that is not only contrary to the party statute but also tilted towards the model of an 'opinion party' – allowing even those who are members of neither the DC nor the PPI to decide its

* L. Granelli, 'Perché ho difeso la Democrazia cristiana', *La Base*, Rome, 1994, pp. 20–22.

name.

All this embitters those who believed, and still believe, in the referendum as a free exchange of ideas on an issue – the choice of name – that is by no means trivial. By contrast, the propaganda is one-sided. The debate does not seem to be taking off and, in many cases, it is not encouraged because the referendum is seen as a pointless ritual that wastes time on a decision that has essentially already been made, even justified by the aim of dissolving the DC and forming the new political entity, the PPI. In this context, I am reminded of Mr Ford's remark from the beginning of the century, in which he granted Americans the right to choose the colour of their car, as long as it was black.

However, this does not mean I am evading my duty to contribute my ideas wherever appropriate and to vote accordingly. I hope that, in the end, a procedure already open to criticism in terms of substantive democracy will not actually degenerate, as Martinazzoli is fond of saying, into a hurried and unverifiable counting of votes. That would allow the party's new name to be proclaimed in haste, stripping the congress of a prerogative that would be hard to undo. Such an imposition could reopen matters of conscience and rifts that were already beginning to emerge before the Constituent Assembly.

It is in everyone's interest that the party's new name be solemnly adopted at the congress, in full compliance with the law, and that it be applied consistently throughout Italy, as befits a national democratic force, so as to allow a coherent ideal, organisational and political renewal. In this context, I reiterate – and I will repeat this at the congress if possible – that it is a mistake to abandon the name 'Christian Democracy'. For me, the need for a radical change in our customs, structures, programmes and leadership has long been an absolute priority, and it does not automatically depend on the choice of name. If there is no genuine desire for change, a new name may simply result in an organisation that opportunistically conforms to the current trend.

A name that is historic, rather than outdated, can be made

credible if it demonstrates a genuine willingness to change – not just in words – so as to free the party from the betrayals, degenerations and omissions that have disfigured it. Beyond representing an undeniable ideal and historical tradition, not least because of its decisive contribution to the country's free development, the name Christian Democracy also expresses values that are, objectively speaking, extraordinarily relevant today. Moreover, at a time of fierce criticism of partitocracy, the lack of any formal reference to an idea of party has certain psychological advantages. Looking at the substance of the matter, I am convinced that there can be no democracy without parties. However, precisely for this reason, it is essential to remember that the DC was, and is, a party in a way that places greater emphasis on the fundamental values that inspired it than on the historical and organisational tool used to promote those values. The crisis that has affected political regimes across the world is objectively evident, not only in the collapse of authoritarian regimes that have been superimposed on societies, but also in a substantial deficit of democracy. This also highlights the often formalistic nature of many of the gains made in parliamentary systems.

The achievement of democracy in all areas – the constitutional order of states, the economy, self-governing pluralism in society, and an international system based on the rights of peoples – is a highly timely goal for the liberation of humanity, of all people, and for broadening the concept of citizenship in terms of participation in shaping one's own future. Even the movements in Europe that are most influenced by an ideological view of politics are returning to this realisation. Those who advocate overcoming social conflict through welfare or paternalistic provision are recognising this too, because even when people are free from want, they remain restless without recognition of the rights that democracy affirms and must set out to realise.

Why must we abandon this valid label, for reasons that are circumstantial, albeit dramatic? Popularism, which also has an important meaning (to be discussed elsewhere), is more generic and

less reassuring when it comes to the historical development of freedom and the institutions that guarantee it. Even more fundamental is the reference to Christian inspiration. The Second Vatican Council also provided authoritative guidance, confirmed by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, on the need to give politics a strong ethical dimension – without any return to clericalism that would harm religion itself – and to work so that people of good will, including those of different faiths, can rediscover, within a pluralism of choices, the Christian values of the defence of the person, justice and solidarity.

Today, even more than in the past, the insights of Sturzo, De Gasperi and Moro are strongly validated, both ideologically and historically. The dangers of an intolerant integralism that prevents engagement for the common good with other democratic ideological forces are less significant. Indeed, they lie dormant more in the cultural and spiritual shortcomings of individuals than in the actions of the Church. Benedetto Croce asserted that ‘we cannot but call ourselves Christians’. Even for lay people, this is easier to affirm today than it was in the past, provided there is intellectual honesty and a determination not to revert to an anti-clericalism that is equally out of step with history. Why, today, should politically active Catholics, acting independently and under their own responsibility, once again set aside, for a contingent reason, a Christian identity in the Sturzian sense – an identity which, moreover, also serves as a stark reminder of the need for moral renewal and for lasting changes in social, economic and political life? These are the reasons why, even in the midst of the current extraordinary crisis, I support the idea of retaining the name Christian Democracy. Indeed, I am convinced that it is not the name – as will unfortunately be demonstrated – that stands in the way of a courageous change in our way of doing politics. We can also discuss other solutions, as I intend to do, but on the condition that we do not stay on the surface in a purely nominalistic dispute over what to call a party.

*The Populares: An Opposition with a Promising Future**

Formed from the now-dissolved Christian Democracy party, the Italian Popular Party (PPI), under the leadership of Mino Martinazzoli, held its first Congress in Rome on 29 July 1994, when Rocco Buttiglione was elected party secretary.

In February of the following year, Buttiglione's political line favoured an agreement with Forza Italia. He was opposed by the left-wing faction, which was instead inclined to back the Catholic economist Romano Prodi's candidacy as leader of the centre-left against Silvio Berlusconi.

Dear friends,

I am taking the floor to briefly share my views on the role of the PPI, even though, as you know, I have no personal agenda to pursue. In the most recent general election, after a long and consistent period of activism, I freely decided not to stand for Parliament. My aim, without any inferiority complex, was to set a tangible example in support of a broad renewal of the political leadership. When a party loses credibility, it also needs to be helped through a natural turnover of leadership, based on the principle – too often overlooked – that in democracy, everyone is useful and no one is indispensable. By making this choice, I did not intend, and do not intend, to retreat into

* L. Granelli, *Messaggi in bottiglia 1994* [Messages in a Bottle, 1994], edited by the Associazione 'Popolari Intransigenti' F. Luigi Ferrari – Milan and Florence, 2000, pp. 98–107.

seclusion or remain indifferent. As a committed party member who joined the new party with my Christian Democratic conscience intact, I claim the right to make my contribution, for as long as I have the opportunity, and to put myself at the service of our shared struggles without asking for anything in return. If we do not restore this voluntary and selfless spirit to our internal relations, reinstating a habit of candour and dialogue, it will be difficult to bring about a genuine cultural and moral renewal in politics.

The internal debate within the party has become more polarised around the candidates for the post of party secretary than around the party's programmes and political direction. Combined with preparations for the congress that have not always been clear, this is exacerbating the conflict, reducing the scope for genuine clarification, and risks leading the party to an unproductive outcome at a time when the greatest effort should be devoted to enquiry, in-depth analysis and collaboration on the basis of clarity. That is why, along with others, I insisted – to no avail – on withdrawing all the candidatures due to be presented and identifying a new leadership group at the close of the debate, at the congress, and not beforehand.

1 - Internal radicalisation is harmful

Indeed, in politics, there is no point in pointing fingers. In any case, after a period of emergency and emergency powers that lasted far too long, the congress will produce a democratically legitimised secretary and party bodies. These will have to resume a dialogue that has become overly radicalised by the win-lose logic. For this reason too, clarity is key – no diplomacy, no fleeting tactical tricks – when setting out one's point of view. It would be desirable for everyone to be more willing to listen. Without this attitude, the debate is reduced to a ritual, and everything boils down to a referendum for or against. In the run-up to the congress, and in many different forums, I have tried to contribute to a broader debate.

It is well known that I am critical of the line that the Hon.

Buttiglione, albeit with some flexibility, has been proposing to the party, but I have sought to explore the reasons for my disagreement in the search for useful areas of convergence. I also tried to explain my views to him through a number of articles in the daily newspaper *L'Informazione*, and to understand his positions, while fully respecting our differing opinions. The exchange, always cordial in tone, nevertheless remained on the surface, and it seems that even at the congress the possibilities of reaching greater clarity are limited. I did not find his address persuasive, although I do appreciate a few unprecedented openings. But I have been unlucky with the Hon. Buttiglione. I have listened to him on more than one occasion, but I have almost never managed to make him listen to me. The same thing happened at the congress. It was my keen desire to draw his attention to at least a few crucial points in the ongoing debate. I will speak anyway, in the hope that someone will report my remarks to him accurately. And I would like, if possible, to advise him to change his habit of speaking at an assembly, as happened at the Lombardy regional congress, and then leaving when others take the floor. The Hon. Buttiglione speaks explicitly about politics more in interviews, in the newspapers and on television than within the party, where his comments are more veiled, and this does not help to develop the discussion constructively.

He is not the only one with this shortcoming, but it is in everyone's interest to place greater value on debate in official forums. In keeping with this rule, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Buttiglione to two points concerning, respectively, the PPI's political line – especially in its relations with the governing majority – and the idea of a popular, democratic, secular, Christian-inspired party which, in my view, we must not allow to be lost. On the first point, it is not enough simply to repeat that we must, without any wavering, stick to the commitments we made to the electorate.

2 - Don't betray your commitments to voters

During the election campaign, we made it clear that, after the vote, we would not support either of the opposing camps. These shared vague and opportunistic electoral alliances rather than agreements on policy and programmes. Rather, we would assume our role as a democratic opposition with firmness and dignity. We cannot compromise on this commitment without destroying the party's credibility. Too many of our friends who identify with the views of the Hon. Buttiglione – our friend Mr Formigoni in particular with his openness to Mr Berlusconi and the right before, during and after the elections – seem willing to be flexible on this choice. Their calls for constructive opposition and for the duty to govern seem to be driven more by a desire to come to the rescue whenever the majority finds itself in trouble through its own fault than by a desire to promote the country's interests, where conditions allow, by highlighting the contradictions of the centre-right.

We must resist this temptation. In line with our programmes and our ideals, our firm and responsible opposition must demonstrate the mistake made by many voters. And we must not chase those voters after at the risk of losing those who, courageously, have placed their trust in us. The political wisdom of this approach is also confirmed by evident logic. The governing majority is experiencing increasing difficulties, while the opposition is failing to gain traction and is being called upon to tackle issues that had previously been sidelined. We should not irresponsibly come to the aid of these camps. On the contrary, they need to be urged to examine the root causes of their difficulties, rather than being helped to cover them up with external, opportunistic manoeuvres.

The PPI needs the courage to challenge the majority with rigour and to engage, without blurring distinctions, with other opposition groups. Then the time will come when it will be the others who have to deal with us, rather than us jumping on the bandwagon of today's winners or falling into line with those who delude themselves that they will soon be able to offer easy alternatives. Buttiglione is right when he says that we need to strengthen our identity and that it would

be a mistake to make decisions in advance, because we do not yet know what the right or the left will be like. However, this reasonable approach needs to be supplemented in one crucial respect. There is no point in waiting until tomorrow to find out what we already know today: the right that has come to power in Italy through Berlusconi's initiative is, in all its implications, dangerous.

It is not true that voters chose a programme, a majority or a 'premier' who had formed a clear governing coalition before the vote. Berlusconi, exploiting the room for opportunism afforded by electoral law, opened up a path to power through a tactical alliance in the south with the neo-fascist right, which has not fundamentally reassessed its past and is not free from authoritarian tendencies, and through a more hard-fought agreement with Bossi's Lega in the north. This had the effect of deceiving Italians into believing that a majority had been formed. The 'Polo della Libertà' is, in essence, a strategic power deal rather than an alliance based on policy and political principles.

This was evident in the laborious process of forming a government. First, it failed to reduce the number of ministers and undersecretaries, as would have been appropriate, and repeated the perverse logic of the Cencelli playbook. But it was also marked, from the outset, by personal conflicts and compromises. This is evident in the periodic recurrence of high-profile controversies within the majority. It seems that the rather uninspiring history of recent times is repeating itself. Berlusconi, Bossi, Fini, and – to a lesser extent – our often-overlooked defectors, agreed on muddling through and starting to carve up new allocations of power; but they are often at odds with one another over how to govern and how to tackle the country's problems.

3 - A resolute opposition with a promising future

It is on this basis that the PPI's initiative must be pursued as effectively as possible in Parliament and across the country. The PPI

must carve out its political space through alternative proposals on the major issues of economic consolidation and a real, non-demagogic recovery; job creation, and solidarity as a counterbalance to risky, unbridled free-market liberalism; state reform in line with the principles of the first part of the Constitution, which Dossetti rightly asks us to defend with vigilance and determination; the extension of citizenship rights for individuals and for the most vulnerable sections of society; and a strongly pro-European and independent foreign policy. It must do so today in opposition and tomorrow in government, to construct a new world order free from parochial and nationalistic temptations.

A commitment of this scale requires the party to once again develop its capacity for study, analysis and proposals. This is impossible without mobilising all the available energies of those who have joined the PPI or who have been active in the DC with proven integrity. However, this medium- and long-term work can only progress if we stand firm. We must not waver in carrying out our duty to the full as a resolute opposition with a promising future, and in defending the rules that underpin the rule of law, which are exposed to continual violation. Formigoni is jumping the gun when he warns us of the future dangers of television control. Troubling distortions are already underway in this area and must be rolled back as soon as possible.

No other democratic country would tolerate a prime minister controlling three private television stations and, with suspicious haste, seeking to extend his direct influence to the public broadcaster as well. The conflict between private interests and public duties is becoming increasingly apparent in the government's actions. The idea of circumventing this morally and politically disqualifying obstacle by entrusting the study of the issue to three councillors with no real powers was a mockery of Parliament. We even had the scandal of meetings – albeit in a private venue, yet more than once treated as a public forum – between the Prime Minister, ministers, and defence lawyers representing individuals and companies under judicial

investigation, marking yet another breach of the rules of constitutional democracy.

Given the ongoing deterioration of the situation, we must call for greater attention from the Presidents of the Chambers and the President of the Republic himself, who has rightly asserted the right and duty to ensure a proper separation of powers. This is because, on too many occasions, instead of bringing his 'status' into line with basic constitutional propriety, Berlusconi has improperly called on the highest offices of the State to vouch for him, with unprecedented audacity. Even on issues of this sensitivity, a firm and effective initiative by the PPI is needed.

4 - Clarity in relations, including with the left

By remaining steadfast in fulfilling our duty as the opposition, on the basis of our political and programmatic identity, we can also establish and develop our relations with the left with the utmost clarity. On this point, we should have no inferiority complex. In an opposition struggle that is shared on many fronts, a willingness not to reject useful convergences *a priori* should not be confused with a return to consociational practices inspired by power-sharing deals. In this regard, it is unacceptable to seek to erase the entire historical experience of the DC because they lacked the courage to sever all ties with those within the party who erred by committing serious offences.

First Sturzo, along with Donati, Ferrari, and many others, then De Gasperi, Lazzati, Dossetti, La Pira, Vanoni, Fanfani, and Moro – to name the most important 'leaders' [in English in the original text] – left us a legacy of valuable lessons that must be protected from summary, blanket condemnation. The consociationalism of recent years has nothing to do with the DC's tradition of clarity and democratic openness. This dates back to anti-fascism, the Resistance, the Constituent Assembly and the reformist policies of the centre-left, as well as to an original concept of 'national solidarity' in the face

of crisis, which Aldo Moro never confused with the 'historic compromise'. In relations with the left, debate, dialogue and the search for areas of agreement that benefit the country must never be a form of subordination.

From its inception, the PDS (Democratic Party of the Left) has had a tendency to write off the historical role of the DC and the entire DC movement, viewing it as a regime that, in many respects, served as a convenient target for outright opposition. This approach became more pronounced through its engagement with a bourgeois radical-leaning left, which has always advocated for a secularist alternative that would sideline Catholics in Italian democracy. Achille Occhetto made a serious mistake in believing he could defeat the right by attacking the centre, particularly the DC and later the PPI. In fact, historically and ideologically, it was precisely the central position of Catholic democrats, in collaboration with forward-thinking lay people, that provided one of the safeguards against the right. New problems are also emerging on the left, following the Progressives' failure to form even a single parliamentary group and the resurgence of conflict between the PDS and the smaller components of the electoral coalition. These problems require us to press for, and engage in, an open and exacting discussion, rather than falling into uncritical alignment with their positions. It is by maintaining distinctions that we can work together, whether in government or in opposition, to strengthen the safeguards of Italian democracy. This way we can pave the way, through political means and not just the electoral process, for viable and reversible alternatives.

The relationship between the PPI and the Italian left cannot be reduced to a temporary convergence in opposition battles. Here too, the key issues of the democratic state, the free market economy, the rights of the individual and the family, pluralism in society, Europe's choices – not only economic ones – and the building of a world order founded on the independence of peoples must form the basis for a wide-ranging debate with the PDS and the Italian left. In the battle against the right, it would be an unforgivable mistake to become

absorbed into the left, with a loss of ideological and political identity.

On both fronts, the distinction should not turn into neutrality or a mere-stance centrist nostalgia. The centre-left, the idea of 'grand coalitions', and a properly understood national solidarity are not at odds with the PPI's role as a centrist party, open to well-founded democratic collaborations. De Gasperi and Moro, and before them Giolitti himself at the time of universal suffrage and the factory occupations, attached a specific meaning to this choice. For this reason, clear opposition to the current governing majority and the clarity of the relationship with the left make it necessary to reiterate, with due pride in its history and its identity, that the PPI engages in lively internal debate but is not for sale to anyone, whether on the right or on the left.

5 - Keeping watch on the new risks of clerical moderatism

In order to assume this role, though, and once again become a significant and decisive force in Italian democracy, the party needs to keep its finest traditions. It must also emerge courageously from the crisis through determined work, both at the centre and on the periphery, and pursue cultural, political and organisational reconstruction. There is a great deal of energy to be mobilised within the diverse Catholic world, in the positive aspects of the DC's legacy, and among people of good will who recognise Christian values even without being believers. On this point, the conception of the party and its autonomous responsibility is of great importance.

In recent times, highly dangerous integralist visions of politics have once again come to the fore. The risk of a clerico-moderate temptation – defending oneself against a hostile and secularised world – is real, and not a polemical invention for the party congress. The Hon. Buttiglione, who has a creditable background but who would also benefit from some critical self-reflection, reacted harshly to requests for clarification on the issue of clerico-moderatism. As a polemical riposte, he recalled the insults levelled by secular quarters

at De Gasperi, who had been accused, out of anti-clerical animosity, of being in effect a clerico-moderate. He added that anyone who raises this issue again today is either ignorant of history or acting in bad faith.

As is well known, De Gasperi was never a clerico-moderate, and there is no difficulty in rejecting that charge. But the ungenerous charge of ignorance levelled at those who today warn of the dangers of clerico-moderatism should be rejected too.

This trend has a specific meaning and has occupied a limited and well-defined place in the history of Italian Catholics. Rosmini, Manzoni, the first Christian Democrats at the start of the twentieth century, the *Leghe Bianche* and the cooperative movement had nothing to do with clerical moderatism. It is from the legacy of their intransigence and their social openness that Sturzo drew strength and justification for the creation of the Popular Party. From that same legacy, Catholic democrats chose the path of anti-fascism, and the DC contributed, in a secular spirit, to the founding of the Republic and the drafting of the Constitution.

Rather, the architects of the ‘Gentiloni Pact’, meant to climb aboard the liberal-conservative bandwagon, were clerical moderates. They set out to shore up other people’s movements in the hope of securing some kind of *quid pro quo* for the Church. At the 1919 congress in Bologna, Fr. Gemelli found himself in the minority, as Sturzo rejected the idea of a Catholic party on the grounds that ‘politics divides, whereas religion unites and cannot be a party banner’. If today’s PPI wants to position itself within the rich tradition of Catholic democracy, it cannot align itself with the supporters of a new ‘Gentiloni Pact’ – who, not surprisingly, have already left the party – or with a Catholic and integralist conception of the Church’s role in society, or with Gemelli’s idea of automatically applying Catholic social teaching without independent cultural reflection, or with a brand of politics that is the exact opposite of that of Sturzo, De Gasperi and Moro.

We must be vigilant against any resurgence of clerico-

moderatism, which would once again raise ahistorical barriers and confuse believers with citizens, to the grave detriment of Italians' civil and religious conscience. The Second Vatican Council urges us to keep this distinction clear. It is quite different from the separation between faith and historical experience that has led to growing secularisation. We must not renounce the Christian inspiration of politics. Rather, we should take it up in a secular spirit, bear witness to it consistently, and seek encounters and collaborations oriented towards the common good with those who, in Benedetto Croce's words, cannot help describing themselves as Christians, even if they do not identify with the Church's social doctrine.

Today, a return to clerico-moderatism would be detrimental to religion and to the Church, which cannot identify with any particular political system. It would also be an affront to a fertile historical and ideal tradition that has placed Catholics, within the realm of democracy, on an equal footing in terms of dignity within the life of the modern state. It is not out of place to invite the Hon. Buttiglione to reflect on this point too. You cannot build a Christian-inspired popular party, anchored in clear values and opposed to any pragmatic deviation, without the autonomy that Sturzo, De Gasperi and Moro won and defended, and which we must not lose.

6 - No one should choose disengagement

The task that awaits the Populists – to rebuild their party with clarity and courage – is so demanding that it will require generosity, dedication, and a spirit of service from everyone. I read somewhere that the Hon. Buttiglione is ready to go to Oxford to teach philosophy if he loses the party congress. That would be tantamount to running away, as well as a sign of a lack of responsibility. No one should choose to disengage. Even in a minority position, one can help build a free and vibrant party. Ideas can only gain ground tomorrow if they are affirmed today. One should never identify the party with oneself. The primary duty of the secretary and the

leadership team who are legitimised by the congress is precisely to mobilise every energy to ensure that, under no circumstances, anyone is tempted to throw in the towel. It would be a grave mistake to fear opposition, to seek shortcuts based purely on power, to engage in polemics without listening, or to delude ourselves that it will be easy to rebuild the party in an ideal, political, and organisational sense. This is a long-term undertaking. The PPI, and with it Christian and democratic values and our finest historical memory, will have no future unless a genuine spirit of service prevails in everyone, in the clarity of positions, as a sign of true political renewal.

*Founding Charter of the 'Popolari Intransigenti'**

The Associazione Popolari Intransigenti (Intransigent Populars' Association) was founded in September 1994. Granelli was its president, while Calcaterra, Narciso Longhi, Mario Mauri, Arturo Bodini, Michele Pellegrino and Luca Birindelli were tasked with coordinating the start of its activities. The reference to popularism was meant to affirm the validity of a lay, Christian-inspired conception of politics that Sturzo had placed at the heart of a mass, socially articulated presence in public life. The goal was to help democratise the centralist state that had emerged from the Risorgimento. It was also meant to stress the need to reject clerical integralism, harmful to religious life itself, and to move beyond a purely social and pauperistic vision.

The association was named after Francesco Luigi Ferrari to evoke his moral, intellectual, cultural and political commitment. That 'intransigent Popular Party politician' had been active in Milan in the 1920s and had been a leading figure at the key turning points in the political movement of Italian Catholics.

The choice of establishing an association emerged almost inevitably from the idea of creating a new organisation to break with the past. Without denying the positive aspects of the experience, it meant to provide a response to the serious crisis of loss of direction and the disengagement of many Catholic democrats. At a time of upheaval and change, the task of reviving Christian and democratic values in the cultural, civil, and even political spheres, both within and outside the party organisation, could not be left to sporadic

* L. Granelli, *Messaggi in bottiglia*, edited by the Associazione 'Popolari Intransigenti', Milan, 2000, pp. 115–122.

initiatives, traditional factions, pressure groups, or simple public opinion campaigns.

1 - Reasons for a choice

That non-profit association was self-funded and governed by democratic and transparent rules. It was meant as the appropriate means – provided for by law – of enabling a group of people to come together to pursue common goals with at least a minimal legal basis. At a time of profound uncertainty, which is affecting both old and new forms of organisation, the emergence of numerous associations – even if, in some cases, they are set up as a means to an end or for convenience – is a healthy response in an increasingly homogenised and conformist society.

Above all, the *Associazione Popolari Intransigenti* is the result of a clear realisation that it is impossible to remain neutral when democracy is facing a troubling crisis. A bottom-up process must resist the top-down attempts to shape opinions and the formation of the leadership class through increasing co-optation and the unscrupulous use of the mass media. Such a resistance should work particularly among young people in developing and disseminating ideas by means of education and active presence. This is of essence to the ethical renewal of politics itself.

It is well known that the Italian Constitution calls citizens to shape national policy. However, the exercise of this right is made more informed through preparation, which can be found in civic associations and in the spread of a critical spirit and dialogue. This is a good antidote to the authoritarian backsliding inherent in the tendency to turn voters into passive and easily manipulated subjects of a plebiscitary democracy. People's participation in public life is an indispensable achievement of the struggle against the Fascist dictatorship as enshrined in the Constitution. It must be defended by all means against the increasingly evident reactionist attempts in the so-called Second Republic.

2 - The meaning of popularism

For this reason, the Associazione Popolari Intransigenti, in active solidarity among different generations of Catholics, aims at supporting young people committed to *'making Christian and democratic values relevant today'*, as the preamble to its Statute explicitly states, *'through ongoing and constructive dialogue with those who, even with different ideas, seek to renew society, affirm justice, and strengthen the institutions established in Italy by the 1947 Constitution'*. The association's democratic and constitutional position, together with its convinced openness to dialogue – especially with the reformist currents of the Italian left – are crystal clear. However, the reasons for this choice are even more explicit when it comes to its ideal point of reference in the history of the Catholic movement.

The reference to *'popularism'* is highly significant. Sturzo's secular, Christian-inspired conception of politics remains valid. He placed it at the heart of a mass-based and socially articulated presence in public life, intended to help reform the centralist state that emerged from the Risorgimento in a social and democratic direction. This conception should be put forward again, addressing the problems of our time without any inferiority complexes. The rejection of clerical integralism, harmful to religious life itself, and the overcoming of a purely social, pauperist view of the national crisis have enabled, and still enable, Catholics to be themselves, without subordination, while contributing as protagonists to the country's history.

The early DC, at the beginning of the century, and later the parties of Sturzo and De Gasperi, demonstrated this, despite the mistakes and forms of degeneration that we must decisively overcome. The significance of that experience must not be lost. Rather than fuelling unproductive nostalgia, historical memory should help Catholics who embrace democracy to play their role in society, as well as in public institutions, tackle the present creatively, and shape the future with the decisive commitment of young people.

The political disaster of recent years was caused by a loss of ideals and moral conduct in the exercise of power. We cannot emerge from

this situation by making further mistakes; namely, wiping out, along with the faults, the achievements of a century-long history, or by trying to remain in the public arena by selling off our very *raison d'être* to the highest bidder. The difficult path to recovery must be oriented towards the cultural, civic, and even political rediscovery of '*popularism*' by new generations of Catholics. These must independently be up to their responsibilities both as believers and as citizens, acting within the context of constitutional democracy.

Such a demanding task cannot be automatically equated, after the demise of the DC, with a Christian-inspired popular party. Of course, we must help such a party to emerge from uncertainty and recover a credible ideal and political profile, but we be aware that it could also falter and dissolve. Our task should neither be confused with the activities – commendable in themselves – of groups or factions whose laudable aims fall within a narrow party context. For this reason, the autonomy of the Associazione Popolari Intransigenti as such – without prejudice to the free choices of each member – is a key condition. Autonomy will allow us to positively influence the course of events from a broader perspective and safeguard future, more explicit initiatives, should they become necessary.

3 - The problems of today's society

The association's biggest challenge is how to respond to the real problems facing Italian society in a way that is consistent with its guiding ideals. Now, we cannot put forward programmes or solutions without a fundamental cultural and scientific analysis. The scope of the working hypothesis is broad. A structural economic crisis is pushing the unemployed, young jobseekers and migrant workers further and further to the margins, into conditions of hardship and protest. As pockets of poverty grow, the choice is being made to dismantle the welfare state – the result of long struggles and hard-won gains – rather than to reorganise it.

Expanding the production base requires, alongside a revival of

investment, the promotion of entrepreneurship, incentives for production, increased research and easier access to credit. This is being held back by the persistence of unearned income, parasitic behaviour, fiscal injustices and the bureaucratisation of public administrations, all of which are fuelling a crippling public debt that cannot be remedied through one-sided austerity. The imbalances between different parts of the country are widening, and the drive towards selfishness and consumption as a symbol of life is weakening the bonds of solidarity, the pooling of resources and the fair sharing of sacrifices, which are essential for launching a new and lasting phase of economic development and avoiding marginalisation within Europe.

The crisis is no less serious at the international level. Protracted and bloody local conflicts, scandalous arms trading, an explosion of ethnic rivalries and barbaric racism, difficulties in cooperation between rich and poor countries, and the UN's loss of authority form the backdrop to a worrying return to power politics and a reduction of European unity to purely mercantile concerns. Sturzo's *'popular'* vision of a foreign policy based on law, justice, cooperation, disarmament and peace, and on strengthening international bodies (which has guided our relations with other states since the post-war period) is once again highly relevant. In fact, precisely in these years, Italy is shifting to the right, and appears to be retreating into nationalistic aspirations tinged with provincialism, driven, as in the Fascist era, by domestic considerations, with serious risks for our future.

Concerns are growing about fundamental freedoms. The attacks on the 1947 Constitution, particularly on its first part, reflect an intention to solve the problems of institutional stability and efficiency at the expense of democratic rights, decentralisation, autonomy, the separation of powers and the role of Parliament. A return to authoritarianism threatens our freedoms, starting with the fundamental freedom of the press and the mass media. The political struggle itself, reduced to head-to-head clashes between disparate

blocs, is exacerbating the vertical concentration of power at the expense of more structured citizen participation. Only if the governed and those who govern once again embrace a sense of the state, of duty and of responsibility can this dangerous regression be halted.

Within this overall framework, and in accordance with the aims set out in its Statute, the Associazione Popolari Intransigenti will develop initiatives to examine social, economic, and institutional issues, both domestically and internationally, formulate proposals in line with its ideals, and, together with all democrats, defend – through vigilance and action – the foundational constitutional values of the Republic born of the Resistance. From this same logic stem clear decisions: no compromise with the right, against conservatism and its surrogates; dialogue on the left with reformist currents; and useful, reciprocally respectful convergences among popular forces, in order to defend and develop democracy.

4 - The reasons for intransigence

The association will evolve in the fruitful tradition of a *'popularism'* that is a hallmark of Catholic democrats. But why add an emphasis on intransigence to this description? The reason is of the utmost importance. In common usage, the term 'intransigent' conjures up rigid, inward-looking positions, inclined to an extremism that condemns one to isolation. This interpretation is far-fetched, and it should be remembered that the Intransigent Popolars reject, as a matter of principle, any maximalist stance. However, this observation does require some explanation. Nowadays, laxity, an opportunistic distinction between thinking and acting, *trasformismo*, and the pursuit of compromise – even at the cost of setting aside everything that stands in its way – dominate the field and corrupt consciences. This is why the reference to intransigence, understood as firmness of position, defence of values and protection of one's identity, is not out of place.

There is no point in having ideas if, in practice, your behaviour is not consistent with them. Intransigence is not optional if we are aiming for *a moral as well as a cultural and political awakening in our society. The term itself cannot be distorted. The dictionary of the Italian language defines an intransigent person as 'someone who does not compromise, who remains unyielding in their beliefs, and who does not tolerate deviations from a fixed programme or a defined course of action'. It goes on to make a valuable distinction, stating that 'intransigence differs from intolerance, which relates more specifically to doctrine, because it concerns matters of practical conduct'.*

However, beyond linguistic disputes, 'intransigentism' is, above all, a specific point of reference in the history of the Catholic political movement. It should not be confused with the various forms of theocratic integralism. At the time of Italian unification, the intransigents in Italy firmly defended the Church's '*imprescriptible*' rights, but they also developed an unbroken opposition to the national version of anti-clerical liberalism, which gave rise to a centralist state hostile to autonomies. This state was the result of a top-down operation based on the exclusion of the popular classes and on a refusal – interrupted only at times – of demands for social justice.

5 - The lessons of history

There is no denying that, in the initial phase, different attitudes became mixed together within the intransigent camp. The nostalgic supporters of the temporal power of the Church opposed in principle any positive results, in terms of civil conquests, that the Risorgimento could develop. The Catholics, uneasy about the constraints of the '*non expedit*', were socially open and anti-liberal in the wake of '*Rerum Novarum*' rather than of the '*Syllabus*'. It is well known that the ambiguities of this interweaving gradually unravelled.

Particularly from 1898 onwards, when Fr. Davide Albertario was imprisoned in Milan along with Turati for opposing Bava Beccaris' anti-popular crackdowns, two intransigent tendencies became

increasingly apparent within the Opera dei Congressi. The first was conservative in outlook and hostile to any compromise. The second, then influenced by Romolo Murri, was determined to assert a clearly defined political presence, with a clear social stance, and opposed piecemeal clerical-moderate concessions to the governing class.

This core of intransigent thought and action produced the first attempts to form the Christian Democracy party in Milan and elsewhere in the early twentieth century. Thanks to this firm stance, from 1913 onwards, many Catholics resisted the persistent clerical-moderate enticements of the *'Gentiloni Pact'*. Very differently from what Filippo Meda had in mind, in fact, this aimed to win Catholic votes for the conservatives and to serve an anti-socialist purpose. A positive use of the moral resources accumulated during the period of intransigence allowed Luigi Sturzo, on a secular and frankly constitutional basis, to bring to fruition his cultural and political project. According to Gabriele De Rosa's insightful assessment, that project represented the culmination of a long historical process that made it possible, in 1919, to form a Christian-inspired *'modern party of Catholics, intransigent but without integralist reservations'*.

On the contrary, it is precisely the culture and moral relativism of the *'transigents'* that gave rise first to the clerico-moderates and then to the clerico-fascists. Such a sad series of capitulations and compromises clouded the history of the Catholic political movement and contributed to the erosion and collapse of pre-fascist democracy. Likewise, in Italy too, both the failed theocratic attempts connected with the French *'Action Française'* after the dissolution of the Opera dei Congressi and the establishment, starting with the Civic Committees, of movements that have since perpetuated an ahistorical confusion between religion and politics should be traced to fundamentalism, not to intransigence.

Without the contribution of the long *'resistance'* to integralism, which made possible the decisive phase of *'preparation through abstention'*, a Catholic popular party would not have emerged in Italy. Even as it reconciled with the unified state, this party did not abandon

its role in opposition, in defence of all freedoms, above all those of the most vulnerable social groups. Therefore, it was able to give a political voice to the network of 'white' (i.e. Catholic-inspired) associations, leagues and trade unions that had grown out of its deep-rooted presence in society.

During the years of authoritarian turmoil following the Turin Congress of 1923, Luigi Sturzo and figures such as Donati and Ferrari defended the honour of the PPI in the face of extreme adversity and in exile. These men consistently drew inspiration from this important lesson in morality and political creativity. It is by claiming this great historical heritage, enriched by the anti-fascism of Piero Malvestiti's 'Guelphs' and by participation in the Resistance, that De Gasperi's DC was reborn. It then managed to occupy a prominent position in the new Italian democracy and contributed, with figures such as Dossetti, Vanoni, Lazzati and Moro, to the development of Italian society. No subsequent degeneration can simply erase all of this.

6 - The difficult challenge of the future

Drawing on the lesson of *'intransigent popularism'* to reopen the path for Italian Catholics to consciously resume a cultural, civic and even political journey is still appropriate today. The goal is to avoid selling off our own identity merely to prop up the status quo once again or to seek, illusorily, a redress. There is no comeback by following alternatives prepared by others, without the specific contribution of Christian ideas, struggles and hopes in contemporary society and free democracy. As in De Gasperi's time, this commitment offers ample space not only for Catholics but also for lay people who do not want to choose between the right and the left and who are culturally sensitive to Benedetto Croce's phrase, *'why we cannot but call ourselves Christians'*.

The challenge ahead is extremely difficult. The diaspora, which gives rise to small, competing groups of conservatives, progressives and integralists, confirms the irrelevance of Catholics in national life.

There is no future without a large, articulated, Christian-inspired popular democratic force taking shape on the basis of ideas, programmes and civic passion. Our contribution aims to move in that direction as well. The Associazione Popolari Intransigenti is not the result of improvisation, nor does it follow fads. It has a rich tradition behind it, is inspired by values that are highly relevant today, and, in implementing its programmes, is open to believers and citizens who wish to resist the temptation to withdraw.

The memory of Francesco Luigi Ferrari also serves simply to recall the moral, intellectual, cultural and political commitment of an *'uncompromising member of the Popular Party'* who was active in Milan in the 1920s, with the magazine *Il Domani d'Italia*. He played a key role in the most crucial phases of the Catholic political movement. There are many uncertainties along the association's path, but the endeavour is worth embarking on, whatever the outcome.

(Milan, preamble to the Statute of the Associazione Popolari Intransigenti, notarial deed before Notary Fossati no. 12012/81398 – Founders: Luigi Granelli, Felice Calcaterra, Narciso Longhi, Mario Mauri, Arturo Bodini, Michele Pellegrino and Luca Birindelli – President: Luigi Granelli, secretary: Felice Calcaterra – 19 September 1994)

Index of Names

Contents

<i>Editors' Note</i>	p. 5
----------------------	------

PART ONE

Luigi Granelli in Christian Democracy	9
Catholics and Socialists: 'The Problem Must Be Addressed at the Political Level'	25
Open Letter to the Hon. Nenni	33
Fostering Cross-Party Agreements to Broaden the State's Democratic Base	39
The Times Call for a New Politics	55
A New Direction for Christian Democracy	69
The Figure of De Gasperi	87
The Future of the Centre-Left	113
Italian Catholics in a New Era of Christianity	119
Church-State Relations, a Hundred Years After Porta Pia	135
Facing the Divorce Referendum	141
Catholic Democrats: Between Renewal and Debate	169
The Idea of the Base: Remembering Marcora	173

PART TWO

Luigi Granelli's Political Battles	181
The Constitution and the Organisation of the State	201
Strengths and Weaknesses of Centrism	217
Sturzo's Democratic Vision of the Party	223
In the Struggle for a Democratic State	239
The Political Class and Party Renewal	245
National Conference on Emigration	277
Italy's Foreign Policy	289
Establishment of the Italian Space Agency	303
Regulation of the Public and Private Broadcasting System	309
Rebuild, Do Not Shelve, the DC	317
In Other Words: The Cowl Does Not Make the Monk	323
The Popolars: An Opposition with a Promising Future	327
Founding Charter of the 'Popolari Intransigenti'	339
<i>Index of Names</i>	349

Printed in July 2026
by Rubbettino print
On behalf of Rubbettino Editore
Srl 88049 Soveria Mannelli
(Catanzaro)

Ten years after the passing away of Senator Luigi Granelli, this volume -promoted in co-operation with Istituto Luigi Sturzo- commemorates his legacy through a curated selection of his writings and speeches, many previously unpublished. His personal papers reveal the depth and complexity of a life defined by Christian political conviction during, the key events of the Italian Republic. The publication retraces his militancy within the left-wing Base movement, his lifelong battle for Catholic autonomy in politics (dating back to the early 1950s) and his commitment to involving the masses in construction a democratic state. This journey includes his strategic governing alliance with the Socialist Party and high-level ministerial activity.

ISTITUTO LUIGI STURZO

The Luigi Sturzo Institute, a legally recognized institution founded in 1951 and named after Luigi Sturzo, carries out scientific research and promotes studies in the historical, sociological, political, legal, and economic fields. It works on the preservation and enhancement of archival and library heritage, as well as on advanced education and training.

The Institute conducts its institutional activities through six areas of intervention: Historical Archive, Library, Studies and Research Area, Training Area, European and International Affairs Area, and Multimedia Laboratory.

[Eliana Versace](#) teaches “Contemporary Church History” at LUMSA University in Rome. A specialist in the relationship between the Church and Italy politics, her research focuses on Giovanni Battista Montini (Pope Paul VI). She has extensively analyzed aspects the diocese of Milan under the episcopates of Cardinals Montini and Giovanni Colombo and contributed to the Positio for the beatification of Pope Paul VI. Her published works include Montini and the Opening to the Left (2007); Fifty Years of Milanese Christian Democracy (2008) and The Birth of “Avvenire” (2009). She is a contributor to “Avvenire,” “Il Giornale di Brescia,” and “L’Osservatore Romano.”

[Maria Chiara Mattesini](#), holds degrees in Literature, Philosophy, Publishing and Journalism as well as a PhD in the History of Political Movements and Parties. She’s a professional journalist and research fellow at the University of Rome “Tor Vergata”, she collaborates on various research projects at the Luigi Sturzo Institute -in Rome-. Her notable publications include Opposing Identities: Female Models and Politics Compared between Resistance and Reconstruction (2018); A Female Battle: Maria Eletta Martini and the new Family Law (Lucca 2017).