

## Europe as the Political Sense for the World: The Project of European Union of Saint-Simon (1815)

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After the defeat of Napoleon I, in 1814/15 was reunited in Vienna an international Congress with the difficult task of reorganizing Europe in the aftermath of French Revolution and the fall of the Napoleonic Empire.

The desire of peace that followed and the recognition by kings and diplomacy of the existence of a new political reality, corresponded to the demands of national public opinions that intended that the recognition of legitimacy of power, needed political Constitutions and parliamentary representation, to support it.

It was in this context that the Count of Saint-Simon<sup>2</sup> decides to intervene with a proposal of European Union, a Confederation under a European Parliament. The work he tried with no success to present to the Congress was titled: *From the reorganization of the European society or from the need and the means of assembling the people of Europe in one political corps saving each their national independence.*

It was not the first time that these kinds of advice proposals were presented to the instituted powers in order to obtain everlasting peace. The best known work was the one of the Abbot of Saint-Pierre that it was mentioned among others by Saint-Simon. All those projects were considered morally high but also utopian ideals. So the French author tried to fundament his own synthesis and claimed for himself, *avant-la-lettre* the role of political analyst.

“After enormous efforts and dedicated works, I have put myself in the point of view of the common interest of the European peoples. This point is the only one from where we can realize the evils that menace us and the means to

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avoid it. If all who run the political affairs rise at the height I did they all shall see what I have seen.”<sup>3</sup>

It was in his quality of political scientist that he addressed the international gathering and Europe, that he understood like a common cultural and political heritage. Also common to all governments and European peoples was the challenge that represented the responsibility of the preparation of a better future that was only possible, according to the Count, within political and institutional homogeneity in Europe. So the policy autonomy with method and its own goals, as any science, was his point of departure.

“All sciences, of any kind that they are, are no other thing than a sequence of problems to solve, of questions to examine and they only differ from each other by the nature of their questions. So the method that one applies to some of them must agree to all.”<sup>4</sup>

Empirical approach placed Saint-Simon near that current to which the speculations far from experience and observation were a major impediment to the understanding of human reality, but mainly to act positively on it. The dynamic interchange between action and thought was the key to the formal logic of his method.

“To solve a question of any order the logic offer us two methods, better said only one method that takes two operations: The synthesis and the analysis. By the first we embrace the whole of the question; we examine it a priori; by the other we decompose to observe it in all its details; we examine it a posteriori. The results obtained by the synthesis must be verified by the analysis.”<sup>5</sup>

Saint-Simon assuming as the object of his study the policy, that he wanted to provide with a scientific method, centered this object in the form of Government.

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<sup>3</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 95

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, pp. 28-29

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, pp. 29-30

Departing from the whole of the surrounding reality concluded of the analysis taken from there that, the moment was unique for the concretization of a European Federation. In that way, his work was developed in several plans:

“First I shall establish the principles on which should lean the organization of Europe; after I shall do the application of the principles, and finally I shall find in the present circumstances the means to start the execution. Like this the first part should be a little abstract, the second less than the first and the third less than the second, the last will contain only the events we have before us and in which we are actors or spectators.”<sup>6</sup>

Politics could be driven by a scientific method, and could be applied to Federative reality, that is, through such a Constitution that allowed all questions of public interest be faced under the two points of view that formed it: the public interest (a priori/synthesis) and the private interest (a posteriori/analysis). Only in this way the best possible form of Government would balance the exercise of power.

This theoretical support applied to society and political institutions made credible the solutions proposed by Saint-Simon that wishes, at the same time, to put distance from the accusations of utopia that others previous projects were accused of: “Even more, is from the application of this method that all science takes its certainties, it is by it that science become positive, that ceases to be a science of conjectures; and this only happens after centuries of vagueness, of mistakes and uncertainties.”<sup>7</sup>

The clear introduction of the time factor, or the historical mediation, as a determinant component of the policy and legal construction of the French author, opened another door to our understanding. The established relationship between a doctrine of Right and a Philosophy of History, resulting in the intended Political

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<sup>6</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 17

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, p. 29

Science and consequent application to the European reality, constituted the ideological base of the dynamic of progress that, finally, presided to his idea of Europe.

“In this way all legislative measure conceived under the rapport of the public interest, will be examined under the rapport of the private one, and vice versa; or to go back to the logical terms, all legislative measure conceived a priori will be examined a posteriori and vice versa.”<sup>8</sup>

Also the creation of a political and institutional structure common to all Europe, the Confederation, was intended as a cultural cumulative process of learning that should depart from the two nations already prepared for the constitutional reality: Great Britain and France. He believed that the will, with origin in certain feelings that came from practices, habits and cultivated interests in common, would take to the claimed position of feeling European.

“Every man born in any country, citizen of any state, acquires always by his education, by his relationships, by the offered examples, certain habitudes more or less profound of enlarging his views out of the limits of his personal welfare and to dilute his private interest within the society where he belongs. [...] Now this will of corps that, in a national government born from the national patriotism, in the European Government can only come from a broader general view, from a more enlarged sentiment that we can call European patriotism.”<sup>9</sup>

In fact and following the line of thought of Saint-Simon, the coincidence between private and public interest was the coincidence of paths between what was and what it should be. Though independent by its origins and theoretical support, moral and politics pursuit the same objective, with no need hostility, which was the progressive improvement of the human condition as an attainment of freedom: “The gilded age of

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<sup>8</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, pp. 30-31

<sup>9</sup> *Idem*, pp. 45-46

the human genre is not at all behind us, it is ahead of us in the improvement of the social order; our fathers didn't see it, our children will get there someday: we are the ones who owe them to pave the way."<sup>10</sup>

Innovation was not out of Saint-Simon's plans, but the knowledge and the experience of the French Revolution showed him the importance of time mediation to make the necessary changes to reorganize Europe.

"This reorganization could not be done in a sudden and not all at once; because it was need more than a day to destroy completely the old institutions, and also more than a day to create better ones; these ones should rise and the old ones should fall in ruin, slowly and step by step."<sup>11</sup>

Time was like a guarantee of moderation avoiding the power vacuum and the assuring the success of political changes and reforms. According to the French author only Great-Britain had been able to conciliate the individual freedom with the independence of the nation through a Constitution built over time. Never the less the France of the restoration had finally reached the possibility of being free and independent with a similar Constitution and Parliamentary regime. From the union of these two countries would begin the future European Federation.

"Today that France can join England, to be the support of liberal principles, nothing else left but to join forces and make them act to Europe reorganization. This union is possible from the moment that France is as free as England."<sup>12</sup>

A unified Germany should follow and join, and one by one all the others countries would join and complete the desired Confederation As the author implied, the constitutional program would only be possible with the support of a public opinion.

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<sup>10</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 97

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, p. 11

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*, p. 12

Only who possessed property could be elected and to be elector one have to know how to read and write. Freedom of opinion and conscience corresponded to individual autonomy, or self-awareness that, allowed the ability to choose.

“In this writing, I wanted to prove that, only the establishment of a political system convenient to the actual state of enlightens, and the creation of general power invested of a force capable of repressing the ambition both of peoples and kings could bring to Europe a pleasant and stable order of things.”<sup>13</sup>

The application to the European reality passed through the unfolding of these political principles, regarding the origin, distribution and the attributes of power. For the organization chart of the Federation it was proposed specifically, a king (executive power and legislative veto), a Chamber of Commons (legislative power) and a Chamber of peers (moderator power). The executive followed the British rule, that is, the ministry responsibility clear the king of any government fault<sup>14</sup>, as long as the King in the choice of the ministry had in mind the parliamentary majorities and public opinion<sup>15</sup>. Regarding the Chamber of Commons the electoral method, pursuing the independence of the federal government, ignored the frontiers, caring only if the elector was alphabetized. The number of Members depended on the previous calculation of that number at European level. The origin and the legitimacy of the legislative power were both put in the European citizen.

Following the liberal currents with the influence of Enlighten philosophers, public interest or public good, in Saint-Simon thought, was translated as a replacer of the general or universal will that, it was only achieved when public interest harmonized with the private interest, prevailing the public interest as part of each private one. The knowledge and the influence of the discussion around the North-American Constitution

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<sup>13</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 94

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, p. 38

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, p. 38

were clear and, though, Saint-Simon talked about respect for the independence of each federation state, the truth was that the question of sovereignty was put aside when one talked about the Government form and referred vaguely to a monarchy only to after the same appear incorporated by the European Parliament, that superseded each Member State.

“If any portion of the European population wanted to form a nation apart, or enter under the jurisdiction of a foreigner Government, is the European parliament who decides the matter. It did not decide in favor of the governments, but in favor of the peoples, proposing as an objective the best possible organization of the European confederation.”<sup>16</sup>

Like this, there is a direct liaison between the federal government and those that elected them as representatives, the European citizens; that is, even when undermining or restricting the authority of the States, the rights of individuals that composed the European citizenship remained intact.

Saint-Simon based his federative structure in a European citizen, endowed with autonomy and opinion, that was translated in the capacity of representation, that is, of choosing representatives by direct vote, at the highest level of the European political structure, the Federal Parliament.

“Like this there will be among the European peoples what makes the connection and the base of all political association: compliance of institutions, union of interests, maximum agreement, community of morals and public instruction.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 17

<sup>17</sup> Saint-Simon, *De la Reorganization...* [1814], Paris, 1925, p. 52