

Jean Monnet. *Notes on Reflections* (Algiers, August 5, 1943)

I.

The development of the war is such that one can imagine its imminent end. Italy is on the verge of giving up the fight. Germany gives evident signs of weakness: the failure of its underwater campaign is marked—at a time when the allied forces and materials cross the Atlantic in ever increasing numbers—by monthly losses larger than the combined losses of allied tonnage. Its 700 000 tons in January has been lowered to less than 100 000 tons at the present time. The weakness of its air forces, its inability to withdraw troops from Russia in sufficient quantities in order to support Italy—all this indicates, without doubt, that the hour of its collapse approaches. Even without a concrete military defeat, the German edifice will break down. Indeed, it is possible to spread a totalitarian system; but it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to overextend its economic resources. For a while now, German war-time production has certainly, reached its maximum limit. Its failures under the sea and its weakness in the air are signs that clearly indicate a diminution of its productive capacities. A totalitarian system of production stretched to its limits requires a scientifically established distribution, a calculated balance between all the economic programs, and finally, the calibration of all the resources into an integrated plan in which all the constituent elements depend upon each other. If it were suddenly to lose a crucial element—primary material [*matière première*] or an essential resource—then it is not merely a single part of the system of production that suffers, it is the entire system itself. The causes can be tiny, but the effects are cumulative. Germany will inevitably suffer the consequences of its system of production and its lack of resources.

If one also considers the difficulties involved in the withdrawal of an army from occupied territory (like the Balkans), in the restoration of lines of communications, in the confrontation with the revolts of the populace of an occupied nation thrilled by the prospect of its certain liberation, then one cannot but conclude that the fall of Germany is at hand. The fall of Italy and the end of Germany will mean the victory of the Allied Forces in Europe and the release of the occupied territories. This event will occur in the nearest future. An unforeseen accident that might call for the readjustment of the current situation—to which Germany must respond—might bring with it an even more sudden end to the war.

II.

Under these conditions, it is vital to anticipate essential measures that will prevent the European continent from slipping into chaos and that will lay the basic foundations upon which it may rebuild itself.

In such dire moments, it is incumbent upon the *Comite Francaise de la Liberation Nationale* to take up a special responsibility.

Indeed, its attitude with respect to these problems will greatly inform the attitude of the European peoples as well as that of the the great Allied powers whose armies will liberate the continent.

The manner in which France, upon its liberation, will re-establish order in its national life will depend on European stability and the possibility of making a constructive and durable peace.

Without French contribution to the design of the peace and rebuilding of Europe, there will be only hesitation, confusion and incomprehension of the European situation.

Without the effective participation of France in the re-establishment of peace in Europe, there will be only anarchy. There will be such a concern to maintain order that the Great Powers will be more preoccupied in seeing this order preserved rather than in establishing and nurturing institutions that will sustain it; the consequences will be foreign occupation and the obligatory acceptance of violent and arbitrary government which will install themselves in various countries. Democratic institutions will be regarded as mere luxuries that do not enable expedient action. Before we can realize it, we will have Europe partly occupied by the allied troops, partly nationally controlled by arbitrary governments. Democratic institutions will disappear.

Disempowered people will seek hope in better conditions. They will want to know which solutions were prepared in order to solve those problems whose existence precipitated the war. They will turn to the Allies: the United States, Great Britain, Russia. Unless the conditions have changed, the Allies will not offer them any constructive plans that will respond to their anxieties. And then, inevitably, the arbitrary governments or authorities installed in each liberated country will seek to alleviate these anxieties through nationalist formulas to which they all necessarily have been led, given that in order to maintain their power, these governments will have had—under the pretext of maintaining order—to remove essential freedoms of press, etc. As "dictators," they will undergo the fate of governments without real democratic mandate; that is, to seek in nationalist exaltation the momentary solution to problems which, in the current state of the world, can only be resolved in an international forum. But [in such a situation] the international solution will falter; the re-establishment of internal order through democratic means will falter. The governments or authorities set-up in each nation will have no other solution than political arbitrariness and nationalist solutions.

If it were to travel down this path, Europe will once again be lost. After a short period of time, the British and American forces will be incapable of maintaining order in the countries which they will occupy: the disarray will be too widespread and the pressure of American public opinion for the return of their "boys" will be too strong. Tired Russia will occupy a strategic line which it will consider indispensable to its security. England, weakened by its effort, worried about the future, will be concerned with maintaining its Empire and with ensuring its own safety with respect to Europe. They will turn their attention to the United States and will seek with it, like France in 1918, an illusory safety though individual treaties. Confronted with the sudden

establishment of authoritarian governments where it had intended to see the establishment of democratic institutions, faced with the outburst of nationalist feelings and of old European quarrels compounded with the fear of Bolshevik influence in Europe, public opinion in the United States will wake up, frightened, and the isolationist movement will once again take on an immense force. With the war against Japan unfinished, the United States will send all of its forces there for its own security, and they will seek in the European resolution only the essential elements of their safety. Once more, as in 1918, peace will be a negative peace, inspired by fear; the measures taken will be measures of national protection, of America's, England's, and Russia's protection from a Europe which has unceasingly disturbed the world, of each country's protection from the neighboring country and to profit from the collapse of the adversary in order to strengthen its own national defense. We will remake the peace of 1918. But this time rancor will envelop all Europe, including France. The foundations of the next war will have been laid—but before this war, we will have established the grounds for a long period of discord, prevented the re-establishment of democratic institutions and ensured the impossibility for the countries of Europe to recover their prosperity.

III.

This catastrophic situation towards which we are inevitably headed can be avoided only if France's thinking intervenes in order to foreground the danger, to show the way and to propose methods which, at the very least, would make it possible to solve the problem. Indeed, of all the allies, France alone is European, and it is the solution of the European problem with which it is concerned. The others—England, the United States and Russia—have their own worlds to which they can temporarily retreat. France is tied to Europe. It cannot escape it. The life of France depends on solving the European problem. However, we saw that the inevitable development of the European situation in the aftermath of its pending liberation will necessarily result in the three large countries protecting themselves from Europe, and consequently from France. No agreement France makes with England, America or Russia will be able to dissociate it from Europe with which, it is intellectually, materially, militarily linked.

Moreover, in a liberated Europe—one in which Germany and Italy have crumbled—France becomes once again the first continental power. Europe will turn towards France because of its historical past and its democratic traditions and will expect from it some hope for the future. And from where it can it arise outside of France? Neither Germany nor Italy will be capable of making their voice heard with authority, for the legacy of the totalitarian institutions that they invented will be too heavy and the defeat which will mark the spirit of their people will divest them of any possibility of a constructive initiative. The other countries of Europe are small, and therefore nationalist, anxious. And their contribution to a renewed European order will be too weak for us to hope that their action will be effective. It is thus only France which can design the new European order and from whose impulse we can hope for its complete realization, or at the very least for its undertaking and partial success.

IV.

But the current circumstances of the war, as explained above, can bring the imminent defeat of the enemy and the liberation of Europe. It is for this moment that we must prepare; it is before this moment that diplomatic arrangements must be made and before this moment that the people of Europe must be educated, such that essential concepts are prepared in their minds, essential concepts that will enable the re-establishment of the democratic institutions, that will nurture the hope that a constructive program of European reorganization will bring prosperity and peace to them, that will provide the faith that solutions will be in a cooperative international project.

Thus, we will have contributed towards laying the foundations which will make it possible to eliminate—through the reaffirmation of faith in democracy and the hope of a better world—the largest dangers threatening European reconstruction and peace; that is to say, the belief that the anxieties of the people might be alleviated and the problems of the future regulated through nationalism and the affirmation of national sovereignty (in its various political and economic forms).

V.

It is thus necessary to act before the enemy falls. It is necessary to act now. Herein lies the duty of the *Comité Français de la Libération Nationale*. It must formulate policy, communicate with the allies not necessarily to seek their approval, but in order to take stock of their final position [on the European question] and of the essential points of divergence with their point of view. This is because their collaboration—or, at least, with some of them—is necessary for our enterprise to succeed. It must then speak to France and speak to the world.

VI.

The goals to attain are:

The re-establishment or establishment in Europe of democratic rule, and the economic and political organization of one "European entity."

These two conditions are essential for the establishment of conditions that will make of peace a normal state in Europe. There will be no peace in Europe if there is the possibility that rights of opposition are not accorded respect and free elections do not exist. These two conditions are essential for the re-establishment and the maintenance of all essential freedoms of speech, assembly, association, etc, which are at the very roots of the development of Western civilization.

There will be no peace in Europe if the States reconstitute themselves on the basis of national sovereignty and its attendant politics of prestige and economic protection. If the countries of Europe once again protect themselves from each other, the creation of

great armies will once again prove to be necessary. Some countries—for the sake of future peace—might be able to rebuild armies; others will be prohibited from doing so. We have had recourse to this solution in 1919 and we know its consequences only too well. Inter-european alliances will be made; we know the value of this process only too well. Social reforms will be hindered or delayed given the weight of the military budget. Europe will once again recreate itself in fear.

The countries of Europe are too insular to guarantee their people the prosperity that modern conditions make possible and, consequently, necessary. They need broader markets. It is also necessary that they do not use a significant part their resources on the maintenance of "key" industries supposedly required by national defense and that was rendered compulsory by the form of states such as we knew them before 1939, states predicated on "national sovereignty" and protectionism.

Their prosperity and essential social developments are impossible, unless the States of Europe form themselves into a Federation or one "European entity" understood as a common economic unit.

It is evident that it is not possible to arrive at this "European result" immediately and that one rather long period will be required to allow the essential discussions and the necessary conclusion of the agreements. But it is essential that, at this time, measures are anticipated which would at least make its realization possible. We saw above that, if the liberation of Europe can be foreseen, the consequences will inevitably be the establishment of arbitrary authorities in Europe and the reconstitution of Sovereign states and protectionism; that is to say, the goals outlined above are not likely to be reached.

VII.

Consequently, it appears that the reconstitution of Europe, and consequently and the establishment of peace, must be developed in two stages, as much from standpoint of the reconstitution of the political powers in the various States as from the economic point of view. The first stage starts when the first soldiers of the armies of the liberators land on the continent until the moment when a congress of peace can be convened. The second stage begins from the moment when the congress of peace is convened until the conclusion and the establishment—if we ever arrive at this—of a European entity.

VIII.

The first stage for the reasons indicated above is the most dangerous. Everything will depend on it.

From the political point of view, it is essential that measures are anticipated which allow for the immediate creation of provisional governments (through democratic consultation) in the liberated countries.

The *Comité Français*, given the commitments it publicly adopted and incorporated into its deed [*acte constitutif*] of June 3, 1943, occupies a position which enables it to guide Europe.

Indeed, "in conformity with the documents previously exchanged between the *Comité National Français* and the civil and military Commander in Chief and, namely, the letter of General Grimaud May 17 1943 and the response of General de Gaulle 25 May, the *Comité Français de la Libération Nationale* will exercise its functions until the date when the condition of the liberated territories is such that it can enable the formation, in accordance with the laws of the Republic, a provisional government to which it will then hand over its powers. This date will be, at the very latest, that of the total liberation of the territory." (Ordinance of June 3, 1943, article 4.)

The various European States must travel down the same path, according to the constitutional form relevant to each country. But nothing could provide more political tranquility to a perturbed Europe than the knowledge, before liberation, that the first act of the liberators will be to install a constitutionally-mandated "provisional government" that will assume governance of each country until elections of universal suffrage, held when prisoners, workmen etc. have returned home, will elect the definitive government.

This procedure will weaken the various constituents which, in the various countries, might be preparing to seize power. Indeed, without the knowledge that a provisional government set-up on a democratic basis will be constituted immediately after liberation, the people can be suspicious of everything, and consequently, the use of force will be justified or at the very least, encouraged. Moreover, if the use of force occurs, under whose name can it be repressed by the *de facto* authority? If a repression is necessary before the creation of the provisional Government, the *de facto* authority will repress the use of force in order to allow the normal constitution of the provisional government. In one sense, it is civil war; in another, it is the maintenance of law and order within the framework of institutions.

Once the provisional government is constituted, it will maintain order in the name of the Nation.

The maintenance of law and order in the name of the Nation will be satisfactory only if it is realized in all legality. The European drama is that of arbitrariness. The respect for the law must be restored. Power must be depersonalized. It is necessary to reject despotism and *anthropolâtrie*. Such was the situation in almost all of Europe, before the totalitization regimes, primarily around 1914.

Vague formulas and proclamations are not enough. Public opinion should be made clear. For many years now, liberalism and democracy, respect for the rule of law and the truth, have systematically been cast to the shadows, the object of the most virulent criticisms. It is necessary to bring them back to light, without hateful polemics or words of revolt, but with intelligence, variety and sincerity. Public opinion must be

informed. Youth must be educated by the press, the radio and teaching; democracy and the respect for the law must be impressed in all minds and all consciences.

If, as some fear, some parties seek to benefit from the disorder and the abandonment of the people in order to impose their own will and to establish their own systems, their actions would in this case constitute a rebellion against the institutions and consequently, they would expose themselves to the measures of repression justified by the same institutions in which they were all called upon to participate.

From the economic point of view, it is essential that, from the very beginning, the reconstitution of economic sovereignties be prevented; consequently, commitments [*engagements*] should be asked of all the governments in exile or authorities such as the *Comité Français* not to establish customs duties or quotas until the conclusion of the future peace.

Apart from the reasons indicated above, it is clear that, lacking resources, Europe will need all that it might be able to trade, and that the life of peoples during this period will be rendered more difficult if essential goods (which are already so difficult to procure) were burdened with customs duties.

It is also obvious that, if such measures were not taken, particular interests will exert pressure on the governments for the restoration of customs duties and countries will require them in order to possess a weapon in what, for the sake of convenience, has been called "economic negotiations." Before we know it, protectionism among European countries will have been reconstituted and, for a new period of years, will not be abolished. With this protectionism or "nationalist economics," we shall return to the conditions of Europe prior to 1939.

- Questions of monopolies of import and export.
- Relief.
- Jump-starting national industries, at least to ensure work.
- Question of Germany which could occupy the position of the only country with an industry capable of functioning.
- Need for a monopoly of foreign trade managed by the Allies.
- Restitution by Germany of the machines, etc, taken from occupied countries.
- financial questions for this intermediary period.
- L/L (Lend Lease=Prêt-Lease) for the provisioning of overseas, etc.

Under these conditions, it appears that the first stage must consist in immediately creating provisional political powers on democratic bases in each State; to maintain the European economy during this limited period, without establishment of customs duties, etc.; to convene the congress of peace only when all duly-elected provisional Governments of various European countries have been mandated and can meet.

The plan under consideration for this provisional period will succeed only if it is realistic. It will have to for the specific historical experience peculiar to each country. It should not artificially separate the political element from the economic element because this distinction runs against the lessons of history and with the necessities of governmental life. It can only develop itself within the framework of legislation shelved for a long time, or more recently simply abandoned, but which will once again assume the merit to have existed, to have been conceived and implemented in each of the states to be restored. Lastly, the mechanism of the elections and more generally of the democratic institutions supposes an administrative operation [*agencement*] whose structure it is advisable not to improvise without referring to the precedents of the liberal age.

IX.

The second stage is essentially the congress of peace.

- Plan of political and economic rebuilding of Europe.
- Situation of Europe with respect to the United States, the U.K., the USSR.
- Program of the resolution of the German question – population movements.
- Constitution of a European State involved in large metallurgy.
- Control by the European authority of manufacturing authorities and plane routes.
- Involvement of the USSR, the U.K., the USA with these systems and controls.
- Political and financial organization of Europe.
- Organization of the *Conseil Mondial* with European participation.

X.

Situation of France if this policy is pursued:

- for the *Comité Français*, immediate authority with respect to the rest of the world and France
- the position of France in Europe, its safety, its prosperity.

XI.

If these general points are adopted, it is necessary, moreover, given the urgency of the situation, to determine the set of priorities the *Comité Français* must settle:

- a) to hasten the re-armament of the French Army;
 - b) to organize relief;
 - c) to immediately stop adoption of the *Loi Tréveneuc*, without waiting until the *Assemblée Consultative* is constituted (*une commission des partis*);
 - d) to eliminate any reasons for division in France - unification of the movements of resistance - secret army;
 - e) to fix the juridical rules which will allow purification in France and the elimination of the collaborators;
 - f) plan of reconstruction for rendering operational [*mise-en-oeuvre*], under the general conditions indicated above, industries that would enable the creation of indispensable labor;
 - g) to adopt the administrative measures which will progressively be applied over the course of the liberation
- measures to take stock [*sonder*] of the USA, the U.K., the USSR;
 - final development of the plan;
 - diplomatic measures and public opinion.

(Translated by Armando Manalo)