



Fears of Europe: USSR, Russia and European Integration

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«If we don't know how to make ourselves bearers of a human and modern ideal in a lost and uncertain Europe on the way to go, we are lost and Europe is lost with us. In this our old continent, there is a scary ideal vacuum. (...) We must oppose this triggering; and the only course of action that opens before us is the preaching of the good news. We know what this good news is: it is the idea of freedom against intolerance, of cooperation against brute force. Europe that Italy hopes for (...) is not a Europe closed to anyone, it is a Europe open to all, a Europe in which men can freely assert their conflicting ideals and in which the majorities respect the minorities and promote the same ends, up to the extreme limit in which they are compatible with the existence of the whole community»¹.

These words are by Luigi Einaudi: he pronounced that speech in 1947 in front of the Italian Constituent Assembly. His words are still current at a time when fear seems to be the dominant feeling in Europe. For those who believe in Europe, there is the sense of imminent danger for European democracy, because of the advance of Euro-scepticisms and sovereignties. In Europe a poison of anger, fear, violence and hatred unfortunately winds and an antidote must be found, ensuring that all countries become "producers" of knowledge, freedom, solidarity, strong economies, sustainability, and integration.

Nowadays, the fear of immigration is certainly another hot topic. The xenophobic rhetoric against migrants and refugees seems to wipe out the most tangible symbol of the European construction for the citizens of the participating countries. The Schengen agreement was signed in 1985 by Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands to progressively eliminate internal border controls and introduce freedom of movement. However, at the beginning of the 2000s, with the attack on the Twin Towers, the European States adopted the doctrine of "national security" on the American model and more and more the borders become matters of State security. Consistent with this address, in 2004 the Agency Frontex was born in order to keep monitored and controlled access at the border of land and sea to EU countries. An intensification of these trends occurred in 2012, when more consistent migration flows affected the continent. If until that year, there were only two walls built on the borders of European countries, both along the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and

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¹ Luigi Einaudi, *Discorso di Luigi Einaudi pronunciato martedì 29 luglio 1947 davanti all'Assemblea Costituente*, in *Assemblea costituente, CCVIII, seduta pomeridiana di martedì 29 luglio 1947*, http://legislature.camera.it/_dati/costituente/lavori/Assemblea/sed208/sed208nc.pdf, pp. 6422-6426, specifically p. 6425, 8 October 2019. The translation from Italian to English is mine.

Melilla, the barbed wire fence on the border between Greece and Turkey inaugurated a new season for the European countries. The walls have sprung up all over Europe, fuelled both by the fake news that circulates indiscriminately on social media – which now seem to be the main information tool used by citizens – and by the absence of a clear political strategy that is able to manage migratory flows and reassure Europeans.

Another fear often cited by anti-Europeans relates to euro, wrongly considered responsible for national taxes, economic crisis, inflation and unemployment. In twenty years, euro has become the currency of 340 million Europeans and 19 Member States, including, among others, all the founding countries and 7 of the 13 that joined EU after the start of its circulation. Euro directly or indirectly influences the currency stability of 60 territories located even outside the borders of the old settlement, involving around 6.5 % of the world population; it is not by chance that it accounts for 20.1% of global foreign exchange reserves². It is also a popular currency: in twenty years, support for the single currency has increased from 71% in the early 2000s to 74% today. Economists often remember that inflation and financing dynamics, incomes and employment are tangible signs of its success. Three elements agitate the debate among the “experts”: the completion of the banking union; the transformation of the European Stability Mechanism into a European Monetary Fund; the establishment of a finance minister. These tools, if adequately designed, could strengthen the capacity of European institutions to guarantee the financial and economic stability of the whole Union.

According to the Eurobarometer data³, these fears seem to be the most pervasive, but certainly, they are not the only ones and change country by country. Becoming aware of these fears does not mean justifying the European Union or obliging citizens to change their mind. An analysis, or at least an awareness of the short-sightedness of those narratives that feed these fears, would go back to thinking about the difficulties, the failures and the EU’s urgent needs, in order to propose a political agenda as much concrete and shared as possible.

This issue of «De Europa» intends to be a small contribution in this direction. It deals in particular with another fear, the USSR/Russia, which has historically been a powerful factor of aggregation and acceleration of the process of European integration at the beginning of the Cold War.

Anti-Russian hatred and resentment has developed over the centuries in different directions. There was a French Russophobia during the Napoleonic era, a British one, which began with the “big game” in Central Asia, and a German one with the fight for “living space” in the East. Finally, American Russophobia appeared. It is a dynamic synthesis of French liberal-democratic Russophobia and English and German imperialist Russophobias⁴.

² European Central Bank, *The International Role of Euro, June 2019*, <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/ire/html/ecb.ire201906~f0da2b823e.en.html>, 8 October 2019.

³ European Commission’s Directorate-General Communication, providing public access to the official Eurobarometer reports, <https://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm>, 8 October 2019.

⁴ Guy Mettan, *Russofobia. Mille anni di diffidenza*, Roma, Sandro Teti Editore, 2016.

The “red danger” found its lifeblood with the emergence of the category of “totalitarianism” from the late 1940s. It would later become a highly abused interpretive key to understand the twentieth-century European dictatorships, and it would have returned in vogue in the Reagan era, when the Soviet Union would have been identified with the “evil empire”⁵.

Many of the *clichés*, or the most evocative and still widespread images (from the Cossacks to St. Peter to the child-eating communists, up to the mental and literary *topos* of Siberia) date back to those years. For the older generations, Russia remains an irredeemable home of godless, from whom it is the least to be wary. It must be added to these Russophobians those who, due to various political motivations or to the effects of the strong American influence, show a clear basic tendency towards Moscow. This hostility often flows into the merits, when it takes aim at the whole Russian people (continuously confusing *Russkij* and *Rossijskij*) or when it took refuge in cognitive convenient loopholes (like that never really occurred, the Russian troll) in order not to analyse the complexity of reality⁶.

On the other hand, there are those who look at Russia with manifest fondness. Here too, the reasons are very heterogeneous. On the one hand there are those who do not feel a particular connection with Moscow but with the form and expression of its most visible power, namely Putin or Putinism, Then there is of course the anti-American component, which in the framework of geopolitics has (re)seen in Moscow the most direct and close rival of Washington’s imperial ambitions. But, above all, there is a far more widespread affinity between different EU countries and Russia, deriving from social ties, cultural exchanges and frequent trade contacts in various areas⁷.

The contributions published in this issue of «De Europa» try to complete the look on Russia, as a rival but also as a potential partner of the European Union.

The first article deals about the historical relation between Tsarist Russia/USSR and Western Europe/Integrated Europe. Since the beginning of the European construction process, by focusing on the ideological prophecies of capitalist contradictions, communist authorities did not understand the potential significance of the efforts of people like Jean Monnet, directed at economic, financial, and cultural integration. Although the Soviet bloc economy needed economic relations with Western Europe, its political rulers rejected the idea of any European federation or confederation on the old continent. Even before the birth of the Soviet Union, Europe and Russia had always looked to each other with diffidence or fear. Specifically, the geographical and identity location of Russia has always suffered because of the ambiguity of being a border between East and West, between Asia and Europe. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to measure the Russian swing between East and West by the yardstick of its greater or lesser Europeanization: this view would presuppose an implicit hierarchical

⁵ Ronald Reagan, *Evil Empire Speech*, 8 March 1983, <https://nationalcenter.org/ReaganEvilEmpire1983.html>, 8 October 2019.

⁶ Giovanni Savino, *Chi ha paura dell’orso rosso?*, in «Il Manifesto», 3 March 2018.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

relationship between Europe and Russia, of which historians should “estimate” progress or involution taking “Russia’s Europeanisation” as a single unit of measure. On the contrary, the relationship between Europe – understood in different historical moments as a geographical reality and/or as European Community/Union – and Russia has from time to time been expressed by the Russians in a complex reception of European or non-European models. Moreover, Russia looks at this relationship with the ambition to be an autonomous driving force because of belief to identify itself as the center of the world and not as a periphery. So it is important to analyse how Western Europe and Russia, being located within a common geographical area, have historically created a web of relationships characterized by attraction and repulsion, conditioned for centuries by ideology and power logic and often degenerated into contradictions and incompatibility.

Elena Dundovich reflects on the fact that, as never before since the days of the October Revolution, Russia underwent radical and profound transformations between 1991 and the beginning of the second decade of the 2000s, both from the point of view of domestic politics and that of its international projection. In this respect, Yeltsin decided to continue the “new course” inaugurated by Gorbachev aimed at improving relations with the USA and Europe. In doing so, a major role was played by the will of the oligarchs who wanted to have close relations with the West in order to obtain financing and new opportunities for profit. Between 1991 and 1996, with Andrey Kozyrev as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the pro-Western policy of the Federation expressed itself with greater conviction until approval of the enlargement of the EU to Central and Eastern European countries. It was not so much for this reason that relations began to enter a period of crisis as the decision to expand NATO in that direction, a choice that aroused harsh criticism in a large part of Russian public opinion and brought Yevgeny Primakov, promoter of a less Western-centred policy, to the fore as the new foreign minister.

Sara Tavani analyses EU-Russia security relations. Since the Cold War ending, relations between Europe and Russia have progressively lost their sense of direction and experienced an ever more complicated phase, especially worrisome in the security field. In the unstable international system which followed the end of bipolarism, Euro-Russian security relations failed to be institutionalised and the European Union continued to refer to NATO as its primary security guarantee. This article argues that the current East-West European security dialogue raises difficulties already faced during the Cold War years, as the CSCE negotiation knots demonstrate. Specifically, the central issue remains the unbalanced strategic relationship between the European countries and Russia, which still lies unresolved due to the continue lack of a major European political and military integration.

Neil Robinson concentrates on Russophobia in official Russian political discourse. The charge of Russophobia has been made increasingly frequently against Western critics of Russia in the last few years. Much of this criticism has been made by Russian media and commentators rather than by high officials of the Russian state. There have been several studies of this media use of accusations of Russophobia and it

has generally been asserted that the charge of Russophobia is part of a concerted propaganda effort by the Russian state. However, there has been little examination of the use of Russophobia by top Russian politicians. This article examines the use of Russophobia by President Vladimir Putin as well as by top officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in communiqués of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It finds that there has been only minor changes in the allegations of Russophobia by senior Russian politicians. The article looks at why Russophobia became a more prevalent accusation in Russian politics generally and at why there has been a difference in the accusations of Russophobia made by the media and in official political discourse.

Daniela Preda changes perspectives, and proposes a re-reading of two important men for an integrated Europe, men who, in salient moments in the history of European integration, have proposed reflections and actions for the progress of the joint construction, fearful not only of possible external threats, but also of how a “non-integration” was detrimental to Europe.

Maria Eleonora Guasconi investigates on the European efforts to keep *détente* alive during the 1980's, focusing in particular on the relations with the Soviet Union after the Single European Act (SEA) signature in 1986. Although the Single European Act was not originally designed to deal with foreign policy issues, as its main goal was to complete the Single market, it represented a significant stage also for the development of a European foreign policy. For the first time it included the scope of a common foreign policy, linking the EC procedures, in a single legal instrument to the EPC. The article will deal with the issue of “consistency”, or, in other words, the increasing recourse made by EPC to EC instruments (and vice-versa) as sanctions or the use of conditionality in economic assistance, in order to further EC's policies. In particular the article will investigate if the completion of the Single market and the revival of European integration in the second half of the 1980's affected USSR policy, wondering in particular if it influenced the development of Gorbachev's project of a European common home.

Finally, Max Guderzo studies some nuances of “fear” in Eastern Europe traceable in US diplomatic correspondence and key decision-making documents produced during the presidency of Jimmy Carter, 1977-80. Washington's perceptions, attitude and policies towards the region and its countries – including the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania – are observed against the backdrop of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in a phase of the Cold War heavily marked by the invasion of Afghanistan and by the ongoing threat of Soviet use of military force to restore Moscow's full control over its Eastern European bloc.

Since historiography is slow in exploring the more specific aspects of the Eastern part, still favouring a Western reading, the articles aim above all to fill this historiography gap. They are also meant to overcome the disciplinary limits, creating an interdisciplinary synergy that, by using different methodologies, helps to return a three-dimensional picture of a long-term historical process that still generates crises and conflicts.