The Fears of Jean Monnet and of Wolfgang Schäuble

Daniela Preda

1. The Fears in the Era of Bipolarism: Jean Monnet

In Monnet's Memorandum of 3 May 1950, the French term *peur* (fear) recurs several times, and even when reference to fear is not explicit, its essential characteristics are often present.

Above all, there is the fear of war, of which the Cold War is, according to Monnet (Bossuat, Wilkens 1999: 505-519)[1], only a prodromal phase. His words echo the First World War, when the opposition between the two great alliances – the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente – had rigidified the European system of states to the point solutions could no longer be sought for the problems at hand. Monnet's fear, which lay behind his revolutionary proposals, is thus that the Cold War could lead again to the same dynamics in Europe of a harsh conflict between two opposing blocs, which would be even more dangerous due to the absence, in the world system of states, of what Ludwig Dehio called the "marginal spaces"[2] of the system.

In the spring of 1950, Monnet clearly saw the problem: another war was approaching, of which Germany would not be the cause but the country at stake. It was necessary for Germany to stop being the stake and to become a link; France had to act and propose a link with Germany.

After the long period of peace in Europe, it was difficult to make tangible those incontrovertible signs of war that, nevertheless, had crossed the continent from 1948 to 1950. Yet, in the spring of 1948 there was a belief that a Third World War could occur. In February, the coup in Prague removed any illusion that countries could remain outside the opposing blocs. The US commander in Germany, Gen. Clay, stated in March that the war was approaching, while the Soviet general, Sokolovski, established military control regarding the relations between West German and West Berlin (the "small block" of Berlin). On 24 June, it was decided to create the "great bloc", after ratification by the French National Assembly on 18 June of the decisions taken at the Conference of London between France, Great

Daniela Preda, University of Genoa, Department of Political Science, daniela.preda@unige.it

[1] Cf. Eric Roussel, *Jean Monnet*, Paris, Fayard, 1996; François Duchêne, *Jean Monnet. The First Man of Interdependence*, New York, Norton & Company, 1994; Jacques van Helmont, *Jean Monnet comme il était*, Lausanne, Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1981; *Jean Monnet*, Lausanne, Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1971.

[2] Ludwig Dehio, *Gleichgewicht oder Hegemonie*, Sherpe, Krefeld, 1948; Id., *Deutschland und die Weltpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Munchen, Oldembourg, 1955.

Britain and the US on the recovery of West Germany and its inclusion in the life of Western Europe[3].

After the creation of two states on German territory – the Federal Republic of Germany on 20 September 1949, and the German Democratic Republic on 7 October 1949 – the situation would become even more dramatic with the explosion in August of that year of the Soviet atomic bomb, which put an end to the US atomic monopoly. In turn, the International Authority of the Ruhr, created on 26 April 1949, to resolve the Franco-German conflict, was viewed as discriminatory by the Germans, who were the only ones to be placed under international control, and insufficient by the French, who feared they would not be able to oppose new requests for increased production: both France and Germany began no longer to feel secure without each possessing the entire territory of that natural coal and steel basin between France and Germany, which had been artificially divided by a border.

In other words, as Monnet wrote in his Memoirs, recalling the observations in his Memorandum of 3 May 1950, Europe was at that moment faced by an impasse:

> Whichever way we turn, in the present world situation we see nothing but deadlock – whether it be the increasing acceptance of a war that is thought to be inevitable, the problem of Germany, the continuation of France's recovery, the organization of Europe, or the place of France in Europe and the world (Monnet 1978: 289).

It was thus fundamental that the European countries, far from distancing themselves from bipolar conflicts, regained their place in the world by overcoming the sterile contrasts using the arms of the imagination. Monnet wrote: "In 1950, fear would engender paralysis, and paralysis would lead to disaster. It was vital to break the deadlock. The course of events must be altered" (Monnet 1978: 291). It was Monnet himself, moreover, who recalled as a reason for his inspiration a statement by Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (Monnet 1978: 291).

However, the fear could be overcome by a change in perspective. If the usual response to the fear of war was the strengthening of defence, rearmament, border closings, the erection of barriers, the centralization of power, and economic nationalism, Monnet proposed instead carrying out an "immediate action on an essential point (…).This action must be radical, real, immediate, and dramatic" (Monnet 1978: 291), capable of changing the terms themselves of the problem and replacing resignation to the inevitable tragedy of war with the hope for a better future. In other words, he proposed undermining at its core the logic of the Cold War, getting Europe to extricate itself from the shoals of a typically bipolar conflict.

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[3] Decisions were taken at London about convening in September an Assembly to draft a constitution for the Federal Republic of Germany, economically integrating the new state in Western Europe, creating the High Authority of the Ruhr, maintaining US military forces in Europe, and coordinating the US, British and French occupation zones in the Trizone.

With the prospect of an association with such a strong America, he wrote, the creation of a united Europe with faith in its future shows that the nations of Europe "will not yield to fear"[4] (Monnet 1950).

In proposing this, Monnet is in line with Altiero Spinelli, who, in a speech to the First International Congress of the *Union européenne des fédéralistes* (UEF) at Montreux in August of 1947, stated that "creating a federation of European democracies is the only way to stop these states from becoming protectorates and instruments of an American imperialist politics" (Spinelli 1973: 97). He was also in tune with Alcide De Gasperi, who went beyond the idea of a united Europe based on the fear of the Russians: the binding force of Europe must not be the "opposition to" but the "construction of". In March 1950, De Gasperi stated, reaffirming the concept during a discussion in the Senate in April 1952, that the sole policy of autonomy of the US is a united Europe (De Gasperi 1985: 704)[5], which for him became an end in itself. The first priority was the need to harness the strong pacifist feelings in Italy and Europe to positive campaigns in favour of peace, thereby moving beyond simple military contrasts. Rather than emphasize the military aspects of security, the West should focus its attention on topics such as democracy and a united Europe.

Closely intertwined by then, but far removed, with the logic of the Cold War was another fear, which we can define as atavistic: the fear of Germany, which was very strong especially in France, where it manifested itself in the resistance to any agreement that would allow Germany to reacquire the two great foundations of its power: the economy – in particular, coal and steel, which were the basis for its industrial and military superiority – and the army. Midway through 1947, it was already clear to the allies that the German steel industry would on its own monopolize all the coke in the Ruhr, with grave consequences for France and Europe. In 1950, after France, in the immediate post-war period, had believed in peace and given proof of its faith in the future, Monnet wrote: "L'augmentation de la production de l'Allemagne, l'organisation de la guerre froide, ressusciteraient chez eux les sentiments de crainte du passé" (Monnet 1950). Germany had unquestioned superiority in steel production. The rapid expansion of the German economy created strong tension around 1950, which went well beyond a simple economic issue. "Déjà l'Allemagne demande d'augmenter sa production de 11 à 14 millions de tonnes. Nous refuserons, mais les Américains insisteront" (Monnet 1950). Having quickly entered into a bipolar frame of mind, the US had in fact for some time begun to seek a normalization in the German situation and the inclusion of Germany in the European and Atlantic collaborative organisms. Therefore, even with reservations, France had to give ground, and French steel production slowed down. The consequences were easy to imagine; Jean Monnet describes them incisively in his *Memoirs* (Monnet 1978: 253): the German economy would grow, thereby creating a

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[4] Monnet had sent to the Prime Minister, Georges Bidault, a previous Memorandum on 28 April 1950, which was published by *Le Monde* on 9 May 1970.
[5] When asked to cite a single case in which Italian policy was independent and different from that of the US, he indicated without hesitation its European policy. Speech by De Gasperi to the Senate, 15 February 1952 (De Gasperi 1985: 1056).

situation favourable to German dumping on the export market; French industrialists, in turn, would have sought protection, leading France down the road toward a limited and strongly protected production. All this would have slowed down the liberalization of trade in Western Europe, starting with the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), and favoured the return of the pre-war cartels. There would thus have been a return to the logic of the First World War, with the reconstruction of the divided sovereign national states and of their power.

Emblematic of this was the official communiqué in March 1950 from the French information minister, Pierre Teitgen, in response to rumours of Anglo-American initiatives for the entry of the German Federal Republic into the Atlantic Pact: "The world must be aware of the fact that France cannot remain a member of a security system that authorizes the rearmament of Germany" (Adenauer 1966).

The classic response, which France was in part already preparing and might very well implement, was to seek out security and protection, defence: first of all, plans for the break-up of the old Reich, then attempts at slowing down Germany's economic recovery and control over the economy, the internationalization of the Ruhr, and proposals of a political distancing of the Saar from Germany.

Therefore, while the US was facing the German problem mainly in the context of a containment policy against Soviet expansionism, in France the aim was to once and for all end any chance of reappearance of a policy of German aggression. According to Monnet, the German problem could not be resolved through the unification of the country due to the bipolar division, or by integrating the Federal Republic into the West, since that would mean the Germans had accepted separation, which would have led to a Soviet reaction.

In this case as well, Monnet proposed a radically new point of view, seeking a solution to the German problem by changing the facts surrounding it, "transforming" it through a Copernican revolution in the relations among the European states: from a fear of Germany, and thus the impossibility of any agreement with the country, to an acceptance of Germany so complete as to make it become the best partner for Europe's future. Faced with the worsening in the Franco-German conflict, he began to become convinced that the only way to stop Germany from laying its hands on material bases for military power was to bring it under the control of an authority even France had agreed to submit to. This would have ensured that in future Germany would not be subject to discriminatory unilateral controls. However, Monnet went even further, and his response to the fear of Germany became at the same time a response to the fear of war and bipolarism. He proposed a special supranational (not inter-governmental) authority with limited powers in the area of coal and steel production, at the same time linking the solution to the European problem to the plan for European unification: "Cette proposition réalisera les premières assises concrètes d'une fédération europénne indispensable à la préservation de la paix" (Monnet 1950). This aim was central to the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950:

Par la mise en commun de productions de base et l'institution d'une Haute Autorité nouvelle, dont les décisions lieront la France, l'Allemagne et les pays qui y adhéreront, cette proposition réalisera les premières assises concrètes d'une Fédération européenne indispensable à la préservation de la paix[7].

The creation of a European pool for coal and steel was thus transformed by Monnet into the first step toward the gradual formation of a European federation through the gradualist approach he favoured: Europe would not be created in one go or through its immediate construction, but realized through concrete measures capable of creating a de facto solidarity.

The Schuman Plan dealt with the post-war economic and political problems using a different approach than the one adopted in the past. It did not merely propose a bilateral or multilateral lowering of tariffs or the gradual elimination of import quotas, which would have kept intact the political divisions among the states with the obvious consequence of long-term instability. It did not simply oblige German to eliminate cartels, based on the failed logic that was as discriminatory as it was ineffective in the interwar period, proposing instead a supranational union of states and strong political control over the economy, and monopolies in particular. It proposed a method and institutions capable of guaranteeing the definite elimination of national barriers and thus even the permanent creation of a free market. In short, it proposed European unification on the basis of a new governance model that represented a historical turning point and, though following the slow timeline of history, created a de facto watershed in the history of international relations, for example, by excluding the right of secession from the Community by unilateral decision.

The bipolar logic – the need to integrate Germany into the new Europe to make sure it was not seduced by the Soviets – gave way to a multipolar one – the creation of the United Europe. Fear, which leads to division and opposition, was to be overcome through a spirit of union and sharing.

2. Europe's post-1989 Fears: Wolfgang Schäuble

During the Cold War, European integration, though showing indisputable signs of self-determination, was destined to occur imperfectly: the reasons for union clashed with those for preserving national sovereignty, without either reason winning out over the other. Europe avoided choosing between confederation and federation, following instead a "third path" and succeeding in resolving the many crises it faced even without a solid framework of reference of states, given that U.S. leadership guaranteed Europe the essential instruments of sovereignty: security and a common defence, through NATO and the nuclear umbrella; and monetary stability, at least until 1971, through the dollar and gold exchange standard.

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[6] Cf. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_fr.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and consequent break-up of the Soviet Union and disappearance of bipolarism substantially modified the prospects for European unification. Sandwiched between micro nationalisms, on the one side, and global pressures on the other, Europe was aware of the need to play an international role if it did not want to become a second-rate power. However, what appeared on the new globalized world scene was a Europe that was still largely incomplete.

A question thus naturally arose: without the outside "glue" of bipolarism, which Europe would appear on the new international scene, which by then had already become multipolar? A more united Europe, even from the political point of view by strengthening the twin pillars of sovereignty (the currency and defence), or the Europe of the old national states?

The fall of the Berlin Wall thus brought back the long-standing contrast between equilibrium and hegemony, accompanied by the spectre of German hegemony spreading over the continent.

The geo-strategic consequences of Germany's position in Europe are known, even if not enough attention is paid to them. During the era of European anarchy, Germany, forced to look both toward East and West, felt itself trapped between a rock and a hard place, undertaking as a result policies involving the strengthening of its military and hegemonic projects. With the birth of the European Community, the search for a new system of security in the bipolar world, and the return of the German Federal Republic to a situation of parity with the other states in the new context of European and Atlantic solidarity, this syndrome had for some time lessened, replaced by a conflict along the single anti-Soviet front. However, the new post-bipolar international context and the weak responses by the Community were enough to rekindle it.

This time the fear of German hegemony in Europe was not simply the subject of debate inside France but, significantly, spread to Germany as well.

In the document presented in Bonn on 1 September 1994, by the CDU/CSU Group in the German Parliament, also known as the *Schäuble Document*, the three drafters of the document – Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Christian-Democratic Group in the Berlin Parliament, who would later become the Finance Minister in Angela Merkel's government, Karl Lamers and Theo Waigel, the then German Finance Minister – evoked, in assessing the effect of the break-up of the Soviet system in Europe, the fear of a return to the unstable pre-war system that placed Germany in an uncomfortable position between East and West, the fear that once again a void would be created in the heart of Europe that would threaten its stability. The solution proposed was to quickly integrate the Central-Eastern European countries into the post-war European system, at the same time maintaining a broad understanding with Russia.

> If (West) European integration does not evolve in that way, Germany could, because of security fears, be led or incited to determine for its own account, turning to traditional means, the stability of East Europe (Schäuble 1994).

According to Schäuble, this would have led to the dismantling of the Union and increasingly closer cooperation between Germany and Russia, even at the expense of Central-Eastern Europe.

The document thus expressed the hope for an urgent opening of the European Union to East European countries; but at the same time, to enable the EU to deal with the immense tasks this would entail, it asked for internal consolidation of the Union to avoid its disintegration into a wide free-trade zone incapable of satisfying Germany's need for stability.

Starting from these premises, the objectives the Schäuble Document proposed as having priority are the institutional development of the Union and the strengthening of its capacity to act in the foreign policy and security spheres. These aims would be advanced by the drafting of a "quasi-institutional document" providing for the federalist reform of all European institutions. Moreover, the document underscores the importance of eliminating the system of unanimity by forming a "hard core" within a Europe that has a "variable geometry" and "variable speeds" (Schäuble 1994).

Therefore, even Schäuble responded to the new fears emerging in the post-bipolar era by re-launching the prospects of a united Europe. He saw as of primary importance the need for an enlargement to include the East European countries removed from Soviet influence, which would have triggered in the entire Central-Eastern area bordering on the EU a virtuous process of stabilization and democratization, indispensable for maintaining peace on the continent. However, this enlargement had to be accompanied by a strengthening of EU institutions through the reform of community institutions and the re-launching of Europe: a Parliament which became a legislative body together with a Council of Ministers, which, in turn, would take on the role of a Chamber of States; the transformation of the Commission into a European government; the elimination of the principle of unanimity; and the creation of a variable-speed Europe.

Therefore, both in the Cold War and the post-1989 eras, the European Union, though in different political and historical contexts, represented the prerequisite for overcoming fear and an alternative and vital path for ending the political stalemate, opposing nationalisms, international anarchy, and the spectrum of war.

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