

Eastward Ho! *...on a westbound boat*

Two are the objections that have been raised, repeatedly and by more than one authoritative observer, during the long months of reflection, preparation and discussion over the project of this new journal.

Firstly: is there any need for a new journal on international relations, when in all European countries a limited readership is shared by several periodicals of great prestige and tradition, frequently associated with famous research institutes or Universities? Furthermore, setting market problems aside, isn't there perhaps, rather than a need for more journals, a greater want for more original and independent analyses, and for high-calibre specialists capable of defending themselves from both the conditioning of international political circles, and the over-simplifications and commonplaces widespread in public opinion?

It could easily be admitted that there is no felt need for one more academic journal. And indeed we are aiming at something different and more ambitious. The European Journal of International Affairs will publish articles and essays of scholarly quality, but dealing with the great issues of world politics from a specifically European point of view, and with issues specially relevant to the Old Continent as a whole; issues and points of view that are frequently neglected by journals reflecting purely national approaches, on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the Old Continent, of course, there are dailies and periodicals of unrivalled quality and prestige, yet these are unmistakably national in slant, even when they have a readership scattered across borders and oceans. None of them, even if they aimed to do so, could claim to be

considered the "voice of Europe" in the major theatre of world politics. And the same is true — even more so — amongst the abundance of specialized monthlies and quarterlies to be found in Europe.

And here came the second objection, continually arising, though sometimes as a joke, throughout the intense period leading up to this first issue: the question of whether it was at all possible to look at world affairs from a European point of view, which would mean with European political, economic, and security interests in mind.

Indeed Europe does not exist as a political subject. Its name is only a geographical expression, and a poorly defined one at that corresponding, in its current meaning (the EEC plus some of the free-market neutrals), to a group of States which, though perhaps less quarrelsome than in the past, are still divided by interests that appear quite divergent, especially in political and security matters. While in economic, monetary and trade matters, it is clear what is meant by Europe's interests, role and stances, the opposite is true with regard to great political and strategic issues.

At a devilishly rapid pace, decisions of great historical momentum on these worldwide issues have been taken by the two superpowers, since the advent of Gorbachev and the decline of Reagan's presidency. And this would appear to any third party observer as a strategy of the superpowers to reduce the unbearable cost of their supremacy, and thus perpetuate their sharing of all world power. It is superfluous to say that the nation-States of Western Europe — whose ultimate destiny is at stake — have had no say in the matter. And what is more, even their post facto reaction has been only a cacophony of discordant voices, from Helmut Kohl's biting of the bullet, to Italy's feigned enthusiasm, and France's attempts to establish a minimum of strategic co-operation with Germany and — in the nuclear field — with Britain. As well as confirming Europe's irrelevance and impotence, this just shows how difficult it is to speak — even in conceptual terms — of common European interests in the political and strategic field.

It can indeed be wondered if there will ever be a common point of view in countries such as France, strongly attached to the idea of a national State completely free of any constraint, endowed with its own "force de dissuasion" and a nuclear power system able to guarantee self-sufficiency in energy. Or England, whose nuclear power, begun under close collaboration with the United States, could lead, with the passage from Polaris to Trident missiles, to an almost total technological and operative integration (and dependence) with respect to its trans-Atlantic ally. Or Germany, which is becoming increasingly intolerant of the consequences of its military defeat forty years ago, as the memory of tragic past years fades, its position in the international economic and monetary system grows stronger, and its imposed post-war renunciation of all non-conventional arms and status of incomplete legitimacy — which the Soviet Union has been attempting to perpetuate with all the means at its disposal — become more and more of an anachronism. How can there be a common vision of world politics, and a community of interests in the international arena, between citizens of countries so diverse and unequal?

Well before formulating the concept of this journal, and proceeding with the project, we pondered precisely these doubts, and were, as a matter of fact, the first to raise the basic objection about the present non-existence of Europe, and the question whether, in assuming that common European interests and views did exist and could indeed be identified, we were not mistaking our wishes for reality. We came, however, to the conclusion that, although pitiless realism in analysis is the indispensable basis of politics, "hyper-realism" could be as treacherous as utopianism or ingenuity.

It is neither lack of realism, nor evidence of utopianism or ingenuity, to be convinced that the unification of Europe is a process somehow already under way; that our interests, political and strategic as well as economic, converge more frequently than they diverge; that the idea of a common predicament has been rooted in our common conscience;

that a no longer negligible feeling of frustration is developing over the marginality of our role in world affairs. What is more, forgetting the existence of these powerful driving forces behind the unification "utopia" would be equally naive and dangerous.

The European idea has still to battle against wind and tide; still, in spite of an unending series of summit meetings where the representatives of the nation-States, bound as they are by their respective national constituencies, waste the best of their energy quarrelling on one issue (agriculture) that concerns less than 10 % of their population, progress is visible. And it is all the more significant because it takes place on a multitude of occasions which do not belong to any pre-ordained plan, and which are often imposed on our politicians by external situations of necessity.

We are referring, for example, to developments in Franco-German strategic co-operation after Reykjavik, or to the European Space Agency, (which, as did the British Empire, grew out of almost an act of absent-mindedness) or to the Eureka programme, (which was partly a French reaction to SDI). And we are also referring to the consideration reluctantly paid by the British authorities to the idea of Anglo-French strategic co-operation in the nuclear field.

News of strong resistance to this latter enterprise, especially by the British PM Margaret Thatcher, reach us just as we write, and here we have an ideal example of a political personality, which out of instinct, socio-cultural background, personal inclination, national pride, and electoral conditioning, cannot help but be averse to Europe-oriented choices, and who is nevertheless obliged to co-operate with another equally proud country in a field so delicate for national sovereignty. This is both significant and encouraging. And we find it encouraging precisely because it is one further proof of how the evolution of the world situation is "condemning" the Europeans to overcome their idiosyncrasies, and aim at realistic objectives at least partially similar to those pleaded for by the "utopianism" and "ingenuity" of the fathers of Europeanism.

The purpose of this journal is to study the world situation, associating realism and scholarly analysis, in the assumption that the inhabitants of this "little cape of Asia" could, by approaching the problems they are confronted with as global world issues, i.e. by looking not only beyond the borders of their nation-States, but also beyond those of Western Europe itself, discover that they share common opportunities and similar threats; and that both, opportunities and threats, are such as to advise co-operation rather than competition.

These are the reasons why we believe that a journal such as this is not only a useful task, but indeed a necessity. It seems to us essential to provide a forum to help formulate, present, and disseminate European points of view on world affairs. The simple passing of time will not be enough to correct the present stagnation in the process of integration. To help the Europeans free themselves from their hereditary nationalist reflexes, it will be necessary to change the agenda of today's debates, from petty domestic (i.e. inter-European) quarrels to grand world issues.

The personality of a child does not appear until it measures itself against the surrounding environment. Similarly, the best way of realizing our European identity is to look at phenomena which affect and involve all the powers, countries, populations, cultures and religions of the world.

To look at the outside world in order to perceive ourselves as Europeans might seem contradictory. In fact, it is rather like sailing westwards to reach the East. But wasn't it just this apparently paradoxical choice which led three fifteenth century caravelles — much more fragile than those Europe is able to launch today — to revolutionize the face of the earth and initiate what our history books call the modern age?