



τὸ διαλεκτικόν

Final Text of the XXIIIrd Ordinary General Assembly Turin, 27 February – 1 March 1998

“A PEACE THAT DOES NOT HAVE WAR AS AN ALTERNATIVE”: THE CASE OF EUROPE

For its XXIIIrd plenary session, the General Assembly of the Société Européenne de Culture met from 27 February to 1 March 1998 in Turin, as a guest of a Town and a Region, the Piedmont, that reaffirm their European vocation with a conviction that translates itself in very persuasive initiatives.

Faithful to its statutory task of a reflection – to always take up again in the light of actual events – on the compelling objectives of the politics of culture at the national and international levels, the Société has again interrogated itself on Europe, the Europe of today that meanders toward the XXIst century in a progressive movement of integration. It has posed the substantial foundations of a debate to pursue **on the case of Europe** relative to a **“peace that does not have war as an alternative”**. This in attributing to that expression the meaning given by its author, the founder of the Société, of a state other than an interval between two wars, a state that presumes radical changes in the reigning order of the international scene.

By comparison with the years of the Cold War, when that tension toward that state appeared as an absolute duty for the forces of culture, the post-bipolar period that we are living today has removed from the foreground the risk of a general conflagration. This is what allows us to grant a new priority to the mass of other problems that weigh on the communities, and even harass them.

According to the contributions of the rapporteurs and participants, attention has been drawn to organized violence and terrorism, whose destructive acts continue to escalate. Facing the explosive potential of conflicts in the Balkanic regions, some have emphasized the isolation in which the will to understanding and going beyond have been abandoned. In the interior of a vast complex of questions tied to the economy, a special place has been reserved to the problem of labour that the post-industrial society is called upon to confront through avenues unknown until today, when it is a question to innovate the notion itself of work.

Elements that undergird the construction of a pacified Europe have been underlined in evidence, such as the enlargement and the evolution of NATO; the rapprochement of Russia and the Occident; the vigilance concerning democratic principles in the interior of the European Union; factors of aggregation of a single currency; the role of “an institutionalised auto-control”, and then the contribution of ecumenical efforts.

Considering the question posed through the determining reality of international relations, it has seemed difficult to arrive to an unambiguous response. That the politics of the powers today finds its advantage in concertation constitutes a precious condition, rather than in itself an answer to the search for an order that would insure an irreversible peace. Whatever it is, Europe is in motion. We live in a period of transition that confers a character of necessity and great urgency to the politics of culture as a resolute commitment, actively orienting forces of good will toward the stakes of peace and authentic justice, as the present historical moment defines and demands them.

Finally it remains to render explicit that at this historical junction, which is also that of the growing global interdependence, the tension toward peace without an alternative could not limit itself to Europe, that would then be perceived in its sole dimension as a new subject of a traditional power equilibrium. To place “war outside of history” – that is even more than outlawing it – there could not be limits to solidarity.

In its extraordinary session, the Assembly approved the XIVth edition of the statutes, including formal adjustments required by Italian law.

By acclamation, it elected as International Vice-Presidents the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea and the French economist Henri Bartoli, and the Senator Giovanni Pieraccini has become a Counsellor.

Turin, 1st March 1998