

Altiero Spinelli

Altiero Spinelli died in Rome on 23 May. He was 79.

A dedicated anti-fascist, he was imprisoned for ten years and kept under house arrest for six years during the Mussolini regime. He was expelled by the Italian Communist Party in 1937. In 1941, from the island in the Tyrrhenian Sea on which he was confined, Spinelli issued his Ventotene Manifesto, the European federalist statement which was to be the ideological and philosophical basis for all his later life and work.

On his release in 1943 he founded the European Federalist Movement in Milan and was its Secretary-General from 1948 to 1962.

After serving as Pietro Nenni's adviser at the Italian Foreign Ministry in 1968 and 1969, Spinelli was appointed Member of the Commission of the European Communities in 1970, where he held special responsibility for industrial affairs (and, in his first term, research and technology). He resigned from the Commission in 1976 upon his election to the Italian Chamber of Deputies as an independent on a Communist Party list. He was at once designated a member of the European Parliament too, and when Parliament was first elected by direct universal suffrage in 1979 he was returned as an elected member, retaining his seat at the second direct elections in 1984.

Altiero Spinelli was concerned that the directly elected Parliament should now adopt a grand design, commensurate with its role, and that it should be identified with that design. The idea of an elected Parliament that would be a constituent assembly, which he had championed as a militant federalist, was an idea to which Spinelli would seek to give substance as a member of the European Parliament.

And so began the long and single-minded campaign which saw him form the Crocodile Club in the newly elected House, secure well-nigh unanimity in setting up the Institutional Affairs Committee and finally serve as the Committee's general rapporteur. This constant endeavour was ultimately rewarded when at the beginning of 1984 Parliament adopted the draft Treaty of European Union by an overwhelming majority.

So limited was the Single European Act concluded by the Governments that Altiero Spinelli continued until the end formulating new ideas that would keep the objectives of the draft Treaty always before us and reaffirm Parliament's role as the key to a federal Europe.



Altiero SPINELLI

Born 31 August 1907 in Rome

- 1924-1927 Studied law at the University of Rome; clandestine anti-fascist activities as one of the leaders of the Communist youth movement
- 1927-1943 Sentenced by the Special Tribunal for conspiracy against the State (10 years imprisonment and 6 years house arrest); left the Communist party in 1937; freed after the fall of Mussolini
- 1943-1945 Founded the European Federalist Movement in Milan in August 1943; took part in Resistance in Milan as a member of the Political Secretariat of the North Italy Action Party; organised first International Federalist Conferences (July 1944 in Geneva - February 1945 in Paris)
- 1945-1946 Member of the National Political Secretariat of the Action Party
- 1948-1962 Secretary-General of the European Federalist Movement (E.F.M.) in Italy; member of the Executive Bureau and Delegate General of the European Federalist Union (E.F.U.) in Paris
- 1952-1954 Worked with Messrs Monnet, Spaak and de Gasperi on the establishment of a European political community
- 1956-1962 International campaign for a Congress of the European People (C.E.P.) composed of delegates appointed by direct election
- 1962-1966 Visiting professor at the Bologna centre of the School for Advanced International Studies of John Hopkins University
- 1966 Director of the Institute of International Affairs (I.A.I.); Director of the revue "Lo spettatore internazionale"; Member of the Study Centre of the Olivetti Foundation, of the Council of the London Institute for Strategic Studies and of the management committee of the revue "Il Mulino".
- 1 July ~~1967~~
1970 Member of the Commission of the European Communities

During his period of deportation on the island of Ventotene during the war wrote, in collaboration with Ernesto Rossi, the "Manifest for a free and united Europe" and his first essays on European federalism (Problems of European federation - From sovereign States to the United States of Europe) in addition to numerous works devoted to European problems.

