

# The Federale State of the Communities.

## Work, culture and democracy in the Adriano Olivetti thought

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*"The communitarian opinion on the planning problem refers to its own ideological premises: the manifestation of a civilization of culture. Being civilization synthesis of ethic, aesthetic, economical, scientific values, any civilization can pursue its accomplishment without an essential condition: the coordination, the establishing of an authority able to achieve the operation of synthesis or organic fusion of the numerous activities which ceaselessly modify the society form still subject, for its incompleteness, to transformation of major amplitude."* (Adriano Olivetti, *Società Stato Comunità*. Edizioni di Comunità, 1952, *La forma dei piani*, pag 73)

If what above mentioned by Adriano Olivetti at the beginning of the chapter on "the form of plans" of his book dated 1952 (which recalls some thematic of his most important work "The political order of the Communities", published for the first time by Nuove Edizioni Ivrea in 1945), with particular reference to the need to organically consider the various activities which characterize a territory in order to accomplish its planning, had received more attention by the governing responsables, starting from the elected persons responsible for the Commons guidance, for the intermediate institutions and Regions, perhaps the polarization of the territory in the medium and big cities would have been inferior and, consequently, minor would have been the abandon and decadence of the smaller cities, the city planning should be the method and instrument to build "cities people oriented" and not as often happens to legitimate the speculation, people would not be eradicated from their own territory nor overwhelmed by technologies in fast development which condition and dim the human relationships.

The gathering of people in the medium and big cities and therefore the abandonment of the small centres is faced reducing the concept of territory planning to the discipline of dwelling areas expansion.

What is the meaning of a regulatory planning of a small centre, for instance a mountain centre (but not only), if is not dealt with, in a wider territorial concept, including more towns, the problem of the economic growth and of the necessary infrastructures for mobility and service, so that not to induce the abandonment of the originating community by the citizens, forced to reach every day the

big urban agglomerated to work, without creating new human relationship and progressively abandoning those of the community of reference?

The birth of mountain communities, at the beginning of the seventies of last centuries, has institutionalized the decline process of the small mountain villages because they have been closed in their mountainous feature, being separated from the developing territories in plains (at that time) and relegated as dormitories.

A systematic approach to the problems of the hilly areas and those of the plain areas, with the identification of a *concrete community* (an area of common living, people oriented), would have allowed a different sizing of the factories and a higher attention to the agricultural production and to the environment safeguard (should be examined in depth the experience of the industrial areas development and of the nucleus of industrialization of the Cassa del Mezzogiorno in the fifties and sixties of the former century. In this framework should be again read the event of the Matera Stones and of the village "La Martella": an attempt of Adriano Olivetti to face the problem of the underdeveloped communities of Mezzogiorno taking into account the history, the needs and people aspiration).

The identification of a unified territory framework, intermediate among the belonging Commons and the Regions, finalized to the organic planning which could consider at the life needs of citizens, is the central theme for a real and effective territorial and institutional order. The government in such a territorial framework should be consistent, carried out by a sole institutional subject characterized by the popular consent and by the competence through mechanisms of election and selection of the governing class (in order to govern a world which changes with the speed and complexity which we daily witness, is certainly not sufficient the universal and direct suffrage).

The abolishment of the Provinces as institutional subjects constituting the Republic (Art. 114 of the Constitution) makes even more difficult to face the problem of the multitude of the small Commons and the polarization of the territory in the medium and big cities. With the national law 7 April 2014, n. 56, the need of an

intermediate entity (the *Union of Commons*) has been acknowledged, but has been increased the danger of the multiplication of instrumental sectorial subjects, through which will be impossible governing the territory.

With the same national law above mentioned a discipline of the metropolitan cities has been created, that where established, take the Province place with the denomination of main administrative cities and worsening the trend of the territory polarization.

Furthermore, will be called into question the role of the Regions in whose framework the metropolitan cities have been instituted.

Adriano Olivetti's proposal, through *'L'ordine politico delle comunità*, of a new institutional order, foresaw the *Community as a basic cell of a Federal State*: "the name of Federal has been chosen because to this will correspond a system of decentralization and autonomy based on the Region and on the Community" (*L'ordine Politico delle Comunità*, 1945, pag 15).

*"Once created the Region, the Province becomes a decentralized authority too extended'. Remarkably increasing the Provinces number, abolishing the role of the Prefect, and assigning to such administrative entity a greater autonomy and wider powers, it will be possible to conceive the Community to which are assigned coordination function, which cannot be entrusted to the Commons."*

*The inadequacy of the Common as a base-cell of the social organisms is even more evident once bestowing functions of control and participation to socialized enterprises (demand that surely shall be fulfilled within the local autonomies):*

- a) *because having variable measures only the big Commons could establish administrative tools adequate for this task;*
- b) *because the big Commons, a part from rare cases, do not constitute economic unities but heterogeneous complex where easily the most important interests will prevail;*
- c) *because the integration among city and countryside, essential element for a new society, will be very difficult where missing a united administration including both agricultural commons and fully urbanized centres. The Region is too vast for such a task;*
- d) *also the Community is not and organism economically homogeneous. But within it, for its limited size, the interests can be easily harmonized" (pag. 34).*

*"The Community is the elementary nucleus of a State that wants to maintain a certain level of culture and values which could be lost is it would assume the features of a completely autonomous entity" (pag. 36).*

The common living area, the concrete community of Adriano Olivetti should have the optimal territorial dimension to organize and manage the main problems that are set for a people community, with reference not only to the traditional services, also to work, giving birth to a social economic layout not dominated by the financial interests.

*"At the community Province level, the concrete Province, it will be possible to overcome at the same time the limitations of the small commons and those of the big cities, creating an organic decentralization conceived for the human being, in harmony with the nature and where to better separate the living areas from the working ones". (Adriano Olivetti, *Città dell'uomo*, Edizioni di Comunità - Torino, 2001, pag. 19).*

The *concrete community* of Adriano Olivetti would be a consequence of the downsizing of the 100 Italian Provinces (giving birth to many *small Provinces*) in order to define territorial settings and resulting new institutions, rooted in the tradition and history and able to face the problems related to progress (cultural, scientific, economic and social), placing the *human person* at the centre of the attention.

The *small provinces* will not abolish the small Commons, which will become basic nucleus of democracy, and that would be sized (with reference to the territory and the population) as optimal territorial settings for the organization and management of the several services (integrated hydrological service, waste management, sanitary and social services, transportation, education): **one territory** (the *small province* or *concrete community*), **one government**.

For the big cities, the articulation in municipalities should be associated with adequate measures which can allow the management of the municipalities problems in a framework of a general reference to the city, defining which will be the task of the subjects designated to the rule of the municipality.

The vertical articulation of the institutions, with a specific obligation for each territorial level in order to avoid overlapping of competences and multiplication of functional subjects, from the Common to the Community to the Region to the Nation: the *federal State* should be created by means of a direct election of the citizens (*territorial principle*) and by means of the political orders (*functional principle*) according which the government of the public system can be organized.

In order to face the problems of the surroundings of the medium and big cities, it is necessary to proceed together with the definition of a plan of a *vast area*, beyond the borders of those cities, with the finality of giving origin to development processes spread on the territory and not concentrated in the urbanized areas (the Region should be the institutional subject for the creation of such plan) from one side; from the other side, would be necessary to proceed to the articulation of a urban agglomeration (the *metropolitan city*) in *community* (*municipalities* within the city, Unions among the minor Commons within the metropolitan city) so that to proceed to an organic resettlement of the whole territory taking into accounts the characteristic of each *community*.

Adriano Olivetti, was for a decade (up to his death, occurred on the 27th February 1960) the President of the National Institute of Urbanistic / INU. In that period, in

Italy, very intense was the cultural and political debate relevant to the development subjects (with reference not only to the Mezzogiorno, but also to the cities expansions characterized by production settlements which were causing significant migratory processes).

The Canavese, an area around Ivrea, principal headquarter of Ing. C. Olivetti & C, was the area (the community) where a process of widespread development in the territory (not only factories, economy but also services and culture) was experimented.

Recall that experience, supported by the knowledge of the institutional proposals of *L'ordine politico delle Comunità* by Adriano Olivetti, could be useful to face the demanding problems of our time (abandoning of the small centres, degradation of the urban outskirts, waste of the territory, migratory phenomenons) which, at least partially, are a consequence of the absence of a political strategy founded on the necessary consistency to the problematics of escape and to those of new resettling.

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