Abstracts and keywords

Giacomo Demarchi, *La tecnica giuridica al servizio della diplomazia e della cultura (inter)parlamentare: le riflessioni di Miguel Cuevas y Cuevas*

How far and in what ways can jurists become ambassadors of democracy by their actions? This was one of the most complex questions that Western legal culture sought to answer between the two world wars. It was an even more difficult question when one considers the major transformations that parliamentary rule of law had to face at the end of the First World War. The aim of this essay is to reflect on how legal technique became a tool at the service of comparative constitutionalism through the reflections and biographical events of Miguel Cuevas, member of the technical secretariat of the Spanish Congress of Deputies and forgotten protagonist of the constituent laboratory of the Second Spanish Republic.

Kewords: Council of Europe; European Integration; European Historiography; Strasbourg; Democracy; Rule of Law; Human Rights.

Serena Mocci, *«Noi abbiamo creato la schiavitù, e la schiavitù genera il pregiudizio»: Lydia Maria Child, abolizionismo statunitense e razzismo nella costruzione dell'impero della libertà*

The essay examines the antislavery thought of U.S. writer and activist Lydia Maria Child, aiming to highlight a distinctive dimension of American abolitionism: its ongoing negotiation with racial fractures that continued to structure American society, even in contexts – such as the Northern states – where slavery had been formally abolished. Drawing on primary sources, particularly An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans (1833), alongside her minor essays, children's literature, and correspondence, the first section reconstructs Child's critique of U.S. institutions, which from their inception had embedded slavery as a structural component of the national project, exacerbating the division between North and South, consolidating the power of slaveholding states, and creating conditions for the persistence of racial hierarchies even in nominally free regions. The second section focuses on Child's reflections on racism, conceived as a direct product of the slave system. It demonstrates how discrimination and inequality in the Northern states were closely linked to the political and social structures designed to sustain slavery, while also showing how Child employed abolitionist children's literature as a pedagogical instrument to challenge and dismantle these prejudices among young white readers. The third section explores Child's critical engagement with the American Colonization Society, an organization established with the stated goal of relocating freed African Americans to Africa, but which, in practice, reinforced racism by presuming the impossibility of coexistence between Black and white

populations within the United States. From this vantage, Child's Atlantic perspective extended beyond Africa to include Haiti and the Caribbean, where slave revolutions and the creation of Black republics posed a fundamental challenge to the racial foundations of the American Republic. Through the study of Child's work, racism in the Northern states serves as an interpretive lens to reveal how the U.S. abolitionist movement was not merely a series of political and moral campaigns against slavery, but also a critical laboratory in which the contradictions of U.S. universalism were interrogated, exposing the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion embedded in the political culture on which American democracy was constructed.

Kewords: Lydia Maria Child; abolizionismo statunitense; donne abolizioniste; schiavitù; razzismo; storia degli Stati Uniti.

Rocco W. Ronza, *Human rights, state sovereignty, and national self-determination: notes on the 1946 Smuts-India controversy at the UN.*

The debate between the idealists and realists' views of the United Nations is partly a reflection of the fact that the Charter of the UN originally committed the organization to three, potentially conflicting goals: the pursuit of international peace through the protection of the sovereignty of existing states, the defence of individual human rights and the protection of the right of national self-determination. Taking its cue from the new debate among historians on the founding of the United Nations initiated by Mazower (2009), the article offers an analytical narrative of how the relationship between state sovereignty, national self-determination, and human rights has evolved since the launch of President Wilson's Fourteen Points in 1918 until the final dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The 1946 controversy between the South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts and the delegation of then self-governing British colony of India on the application of racial segregation laws to South Africa's minority of Indian origin, at the first session of the UN General Assembly in New York, is presented as the takeoff of the career of the United Nations as a discursive arena where transnational coalitions are formed and the content of the norms on which the international order should be based is contested and redefined. After 1946, the strengthening of nationalist elites in the "Global South" and the convergence with the rise of anti-colonialism in the Western left led to the inclusion of universal suffrage in the concept of "human rights," transforming indigenous majorities into "peoples" collectively entitled to the right to self-determination.

Keywords: United Nations; Human rights; National self-determination; Trusteeship; State sovereignty; South Africa.

Giuseppe De Luca, Hugh Goldsmith, Marcella Lorenzini, *Navigating Global Crises. Unorthodox Monetary Policy, Debt Management and International Institutions in Britain and Italy from WWI to Covid-19*

The paper offers a theoretical and comparative reflection on the importance of historical narratives in interpreting economic crises and informing effective

policy responses. It takes as its foundation four emblematic episodes of extraordinary public spending –World War I, World War II, the Great Depression of 1929, and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 – collectively referred to as Big Fiscal Government Spending (BFGS) episodes. These are used as a lens through which to consider the COVID-19 crisis and explore what lessons past experiences may offer for the present and future. The essay adopts a heterodox, interdisciplinary approach, grounded in critical realism and historical inquiry, and deliberately distances itself from a rigidly orthodox economic framework. Drawing on perspectives from scholars like Harold James and Barry Eichengreen, the text argues that public responses to crises are the outcome of political and institutional choices, rather than deterministic economic laws. Accordingly, historical analysis is not aimed at prescribing a single optimal policy solution, but rather at illuminating a range of potential strategies and outcomes—always sensitive to national specificities, institutional architectures, and the influence of individual leadership. A central section of the paper contrasts orthodox and heterodox responses to crisis. A key insight is that in all four BFGS episodes, breaking with orthodoxy was a common feature: from the creation of new monetary instruments and direct central bank financing of war deficits, to expansive fiscal policies, bailouts, and off-balance-sheet solutions. International institutions are considered both as guardians of orthodoxy and, at times, as enablers of unconventional approaches during critical junctures. In the case of COVID-19, the author argues that the decision by governments to shut down economies in order to protect public health marked a dramatic departure from market-driven logic, underlining the centrality of public action. War metaphors are used not merely rhetorically, but analytically, to underscore how debt and public spending take on a different meaning in exceptional circumstances. The analogy with wartime economies supports the idea that public debt incurred to meet existential threats should not be treated as ordinary fiscal burdens. The essay concludes with the view that economics cannot be reduced to technical management of abstract systems – it must also be understood as a historically grounded social science. Crises do not demand uniform solutions, but rather call for learning, and courageous unorthodox political decision-making. Historical examples offer up a range of possible policy actions faced with global crises that are wider than economists in thrall to today's orthodoxies may care to acknowledge.

Keywords: Global economic crises; 20th-21st cc; Unorthodox fiscal policies; Metanarrative; Critical realism; International institutions.