

The intellectual? Let him do his job! The Crisis? Hopefully it will lead to a new conception of the social structure globally. The Unification of Italy? Not only an important historical development, but an indisputable progress. Bureaucracy? I laugh at it but, at the same time, I hope for changes. These are the answers of Andrea Camilleri to the questions of Primo Piano Scala c. Maybe, for once, he is relieved not to talk about his most famous character Salvo Montalbano. In any case this is a truly inspiring interview. And his statement *"I hope that today young people consider themselves as Europeans born in Italy"* reminds us that he has just received a honorary degree in European History at the University "La Sapienza" of Rome. We were wondering why the University had chosen the Sicilian-Italian writer but the answer came straight

from his words during the *lectio magistralis* he gave in that occasion. He spoke about the enlightened Sicily of the XVIII Century, about the Constitution of the Kingdom inspired by Great Britain, about Sicily as the epicenter of the European turmoil, about Mazzini and the Sicilian Clandestine Committee: *when it was a kingdom without a crown. Sicily dreamt a place in Europe.* And at the end of his lecture he came to the conclusion that no authentic unity can exist without a profound and shared ideal (this word he repeated three times) of solidarity and brotherhood. These are the amazing words from an unsuspected pro-European. And what happened then? The European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ms. Maria Damanaki, wrote him a letter in which she blamed Montalbano for enjoying *Novellame*. She claimed that

killing fish before it reaches reproductive age means jeopardising the conservation of fisheries resources. A serious infringement indeed! Was also the European Union infected by that bureaucracy Camilleri has always joked about? We are then waiting for the new EU Regulation on Infringement procedures applying to fictional characters.

After this issue, published in advance of the usual schedule, Telos is going on holiday on the 13th of August, and will be back in September. Enjoy the read!

Mariella Palazzolo

Telos is a member of the FIPRA network

CAMILLERI

THERE IS A LOT TO DO. FOR US ALL.

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Telos: Author, novelist, scriptwriter, man of letters and culture. Is it still possible today, to talk about political commitment and role of the intellectual?

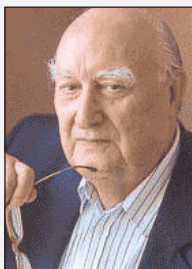
Andrea camilleri: In my very personal opinion, social commitment is innate to the function of the intellectual, but it is an entirely different kind of commitment from that of the politician. It would be better for everyone to stick to their own job. I would say that today more than ever commitment to cohesion should be a duty of all citizens, Italians as well as Europeans, no matter what their individual activities are.

Lately, a joke has circulated, not only in Italy: the best thing about 2011 is that maybe it was better than 2012. Yet, in 2011 protest movements of the younger generation, spreading from the Arab spring to the Spanish *Indignados* or to *Occupy Wall Street*, called into question political and economic structures that seemed undisputable during the period of growth and prosperity. Can this crisis be an opportunity to give a tangible perspective to the requests for a fairer order?

It depends on how we come out of the crisis, whether overcome or strengthened. My wish is that this crisis, which is world-wide one and everywhere is calling into question the ways national and international economies were managed until now, may lead to a new and different vision of society in every single country and globally. The crisis has already played a positive role insofar as it revealed all the contradictions stemming from an uncontrolled capitalism, that had been hidden over decades and are now to be faced. This is a positive aspect indeed.

Anniversaries, celebrations=boring rhetoric? Still, memory and remembrance force us to ask questions to ourselves. In 2011, 150 years after the proclamation of the Unification of Italy we were left wondering if it still means anything to be Italian. Did you give yourself an answer?

I don't have any answer because I have always considered myself as an Italian born in Sicily and this has always had a great meaning, at least for me, and still does. I hope that today young people consider themselves as Europeans born in Italy. However, the 150th Anniversary of the Unification meant so much to me. Not by chance almost all of my historical novels are placed exactly in the



Andrea Camilleri, after studying in Agrigento and Palermo, was granted a scholarship as Assistant-director at the National Academy of Drama in Rome in 1949. He started collaborating with theatre reviews and wrote, as editor, for the great "Encyclopedia of Performing Arts" edited by Silvio d'Amico. From 1953 onwards he has directed over 120 plays, 80 television programs and over 1000 radio dramas. In 1958 he started working for the National Broadcasting Company (RAI) as a collaborator for drama in the Third Programme, then in 1960 he started working for the Second TV Channel, first as a producer (the first eight comedies of Eduardo De Filippo, the investigations of Inspector Maigret ...) then as a TV director. After teaching "Actor's Direction" to directors of the Experimental Film Centre for five years, he taught Theatre Direction at the "Silvio d'Amico" National Academy of Drama for fifteen years. His first novel was published in 1978. Since then, he has never left literature. He published more than 70 books, including historical and civil novels, detective stories (the series of Inspector Montalbano), essays and fairytales. He sold more than 20 million copies in Italy and as many abroad. Translated in more than 33 languages, Camilleri published three essays on theatre as well. He is married with three daughters and four grandchildren.

time of the Unification of Italy, a specific moment in which we tried to shape a national community, sometimes through the right measures, sometimes through the wrong ones.

Your writings show your contempt for all forms of bureaucracy, an absurd Moloch who oppresses the citizen. Yet, not only the structure of the modern State but also the guarantees for the citizens' rights are based on the robustness of the Public Administration. Is there any possibility that bureaucracy might not always be a synonym with inefficiency?

There must be a reason why from Gogol' to Courteline, the world literature has satirized bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is synonym with quibble, slowness and above all citizen constriction. That is the way I described it in my novels, albeit in an ironic form, since in my opinion it corresponds to a precise undeniable truth. Coming back to Italy, it is not a coincidence that two Ministers from two different Governments suppressed thousands and thousands Regulations without actually affecting the bureaucratic machinery at all. Of course I hope that a real reform of bureaucracy may lead to a more efficient, quick and transparent management of the Public Administration.

Camilleri and ...

... bureaucracy

"The telephone concession is a manifesto against never-changing bureaucracy whose mission seems to be that of complicating people's lives. The idea of writing a novel came to my mind in 1995, when I ran into a concession act of the late XIX century for a private telephone line. Such an absurd amount of duties was required to get the license that I immediately thought it would have been a good topic for a story. The applicant is trapped in the bureaucratic mechanism, from which he tries to get out in some way, involving the mafia, the church, constituted authorities."

...The Thousand, Sicily, the Unification

From the enthusiasm for the Garibaldi's Landing in Sicily to the first difficulties arising from the Unification of Italy: this is what Camilleri describes in "150. The stories of Italy." The Landing of the Thousand, mandatory military draft, Piedmontese prefects and bureaucracy, banditry and repression but also the extraordinary annexation of the island to the Kingdom of Italy and the necessity, in any case, of a new unitary course, these are the topics covered by his narration. He helps us to understand the meaning of being a State, despite differences and problems experienced over one hundred and fifty years.

...what is Europe for us?

"Europe as I see it and Europe as I would like it to be: should it be less economy-centred and more ideally inspired? Does Europe mean just the Euro? Or a Mutual aid agreement among States?"

If it's just that, frankly speaking, such Europe has no bright future ahead. It can inspire no one but the spread fetishists. We should dig into the past, rediscovering the thoughts and lives of those who dreamt about that Europe which now attracts media attention only for its macroeconomic data."