Evola and Nasser

By Claudio Mutti

Continuing a research of which we gave the first results a few years ago in an essay included in our book Avium voces (Edizioni all'insegna del Veltro, Parma 1998, pp. 67-87), in the June issue of the bulletin “La Nazione Eurasia” (special issue for the 30th anniversary of the death of Julius Evola) we published an essay entitled Evola and Islam. From the attempt to reconstruct organically the Aevolian vision of the Islamic tradition resulted a framework which, if it sometimes appears inaccurate in some details and often conditioned by a rather personal perspective, nevertheless constitutes, in the end, a representation inspired by the Aevolian recognition of what Islam is essentially:

To this essay, to which we refer the reader anyway, is attached the present article, which was born from the recent rediscovery of an article by Evola on the "emancipation of Islam", included in the collection I testi del Meridiano d'Italia (Edizioni di Ar, Padova 2003, pp. 217-219).

The article goes back to a time, the 1950s, when Italian fascist circles still kept alive the memory of the philo-Arab and philo-Islamic position assumed by Italy during the Ventennio (1), as well as of the solidarity that during the years of the world conflict had been established between the forces of the Axis and the independence movements of the Muslim world (2). Moreover, the Verona Manifesto, to which a large part of the militants of post-war fascism continued to refer, had indicated among the essential points of the foreign policy of the RSI the "absolute respect for the peoples among the Muslims who , like Egypt, are already civilly and rationally organized”.

And in fact in Egypt, in the 1950s, the revolution of the Free Officers, after having driven out the puppet wren (friend of the traitor and fugitive Savoyard king), proclaimed the republic, abolished the partitocracy, began a vast program of reforms, nationalized the foreign capital, expelled the British from the Suez Canal, refused the functional military alliances of imperialist domination, granted asylum and aid to exiles from the Third Reich, pledged to build a national socialism which, in Nasser's geopolitical perspective of unity of the Arab Nation, should have become a real pan-Arab socialism, based on the spiritual foundations provided by Islam. And when in 1956, following the nationalization of the Suez Canal, Egypt had to face Anglo-Franco-Zionist aggression (3),

Julius Evola, who at the time was actively collaborating with the press organs of the so-called "national alignment", published on March 3, 1957 in the "Meridiano d'Italia" (directed by Franco Maria Servello) an article entitled The Emancipation of Islam is the way to communism (5); the same article, with a few more commas and a few less semicolons, was resubmitted on June 25, 1958 to the readers of the "Roma" of Naples.

Above all, writes Evola, "our national circles", which view with sympathy "the irredentist movements of the Arab peoples and the same Egyptian initiatives", make the mistake of blindly attacking colonialism, "forgetting that yesterday it was linked to the very principle of the hegemony of the white race". Secondly, he continues, “the danger is quite obvious that the so-called independence movements naturally end up in the waters of communism”; and Nasser's Egypt, according to Evola, would be the furthest along this dangerous road. To the positions represented by Nasserism and the other liberation movements of the Muslim world, Evola opposes "orthodox Islam", which, in his opinion, "is still defended by Saudi Arabia and by the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood",

“Quandoque bonus dormitat... Julius” – that would be the case to say, paraphrasing the well-known proverb. On the contrary, the good Evola must really have been sleeping seriously to make assertions of this kind, he who twenty years earlier had developed on the problematic character of the "supremacy of the white race" (6) considerations much deeper and more coherent with the essence of his thought. It is also difficult to understand how Evola could recognize Islamic orthodoxy in a country like Saudi Arabia, governed by a tendency (the Wahabite) which in the whole world of Islam, whether Sunni or Shia, has always been considered as sectarian and heretical by the majority. Moreover, it is really strange that even a researcher like Evola, much more aware than so many others about the backstage of the story, overlooked the fact that Saudi Arabia was born out of the more or less covert operations of England, interested in fomenting Arab nationalism against the Turkey and to secure control over the Arabian Peninsula. As if that were not enough, by the end of the 1950s the Saudi monarchy was a first-rate pawn of the new world imperialism: that of the United States. But Evola – it is cruel to have to remember certain limits of his thought – had established that the capitalist West was, certainly not “from the point of view of ideas”, but rather by a tactical recognition of contingent circumstances, the “least wrong” (7). The main enemy, as we know, for him was communism, which, despite the evidence of the situation configured in Yalta, was seen by many, also in good faith, as a real risk. And the obsession with communism also led him, like so many others, to see the communist danger even where it was not to be found: as, precisely, in Nasser's Egypt, where the communist party was put at risk. index and where its leaders, who generally were Jews, were put out of harm's way!

In the cited article, on the other hand, there appears a point more worthy of consideration, which the author himself considers "essential" and which is formulated in the following terms, underlined in italics: "these same Islamic peoples do not make themselves independent of the West than by becoming Westernized, that is to say by undergoing spiritually and culturally the Western invasion". That is to say, "they emancipate themselves materially only by abandoning to a large extent their own traditions and transforming themselves into more or less imperfect copies of Western states".

Now, if Evola was wrong when he expressed the fear that Westernization would push Muslim countries into the arms of communism, he was on the other hand right when he observed that the political emancipation of colonial Muslim countries was often accompanied by the adoption of cultural elements foreign to Islamic culture.

What Evola failed to see in the panorama of the end of the 1950s was the enormous potential of Islam, which, some twenty years later, would manifest itself in a veritable "awakening" and will have led avant-gardes and Muslim peoples to put aside imported ideologies and to turn once again to the inspiring model of Tradition.

NOTES

(1) On the relationship between fascism and the Islamic world, see Enrico Galoppini, Il Fascismo e l'Islam, Parma 2001.

(2) Cf. Stefano Fabei, Holy War in the Gulf, Parma 1990; Manfredi Martelli, Il Fascio e la Mezzaluna, Rome 2003.

(3) Cf. Gianfranco Peroncini, The Suez War, Parma 1986.

(4) Among those who, in Nasserite national socialism, recognized one of the forms of post-war fascism, there was Maurice Bardèche, from whom we report here some excerpts: “'Raise your head, my brother, because the days of 'humiliation are past'. This phrase, which would have suited the Germany of 1934, was used by Nasser to announce on the walls of Cairo in 1954 the advent of a new era. Twenty years later, another people broke its chains (...) the structure of the Republic of Egypt reproduces the characteristics of the fascist political structure. The Head of State unites in his hands the various powers (...) the political parties are dissolved and contact is maintained with the people through the intermediary of a single party, the National Union. (...) But looking even better, we find in Nasser's regime traits already visible in pre-war fascism. In particular this character of fascism (...) that the inspirer of a fascist movement carries within himself and makes his people carry a certain image of the man who commands a certain image of the world. In all fascism there is a moral and an aesthetic (...) This fascist mystic, Nasser and his friends found it in Islam (...) In the Koran there is something warlike and strong , something manly, something Roman so to speak. This is why Nasser is so well understood by the Arabs; he speaks to them the language that their race speaks in their depths. (M. Bardèche, What is fascism?, The Seven Colors 1962; repr. Pythéas 1995, pp. 121-127).

(5) Repris dans: J. Evola, The texts of the Meridiano d'Italia, Padoue 2002, pp. 217-219.

(6) J. Evola, The problem of the supremacy of the white race, «The State», July 1936; repris dans J. Evola, The State (1934-1943), Rome 1995, pp. 151-160.

(7) J. Evola, Orientations. Eleven points, Padour 2000, p. 24.