Ciao Emma!

I met Emma on the roads of Europe in the autumn of 1976 when I joined the Chamber of Deputies as a parliamentary assistant to Altiero Spinelli; Emma had been elected in July 1976 alongside Marco Pannella, and as we were almost the same age – she born in March 1948 and I in May 1949 –.

In fact, I had already come across her at demonstrations in defence of rights, having joined both the MFE and the Radical Party in the early 1970s; these organisations shared a similar vision of a world governed by non-violence and rights, inspired by the ideas that emerged on Ventotene from the thinking of Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, together with Eugenio Colorni, Ursula Hirschmann and Ada Rossi.

Marco Pannella did not have a good relationship with the group of elected representatives within the PCI whom he sarcastically referred to as '*left-wing employees*', but he never used this epithet in relation to Spinelli, who had distinguished himself from the PCI on at least four European and international issues (the EMS, the Euromissiles, Afghanistan and the Falkland Islands), as I noted in an essay of mine on the relations between Berlinguer and Spinelli published in Spain.

There was, in fact, a mutual affinity between Spinelli and the Radicals, which Altiero demonstrated in 1975 as a European Commissioner at the end of his term of office when he made a surprise appearance at the PR congress in Rome, telling them, "*put a grain of your madness into the European battles*".

From 1976 to 2026 – that is, for a full fifty years – I met Emma on the roads of Europe, and there was between us a deep, I would say almost brotherly, bond that went beyond a shared vision of Europe and the world, despite the differences between her conception of a liberal economy that prioritised the market (albeit governed by European rules) and the priority I place on the social dimension, which I believe that should be the foundation for a fairer society.

In the coming weeks and months, there will be an opportunity to explore Emma's contribution to the history of Italy, Europe and the international arena in greater depth, compiling it into a volume that could be entitled "*Writings in Honour of Emma Bonino*".

I suggest that this be published with the involvement of those who shared her political struggles, and it could serve as essential reading for young people who did not know her.

For my part, I would like to recall, amongst other things, the idea (which remained unimplemented in the endless European archives) of a Euro-Mediterranean Community as a response to the Arab Spring in 2011–2012, our conviction that migration policies must be taken out of the hands of interior ministers, as they have nothing to do with

European internal security; and the idea that a United States of Europe is certainly necessary and urgent, but that its realisation must be freed from the paralysing power of national governments.

I shall miss our weekly phone calls and that deep empathy which we sought to translate into a sort of manual on civic education in the joint interview "*What Do We Need Europe For*" (without a question mark) which we published in 2024 with Marsilio thanks to Giampiero Auletta's insight, Luca Cambi's journalistic expertise and the invaluable suggestions of Corrado Augias and Romano Prodi (LINK).

Bye, Emma!

Rome, 11 September 2026

Pier Virgilio Dastoli