

EUROPE AT THE CROSSROADS¹

The European Union of Federalists and the Process of European Integration, 1946-54

The idea of a federal construction of Europe stretches back many centuries. But it was nationalism and nation state-making which characterised the early stages of modernity, and it was not until the devastating consequences of nationalism became apparent that European federalism was able to inspire significant political forces. The carnage of the First World War, and the break-up of the Habsburg Empire, led directly to Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa Union of 1923. The growth of an ugly form of economic and political nationalism prompted the veteran French Foreign Minister, and eleven times Prime Minister, Aristide Briand to propose a "United States of Europe" in September 1929. Both initiatives were élitist, in that they failed either to seek or to attract widespread popular support. Nevertheless, with the international crisis of the 1930s and after, European federalism began to attract large numbers of committed adherents.

The late 1930s and early 1940s saw a remarkable development of federalist activity in Britain, culminating in Churchill's historic offer of union with France, on the eve of the latter's capitulation to Germany.² Thereafter, federalism declined as an active political force in Britain itself; but the British experience, and British federalist literature, contributed decisively to the resurgence of interest in federalism on the continent. Helmuth von Moltke, the leading figure in the German "Kreisau Circle", was a close personal friend, and much influenced by, Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) and Lionel Curtis. In Italy, Spinelli was similarly attracted to "the polished, precise and anti-doctrinaire thought of the English

federalists ... who proposed to transplant into Europe the great American political experience”.³

As Walter Lipgens has emphasised, most of the Resistance movements in occupied Europe and in Germany itself came to see federalism as the only true solution to the European crisis.⁴ The old nation-states had manifestly failed to provide security. Intergovernmental co-operation through the League of Nations had proved equally brittle and barren. Europe itself looked set, at the end of the war, to fall under the domination of one or both of the newly-emergent superpowers. Above all, as the Italian Resistance news-sheet *Unità Europea* put it in 1944, “the unity of Europe is at this moment a reality”.⁵ Virtually the whole of continental Europe shared the experience of German conquest and occupation, while the Resistance was united in the belief that it was fighting not Germany, but the inevitable excesses of nationalism. Leading figures in the European Resistance, such as Altiero Spinelli, Enzo Giaccherio and Guglielmo Usellini in Italy, Henri Frenay and Pierre de Felice in France, Hendrik (Henri) Brugmans and Henri Nord in the Netherlands, and Eugen Kogon and Ernst Friedlander in Germany, continued to play a major rôle in the European federalist movement after the Second World War.

European federation as an immediate postwar policy was ruled out by Roosevelt and Stalin at Tehran in 1943, and subsequently by General de Gaulle. European nation-states were rebuilt, in what some federalists saw as a Congress of Vienna-style conservative restoration. Immediate and pressing economic problems took priority over every other issue. Visa restrictions made international contact difficult, and in some cases impossible. Nevertheless, the immediate postwar years saw the emergence or re-emergence of federalist movements in most European states, with a vitality and coherence unmatched in prewar years. The

increasing tension between the USSR and the USA in 1946-47 contributed powerfully to their growth, with “third force” ideas temporarily ascendant as a means of Europe escaping the fate of a battleground between the rival superpowers.⁶

The first moves to establish contact and co-ordinate policy between the various federalist movements were made by Spinelli and the Italian Movimento Federalista Europeo during the war. These resulted in the Geneva meetings of the International Conference of Resistance Fighters from March to July 1944, and in the first European Federalist Conference, in Paris in March 1945.⁷ Further initiatives were taken in the summer and autumn of 1946. In Switzerland a new journal, *L'Action Fédéraliste Européenne*, sought to provide regular and informed coverage of European federalist activities.⁸ Another Swiss initiative led to the Hertenstein Conference of September 1946, involving 78 federalists from 13 countries. This conference adopted a 12-point programme envisaging a European Union with a “democratic structure beginning at the base”, and endowed with responsibility for “orderly reconstruction and for economic, social and cultural collaboration”. A new organisation, Action Europa-Union, was set up to co-ordinate the European movements, under the presidency of Henri Brugmans.⁹ A month later, at Luxembourg, a separate conference organised by Britain’s Federal Union brought together 75 federalists from Britain, France, the Netherlands, the United States and eight other countries. There it was agreed to set up two new organisations, the Movement for World Federal Government and the European Union of Federalists. The formidable F.L. (Jo) Josephy, appointed liaison agent for the latter, was also charged with contacting the officers appointed at Hertenstein, with a view to co-ordinating activities.¹⁰ Meetings followed at Basle on 9 December 1946, and at Paris on 15 December. The latter officially instituted the European Union of Federalists¹¹, “open to all European

federalist organisations”, and aiming to create “a united Europe which is ready to enter a world federation”. Brugmans was provisionally elected president, a secretariat was set up in Paris under the veteran federalist Alexandre Marc and a timetable was laid down envisaging an enlarged executive meeting in the Netherlands the following Easter, and a congress in Switzerland in the summer.¹²

I

By the time of its Montreux congress in August 1947, the EUF comprised some 33 member or associated organisations, with a total membership of over 150,000. By the time of its 4th Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle in March 1952, this figure had risen to 36 organisations (around half having joined since 1947, the number of old organisations being reduced by a large number of mergers), with over 200,000 members.¹³ The EUF could thus count on the support of an incomparably larger number of adherents than any of the other transnational federalist groups which emerged in these years, such as the Mouvement Socialiste pour les Etats-Unis d’Europe, the (Christian Democrat) Nouvelles Equipes Internationales, or Coudenhove-Kalergi’s European Parliamentary Union. Member organisations ranged from the relatively large Movimento Federalista Europeo in Italy, Europa-Union in Germany and Switzerland, and La Fédération (merged in the Union Française des Fédéralistes) in France, through the medium-sized Federal Union in Britain and Beweging voor Europese Federalisten in the Netherlands, to tiny groups such as the Föreningen Europa Union in Sweden and the various exile groups such as the Mouvement Fédéraliste Basque, or the Groupement Roumain pour l’Europe Unie. (The latter, especially through its president Grégoire Gafenco and its secretary Gabriel Badarau, was in fact influential out of all proportion to its size within the EUF).

The basic structure of the EUF, from 1947 to 1959, gave ultimate authority to its Congress, which met seven times during these twelve years. Delegates to the Congress were chosen by the various constituent organisations, their mandates proportional to the size of the organisation, but with a complicated system of weighting reflecting national population, membership in proportion to national population, and the number of national organisations. Between Congresses, authority was wielded by a Central Committee of some 50-70 members, roughly one-third chosen by national organisations, the other two-thirds elected by the Congress by means of proportional representation. The Central Committee in turn elected an Executive Bureau of 12-15 members, and a full-time Secretary-General (later also a full-time deputy and unpaid treasurer and special delegates).

The early EUF was, as Marc emphasised, “a union of federalists *in* Europe and not *for* Europe”.¹⁴ At least four distinct groups can be discerned in the early years. First, there were the “mondialists”, those who believed in world federation. These included a majority of Federal Unionists in Britain (but, notably, not Josephy), and a significant number of federalists in Denmark and Sweden. Second, there were the “integral”, “personalist” or Proudhonian federalists, often more interested in the reconstruction of society along corporatist or communitarian lines (by means of federal devolution and a political system representing trade unions, professional organisations and other social groups) than in building a European federation. The personalists included a significant proportion of French federalists, and were prominent also in Switzerland. Third, there were the “constitutional” federalists, calling for the creation of a European federal state by means of a deliberate constitutional act: strongest in Italy, but also present in all other countries. Finally, increasingly differentiated from the latter, especially after the creation of the first European institutions from 1949 onwards, there were the “gradualist” or “possibilist”

federalists, sharing the same concern for political institutions, but willing to see federation grow out of initially limited functional integration: again a group present in all countries, but strongest especially in Germany and the Netherlands.

The existence of such diverse strands of federalism helped the EUF in one sense, by broadening its range of arguments, widening its appeal, and allowing it to present federalism as the logical response to a number of different - social, cultural, moral, as well as economic and political - problems. On the other hand, the EUF's federalist diversity was also a burden, in that it forced the movement to waste valuable time and energy on factional in-fighting.

The personalist group was initially dominant within the EUF. It in turn was split between a more radical wing under Alexandre Marc, Claude-Marcel Hytte and Denis de Rougemont, and a more conservative wing under André Voisin, Louis Salleron and Bertrand de Jouvenel (the latter wing associated with the prewar Action Française, and compromised by collaboration with the Vichy régime¹⁵). The radical wing bequeathed the EUF a longstanding commitment to federal decentralisation and regionalism, and enabled it to build important links with local governments, trade unions and other community bodies. The conservative wing led to periodic attempts to suggest non-democratic or corporatist structures for the new Europe: a European "Estates-General" rather than a European Parliament. Both wings gave rise to misgivings amongst more empirically-minded federalists. As Josephy commented after the Montreux Congress,

“at times the theoretical implications of Federation seemed to get far away from the immediate objective and from immediate necessities The word ‘Action’ seemed unfortunately absent As one delegate said, if all the people who spoke at the Conference would get one fresh supporter for

the cause of Federation for every minute they spoke, Federation would soon be in the realms of a popular movement”.¹⁶

The Montreux Congress was, in fact, both the personalists’ high-point and their swan-song. By the time of the 2nd Congress, in Rome in November 1948, their “social” interpretation was definitely subordinated to a more practical and “political” programme.

The mondialists were similarly more influential in the very early stages of the EUF than they were soon to be. In part this can be explained by the Luxembourg decision to create two parallel organisations, inevitably channelling mondialist energies into the more expansive world organisation. In part, also, it can be explained by the very vagueness and impracticality of mondialist ideas. Having inserted a mondialist commitment into the EUF’s principles at Luxembourg and Montreux, there seemed little else that could be done. Above all, however, the mondialists’ decline must be attributed to the increasingly dominating fact of the Cold War, and the impossibility of creating a world organisation which included both the USA and the USSR.

The Cold War similarly ruled out the idea of a European “third force”, and forced the EUF to concentrate on the integration of western Europe. At Hertenstein, Brugmans was one of the most forceful advocates of a European “third way”. A year later, at Montreux, he proposed the formula “without Eastern Europe for the time being, but never against Eastern Europe”.¹⁷ By the time of the 2nd (Rome) Congress in November 1948, he was now definitely anti-Soviet, denouncing Communism as “pure statism”.¹⁸ Thereafter, the EUF’s shift was complete; indeed, the Soviet threat, and America’s supposed insistence that she would only continue to play a full rôle in Europe if the Europeans themselves

united to provide a strong pillar for NATO, became an essential part of the EUP's arguments.¹⁹

Another issue which was resolved relatively early, although in this case more contentiously, was the position of Britain in any European federation. This had been one of the most heated issues at the Amsterdam meeting of April 1947. There, the Italian representative, Milo di Villagrazia, asserted flatly that Britain would not join, whereas Josephy and others argued "that there could never be a true European federation without Britain".²⁰ Another Italian representative, Count Nicolò Carandini (former Italian Ambassador in London), again raised the issue at the Rome Congress in November 1948, citing Britain's different wartime experience, her ties to the Commonwealth, and the fact that the benefits for Britain from Europe would be "most uncertain", to argue that European integration "cannot be a reflection of British policy".²¹ Similarly, Brugmans argued that the whole culture of Britain was different. A book like Gaston Riou's *Europe, ma Patrie* would be inconceivable there. "That which for us is a faith, for the English will be at most a policy." Brugmans suggested a double conclusion:

“ - on the one hand, we cannot endeavour to win over England here and now to an integral, federal European constitution, to take or leave;
- on the other hand, we must take a position against the policy of the ostrich”.²²

The Rome Congress resolved that "special clauses" should be found to associate Britain with Europe, to prevent her being faced with "a choice which could be fatal to the Commonwealth and even to Europe".²³ The 3rd Congress, at Strasbourg in November 1950, heard from the Secretary-General that it was "necessary to go ahead without England", and resolved that a European federation should proceed "with those states already disposed to adhere".²⁴

II

During the very early years of the EUF, certain fundamental elements in its political programme and orientation were thus still in process of clarification. Nevertheless, it is easy to over-estimate the problems caused by divergent conceptions, and to under-estimate the strength derived from a plurality of arguments pointing in the same direction.²⁵ Indeed, the EUF was able to move forward on several fronts at once, and to cite a wide range of arguments pointing in favour of federalism. Thus, European federalism was put forward variously as the means of decentralisation and of enhancing human dignity, as a step towards world federation, as the means of overcoming the Cold War division of Europe or as an element in the strengthening of the American alliance, as a solution to the problem of Germany (including the question of the unification of the three Western zones, the disposal of the Saar and the Ruhr, and the provision of a framework of German rearmament), and as a means of enhancing and accelerating European economic recovery. Social, cultural, political and economic factors were woven together and mobilised in support of the European idea.

Above all, the EUF derived a large amount of coherence from the constitutional approach of both the Italian maximalists and the Dutch and German possibilists, which provided common ground for the various EUF groupings, and the core of its common policy. Even at the Montreux Congress, when the personalists were relatively ascendant, the policy resolution reflected more directly political concerns:

“Part of the sovereignty of states must be conferred on a federalist authority, possessing the following essential features:

1. a government responsible towards individuals and groups and not towards the federated states;
2. A Supreme Court capable of resolving any differences between member-states of the federation;
3. An armed police force, placed under its control, and charged with ensuring respect for ... federal decisions ...”.²⁶

Similarly, a widely-circulated EUF pamphlet, *Pour Bâtir l'Europe*, later recognised as a founding document of the movement, placed foremost amongst its desiderata the creation of a European federal government, endowed with powers over defence, foreign policy, certain aspects of the economy and monetary policy, and taxation.²⁷ The modalities of such a government were discussed in a series of Central Committee, Executive Bureau and working group meetings over 1947-48, with the result that a large amount of agreement was found on the principles underlying federation. There was also, by the time of a Central Committee meeting at Paris in October 1947, broad agreement that a European federation would have to be created by a constituent assembly, and that the EUF's primary task should therefore be to campaign for such an assembly.²⁸

The formation of the EUF coincided almost exactly with Churchill's famous Zurich speech of 19 September 1946. The initial attitude of most EUF members was one of critical endorsement: endorsement because it was recognised that Churchill's intervention would lift the question of European unity onto a different political plane, critical because Churchill's implicit approval of the politics of blocs was rejected, and because his appreciation of the means towards European unity was regarded as vague and insufficient.²⁹ The EUF at first attempted to incorporate Churchill's United Europe Committee and the parallel Conseil Français pour l'Europe Unie.³⁰ When this failed, the EUF willingly joined these

two organisations, the Ligue Indépendante de Coopération Européenne and the Christian-Democrat Nouvelles Equipes Internationales, to form the Comité International de Coordination des Mouvements pour l'Unité Européenne, and to organise the Hague Congress of 7-10 May 1948.

The EUF worked closely with federalist colleagues in the Conseil Français, the LICE and the NEI (many of them also members of the EUF) to ensure that the Hague Congress was not overly-dominated by the British Conservatives' "unionist" (i.e. intergovernmental) point of view.³¹ The latter's attempts at centralising the various European bodies were rejected,³² and the EUF canvassed widely for a distinctive federalist programme, including the following points:

1. the creation of a new European body by the "transfer of certain parts of national sovereignties", exercising a "real authority";
2. a Europe open to further adherents, and not a closed "bloc";
3. government";
4. the creation of European institutions to pool and control railways, coal and steel, Alpine hydro-electricity, etc.;
5. creation of a "European Atomic Authority";
6. co-ordination of foreign and colonial policy by means of "permanent official committees", such that "at international meetings, the family of European states will present as far as possible a common front, in economic policy as much as in diplomacy";
7. creation of a "European Armed Force";
8. judicial machinery for the protection of the rights of man.³³

The Hague Congress has been seen by some writers as a great setback for the federalist movement. While recognising the limitations of what was achieved, the EUF saw it quite differently, citing the Congress's expressed support for

many of its policies, and suggesting that without pressure from the federalists the Congress would have achieved little.³⁴ This interpretation is borne out by comparison of the ‘federalist’ and ‘unionist’ positions before the Congress with the Congress’s actual outcome.³⁵

After the Hague Congress, the EUF continued to play a full part in the Joint International Committee of Movements for European Unity (the European Movement), and especially in the deliberations which led to its report on a Consultative Assembly of January 1949. The EUF prompted the European Movement into last-minute interventions to modify the Brussels Pact powers’ proposals for a European Assembly, which eventuated in the Treaty of Westminster establishing the Council of Europe, in May 1949.³⁶

Relations between the EUF and the European Movement were never smooth, with EUF complaints of undemocratic and unrepresentative structures in the European Movement, “unionist” attempts to use the Movement as a cover for negative attitudes towards European integration, and a general paralysis and inability of the Movement with respect to further moves towards integration.³⁷ Matters came to a head in November 1950, following the European Movement’s endorsement of the anti-federalist pronouncements of certain of its members, prompting a temporary suspension of relations.³⁸ The EUF returned, and was in fact able to move the Movement towards support for a Constituent Assembly and Federal Pact.³⁹ Nevertheless, the “political confusion which has always characterised the meetings of the European Movement” soon returned,⁴⁰ and the EUF broke off all relations with the Movement from 1961 to 1965.

Proof that the European Movement was acting as an “arrière-garde” rather than an “avant-garde” was provided at the time of the first meeting of the Council of

Europe's Consultative Assembly in September 1949. Then, on the very day before the Assembly voted the Mackay-Philip resolution in favour of a political authority "entrusted with limited functions but real powers", the Movement's Executive Committee had rejected a motion in exactly similar terms.⁴¹

The Consultative Assembly's Mackay-Philip resolution prompted a certain amount of enthusiasm in EUF circles. From the Hague Congress onwards, the EUF recognised "the more and more important rôle which 'official' political milieux will play".⁴² The Mackay-Philip resolution appeared to show that the Consultative Assembly "may be capable of realising the hopes which are placed in it".⁴³ Nevertheless, the EUF recognised the constitutional limitations on the Assembly's powers, and the political obstacles towards progress by means of purely intergovernmental negotiation. In particular, there was a danger that, without popular pressure from without, the intergovernmental process would lead to the creation of a "technocracy", with real powers but lacking effective political control.⁴⁴

At an extraordinary general assembly, at Paris at the end of October 1949, the EUF debated the options before the movement. The division between moderate and radical constitutionalists became apparent there for the first time. Brugmans and H.R. Nord both argued for the efficacy of the Strasbourg approach, insisting that the Consultative Assembly could be the germ of a European federation, and suggesting development especially in the economic sphere, by means of the limited transfer of sovereignties.⁴⁵ Spinelli, on the other hand, rejected the Strasbourg approach, and called instead for a massive popular campaign in favour of a Federal Pact, along lines which he had already circulated earlier in the year.⁴⁶ The assembly swung more towards Spinelli than Brugmans, and agreed to launch a campaign to "obtain in the form of a petition or any other imaginable

form, the written adherence of the greatest number of men and women or of organisations to the idea of a Federal Pact, to be concluded between European states”. Nevertheless, at this stage, it was still envisaged that the Consultative Assembly might be responsible for drawing up such a pact, and might, by modification of its constitution and powers, perform the functions of a Constituent Assembly.⁴⁷

The strategy adopted by the EUF envisaged a massive campaign on many different levels, including the organisation of an international committee of patrons; agitation at the national level by means of delegations, parliamentary debates and conferences; local meetings and study days, aimed at securing the support of academics, mayors, social organisations, etc.; a press campaign explaining the motives and significance of a pact; and widespread distribution of leaflets, pamphlets and tracts. The campaign was, necessarily, to be run by the EUF’s member organisations, and it was explicitly recognised that the modalities of the campaign would have to be different in different communities; but the campaign was given a coherent direction by the appointment of Spinelli as delegate-general, and assurances of support were received from the French and German, as well as Italian, national movements.⁴⁸

The EUF campaign got off to a good start. The Mouvement Socialiste pour les Etats-Unis d’Europe (now a constituent member of the European Movement) and the Nouvelles Equipes Internationales were persuaded to support the idea of a Federal Pact at special congresses. With support also from the Conseil Français, the federalists even managed to pass a resolution at the Executive Committee of the European Movement, ditching a watered-down “unionist” proposal, and incorporating much of the EUF’s draft.⁴⁹ Some 150 leading politicians, journalists, academics and cultural figures were persuaded to join the

International Committee of Patronage.⁵⁰ A Conseil des Peuples d'Europe, also described as the Conseil Européen de Vigilance was set up under Voisin's leadership, to keep watch over the Consultative Assembly at Strasbourg. Some 180 French parliamentarians were induced to sign motions supporting a Federal Pact. Referenda conducted by Europa-Union in selected German towns showed overwhelming support for a pact. In Italy, hundreds of thousands of signatures were collected in support of a Pact, including a majority in both houses of the legislature.⁵¹

Nevertheless, by the time of the EUF's 3rd Congress, at Strasbourg in November 1950, it was clear that the Federal Pact campaign was beginning to run out of steam. Moreover, it was also clear that the Strasbourg Consultative Assembly had "failed to deliver the results which had been hoped for". Indeed, "the efforts made in these two years not only have not made decisive steps towards European unity, but ... have not even succeeded in restoring the ties between states existing before 1914".⁵²

In this situation, Spinelli advised the relaunch of the federalist campaign, on a new basis: that of calling for a treaty convoking an altogether new Constituent Assembly, directly elected, and empowered to draw up a Pact which would be ratified by national parliaments, but not subjected to intergovernmental negotiation.⁵³ This strategy was adopted by the EUF Congress, and also by a meeting of the Conseil des Peuples d'Europe (including representatives of the MSEUE and the NEI) which followed immediately afterwards. Under the auspices of the Conseil, an international conference was convened at Lugano in April 1951, which officially launched the campaign for a Constituent Assembly.⁵⁴

The new federal campaign almost immediately ran into difficulties, with the withdrawal of support first by the NEI and then by the MSEUE, leaving the EUF to carry the campaign itself. Nevertheless, the campaign developed rapidly. From the end of June, delegations of “patrons” were organised to present the Lugano conclusions to all governments (starting with the French). A poll of candidates for the French elections revealed one-third to favour the immediate establishment of a Constituent Assembly. Soundings of parliamentarians in other countries were equally, or more, successful, resulting in the passing of motions in the Italian National Assembly (countersigned by the premier de Gasperi) and the Bundestag (supported by Adenauer) favouring a Constituent Assembly. 10,000 French mayors supported the proposal, as did 500,000 signatories to an Italian petition. Spinelli’s attention to American opinion (by means of letters to senators and members of Congress, lobbying of American officials, and an EUF delegation to tour the States) paid dividends, undoubtedly contributing to (though not causing) Eisenhower’s decision to endorse European federation, first in a BBC radio broadcast of July 1951, then in a *Paris-Match* interview of October 1951. At Strasbourg, careful preparation by a group of federalists under Frenay led to the near-passage of a motion tabled by Pierre de Felice, endorsing a Constituent Assembly, in November 1951. (The motion was defeated by 45 votes to 41.) Finally, at the close of the Consultative Assembly’s session, in December 1951, its president, Paul Henri Spaak, dramatically resigned, denouncing the Assembly’s timidity and proclaiming his support for de Felice’s motion. Spaak’s resignation was followed, in March 1952, by the formation of a Comité d’Etudes pour la Constitution Européenne, with a majority consisting of EUF members.⁵⁵ By early 1952, therefore, the EUF’s campaign had come a long way, and was visibly producing results.

Meanwhile, two separate French initiatives had transformed the landscape of European politics. The first was the Schuman Plan of May 1950, leading to the negotiations of June 1950 to April 1951, and the coming into being of the European Coal and Steel Community in August 1952. In this case, the EUC could at most claim a rôle in preparing the ground for the Plan. The Rome Congress of November 1948 called for the creation of a “European Market”, starting with the integration of the coal and steel industries of those countries disposed to adhere.⁵⁶ Similar resolutions were passed by subsequent Congresses. But the EUC’s interest was primarily in the political means of federation, and it cannot be claimed that the EUC was more than a background influence on the Plan. Once it was elaborated, the EUC gave it an ambivalent reception. It was welcomed as realising that integration would have to proceed at first in a “little Europe”, and that sovereignty could be parcelled; on the other hand, the political institutions designed for it were criticised as undemocratic and inadequate, and it was argued that without rapid extension of its competences to other economic and financial realms, the proposed Authority would soon fail.⁶⁴

The second French initiative was the Pleven Plan for a European Army, announced in October 1950, leading to negotiations from February 1951 and the signing of the European Defence Community Treaty on 27 May 1952. Again, the EUC can only claim a background rôle in the formulation of the Plan, although the creation of a common European defence force as the only means of containing German rearmament had featured more prominently in EUC literature.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in this case the federalists’ intervention was to be decisive, even if ultimately unsuccessful.

The EUC deplored “the fact that the problem of European Unity should have been put before public opinion mainly as a problem of defence”.⁵⁹ Nevertheless,

the defence issue provided the EUF with a substantial opportunity, given the fact that it was equally “impossible for democratic Europe to accept ... a Germany disarmed and a Germany armed and strong”.⁶⁰ As Pleven, Schuman and the governments of the Six had realised, some form of European context was desirable from all points of view. Nevertheless, defence raised the question of control in a far more acute form than sectoral economic integration.

The EUF moved swiftly to criticise the institutional framework initially proposed for the Defence Community. A European government was held to be necessary for technical as well as political reasons - especially given the material needs of modern armies.⁶¹ Moreover, there was again the possibility (in this case a very dangerous possibility) that intergovernmental agreement would lead to the creation of a technocracy, uncontrolled by any political authority.⁶² In effect, the Pleven proposals would create a European General staff “like the Emperor Charles V amongst his feudatories”. The only solution was a federal European government. Thus the proposal for a defence community led directly to consideration of constitutional questions, and (in the EUF view) to the necessity of a Constituent Assembly.⁶³

Not for the last time in a long and distinguished federalist career, Altiero Spinelli made a decisive personal contribution to the course of European politics. He bombarded de Gasperi and other members of the Italian delegation with memoranda repeating again and again the fundamental fact that “it is the government and not a military commander that lays down foreign and economic policy, and which on the bases of its policies decides what resources to allocate”. Some form of political authority was inevitable. Only federalism could provide democratic legitimacy and the means to resolve political differences, short of a unitary super-state. Having convinced de Gasperi, Spinelli moved on to

Schuman and Adenauer. As Daniela Preda has shown, it was Spinelli who was the *éminence grise* behind the insertion of Article 38 in the EDC Treaty, which provided for the creation of a European political authority.⁶⁴

Once Article 38 was in place, Spinelli and the EUF concentrated on agitation to bring about its early implementation. Spinelli himself favoured conferring a constituent mandate on a new body, but he was happy to fall in line behind Spaak's proposal to confer it on an enlarged ECSC assembly. The essential thing was to avoid entanglement with the Council of Europe, and thus avoid the risk of British or Scandinavian sabotage. It was important for Article 38 to be implemented swiftly, in order to provide the necessary framework before, rather than after, the EDC Treaty came into force. No specific treaty was necessary, since an invitation from the ECSC Council of Ministers would suffice.⁶⁵ Again, Spinelli's personal interventions with de Gasperi and the other European leaders bore fruit.⁶⁶ On 10 September 1952 the ECSC Council was induced to implement Article 38, by conferring on the "ad hoc" (ECSC) Assembly the mandate to draw up a statute for the European Political Community.

One point on which Spinelli and the EUF had insisted, but which was ignored by the process actually followed, was that the EPC project should be referred directly to the national parliaments, and should not have to go through the laborious process of intergovernmental negotiation.⁶⁷ The negotiations leading to the draft EPC statute therefore lasted not only the six months of the "ad hoc" Assembly's deliberations, but a further year of arduous intergovernmental talks. Against the background of Stalin's death, the end of the Korean war, and the beginnings of France's preoccupation with the colonial crisis in Indochina, the EPC project inevitably lost momentum.

The EUF kept a close watch on the deliberations of the “ad hoc” Assembly, attempting to steer it in the right direction by advising in favour of direct elections, against a Council of Ministers’ veto, in favour of colonial and economic competences, and so on.⁶⁸ The resulting proposal was criticised as something of a half-measure, in which “on all the decisive points of the federal mechanism ... is inserted a foreign body which will paralyse everything”.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the EUF recognised early on that support for the EDC/EPC package was fragile, and that the main energies of the movement should be focused on supporting rather than criticising it.⁷⁰

The EUF organised some 200 meetings in support of the EDC/EPC project, with panels of speakers, press conferences and advance publicity. Weekend briefings were held for journalists, a special information and liaison service set up, and seminars organised amongst trade unionists, schoolteachers and veterans. A series of pamphlets was issued, some in print runs of up to 2 million. A special effort was made to convince opinion in France, including the distribution of a tightly-argued *Réponse au Général de Gaulle* by Henri Frenay and a more populist cartoon brochure, *Communauté Européenne de Défense*. Federalist parliamentarians from Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were induced to sign an appeal to French deputies. Similar appeals were also organised from groups of French jurists and academics.⁷¹

All was, of course, in vain. On 30 August 1954, by a small but decisive majority, the French National Assembly voted to reject the EDC Treaty, and with it the project for a political community.

The date 30 August 1954 was inscribed in the EUF's annals as a day of infamy and perdition. It marked the end of a distinct phase in the process of European integration, when it seemed that the problems of unification might be solved by an early realisation of the federalists' plans. While the process of European integration was relaunched only a few years later, at Messina, it was clear that the political questions raised by the EUF would be left to one side. Unification by means of functional economic integration would clearly be the order of the day.

For the EUF, 30 August 1954 marked the beginning of a serious crisis, which would lead to the rupture of the movement. Spinelli and the radical constitutionalists pursued a more "revolutionary" strategy aimed at summoning up a popular movement for democratisation and federation, while the moderates under Brugmans and Friedlander ("liquidators" of federalism, as Spinelli called them; or "realists", as they called themselves) tacked to the prevailing winds, instituting the breakaway Action Européenne Fédéraliste in November 1956. In June 1959, the radicals pursued the logic of their strategy in organisational matters, converting the EUF into a direct-membership, supranational organisation, the Mouvement Fédéraliste Européenne. Built into this movement was Spinelli's theoretical insight, intensified by the experience of the late 1940s and early '50s, that European integration would proceed only by means of the resolution of periodic crises, and that the crucial thing for a movement hoping to influence the process was therefore to be able to take advantage of such crises. After a long period in the political wilderness, the federalists regained strength in the 1970s by means of a campaign for direct elections to the European Parliament. In the 1980s, Spinelli and the federalists again made a decisive contribution to the process of integration, this time more permanently, with the

“Crocodile Club” leading to the European Union Treaty and the Single European Act.⁷²

During the period examined by this paper, the late 1940s and early 1950s, it is clear that the federalists associated with the EUF exercised a significant background influence as contributors towards, and manipulators of, the atmosphere conducive to integration. Actual instances of direct influence are more sporadic, and tended to arise only in situations where the international climate, the intentions of national politicians and the aspirations of federalists converged. In such situations, the EUF was able to play a significant rôle by taking advantage of policy vacuums caused by the redundancy of previous ways of thinking. Federalist initiatives were thus inserted directly into the mainstream of European politics.

At the end of the day, the EUF failed. It was Monnet’s rather than Spinelli’s method which characterised the integration process and, as Spinelli later remarked, Monnet had “the great responsibility to have built [Europe] badly”.⁷³ Europe followed the economic and functional, rather than the political and federal, road to unity. The consequences have been with us ever since: periodic setbacks and crises, persistent difficulties in dealing with certain key European issues (especially foreign policy and defence), and, last but not least, the remoteness of a European “technocracy” coupled with a widely-perceived “democratic deficit” — which, Spinelli would have argued, is a “federal deficit”.