

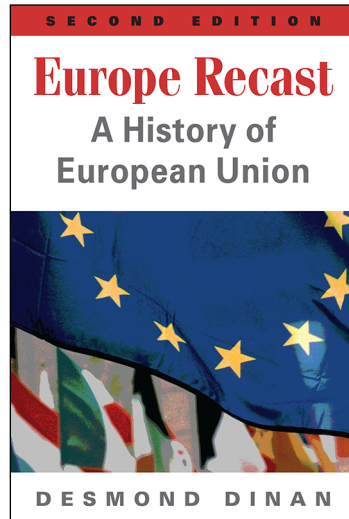
EXCERPTED FROM

Europe Recast:  
A History of European Union

SECOND EDITION

Desmond Dinan

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ISBN: 978-1-62637-071-5 pb



LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS

1800 30th Street, Suite 314  
Boulder, CO 80301 USA  
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fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the  
Lynne Rienner Publishers website  
[www.rienner.com](http://www.rienner.com)

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# Introduction

**THE IDEA OF EUROPEAN UNION IS A RECURRING THEME IN THE** long and often violent history of the continent. The Holy Roman Emperors, Napoleon, Hitler, and others sought, in sometimes horrifying ways, to achieve a continental unity based variously on princely alliances, ethnic cohesion, ideology, or raw power. Ever since the emergence of the modern state, in the mid-seventeenth century, philosophers and political thinkers have also imagined a united Europe triumphing over narrow national interests and allegiances. Today's European Union (EU) is singular among these competing visions. Tempering the nationalist ethos that had become the ruling principle of European political development, the countries that formed the European Communities, the basis of the EU, chose to limit (but not eliminate) their own sovereignty, the hallmark of a modern nation-state, in favor of collective peace, economic integration, and supranational governance.

Their reasons for doing so were rooted in the disastrous decades of the early twentieth century. The miserable legacy of heroic European nationalism—two world wars, countless millions dead, and economic ruin—was not lost on the peoples of Europe, who were receptive to the idea of treaty-based and highly institutionalized economic and political integration after World War II. European politicians wanted above all to end international strife, foster social harmony, and promote economic well-being. They sought to build a better world, free of the hatreds and rivalries that had destroyed their countries in recent years. For their generation, European integration became synonymous with peace and prosperity.

Yet there was nothing inevitable about the emergence of European integration in the form with which we are now familiar. European politicians were (and still are) instinctively averse to sharing national sovereignty, despite rhetorical flourishes to the contrary. National leaders decided to share sovereignty in supranational organizations primarily because they perceived

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that it was in their countries' (and therefore their own) interests to do so. Ideas, intellectual fashion, opportunity, chance, conviction, calculation, personal predilection, and ambition all played a part. Ultimately, however, European integration emerged as it did because of a calculated response by politicians, businesspeople, and other actors to changing economic, political, and strategic circumstances, ranging from Germany's postwar recovery, to the fall of the Berlin Wall, to the acceleration of globalization. Despite growing public concern about the process and politics of European integration, Europeans generally acquiesced because the outcome seemed worthwhile and the alternatives less attractive.

### **The Interwar Experience**

World War I, fought mostly in Europe, ended in November 1918 after more than four years of frightful slaughter. US intervention on the side of the Western allies tipped the balance against Germany, which had earlier forced the newly established Soviet Union to capitulate. The Versailles Treaty of 1919 imposed hefty war reparations on Germany and severely limited its sovereignty. John Maynard Keynes, the brilliant English economist, denounced the financial provisions of the treaty in a bestselling book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, published in 1920.<sup>1</sup> As Keynes predicted, reparations became a huge drain on the German economy, a major irritant in Franco-German relations, and a rallying cry for ardent German nationalists who denounced the democratic Weimar regime for having signed the treaty.

Persistent, virulent nationalism in Western Europe between the wars was hardly conducive to voluntary European integration. To the east, new nation-states, jealous of their sovereignty, emerged from the wreckage of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires. Because the Soviet Union, weakened by civil war, did not pose a serious threat to international security, other European countries were not inclined to unite "against" it. The absence of a Soviet threat accounted in part for the relative aloofness of the United States, which refused to become entangled in European affairs or even to join the League of Nations, the new international security organization. Nor were the Europeans, resentful though they were of the rise of the United States to global power, inclined to unite "against" the United States, a major market and potential ally.

The horrors of the Great War and uncertainty of the early postwar period nevertheless spawned a movement for European union: the Pan-Europa pressure group of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, a count of the old Holy Roman Empire. In his influential book *Pan-Europa*, published in 1923, Coudenhove-Kalergi called for a federal union of European states centered on France and Germany, but excluding the Soviet Union (because of its

communism and foothold in Asia) and Britain (because of its imperial interests).<sup>2</sup> An aristocrat and elitist, Coudenhove-Kalergi initially sought the support of Italy's dictator, Benito Mussolini. Growing public interest in the idea of Pan-Europa, and Mussolini's rejection of it, led Coudenhove-Kalergi to appreciate the importance of democracy in building European union.

Although it generated chapters in most continental countries, Pan-Europa was an ephemeral political movement. Nevertheless, two of its members, Edouard Herriot and Aristide Briand, were leading French politicians who sought a rapprochement with Germany. Briand, foreign minister in the mid-1920s, worked with Gustav Stresemann, his German counterpart, to rescue Franco-German relations from the wreckage of the war and France's punitive policy toward Germany immediately afterward. Together with Britain's foreign minister, they were instrumental in concluding the Locarno Treaty of October 1925, which guaranteed the borders of Western Europe and paved the way for Germany's entry into the League of Nations. The "spirit of Locarno" hovered over the "years of hope" (1925–1929), when it seemed as if Western Europe was finally on the road to a better future.<sup>3</sup>

Briand and Stresemann had a celebrated summit meeting in the small village of Thoiry, across the French border from Geneva, in September 1926. There they addressed a number of contentious issues in hopes of paving the way for a Franco-German entente. France wanted Germany to make good on its promise to pay reparations; Germany wanted the allies to end their military occupation of the Rhineland, along the country's western border, on which France took a hard line. Despite good relations between Briand and Stresemann, Germany and France were too suspicious of each other to follow the Thoiry summit with detailed negotiations and a diplomatic breakthrough. The years of hope gradually gave way to despair as extreme nationalists in both countries entrenched their positions. Stresemann's death in October 1929 symbolized the death also of incipient Franco-German accord.<sup>4</sup>

In his last speech to the League of Nations, in September 1929, Stresemann advocated European integration and even raised the possibility of a common currency.<sup>5</sup> He followed in the footsteps of French prime minister Herriot, who, as early as 1925, spoke publicly about a United States of Europe. Briand was another leading proponent of Pan-Europa. Like Stresemann, he extolled the virtues of European integration in a speech to the League in September 1929. Spurred in part by Stresemann's untimely death, Briand followed up with a famous memorandum in May 1930 calling for an association of European states, subordinate to the League, to coordinate economic policies and promote political union. Although far-reaching by the standards of the time, Briand's initiative did not propose that governments share national sovereignty. Even so, it was too radical for most European countries, including Briand's own. The League established the Committee of

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Enquiry on the European Union, which held a number of sessions in the early 1930s, after which nothing more was heard about the Briand memorandum.<sup>6</sup>

Germany and Austria used the language of European integration to float a proposal in March 1931 for a customs union open to other countries as well. The idea of an Austro-German customs union jogged historical memories of the Zollverein of 1834, the customs union among German states that presaged the rise of Prussia and unification of Germany in 1871. Many Europeans, who ascribed the continent's current ills to German unification, feared that an Austro-German customs union would lead inevitably to an Austro-German *anschluss* (political union). France blocked the proposal. Once Hitler came to power, any prospect of Franco-German reconciliation and voluntary European integration abruptly came to an end.

The 1930s was a dismal decade in Europe, bracketed by economic recession at the beginning and the outbreak of war at the end. Fascism seemed unstoppable in Germany, Spain, and the faltering democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, having already taken root in Italy. Emboldened by Anglo-French weakness and US detachment, Hitler scored one foreign policy triumph after another, until his invasion of Poland in September 1939 triggered an Anglo-French declaration of war. In August 1940, Coudenhove-Kalergi fled Europe for the United States, his Pan-Europa movement almost forgotten.<sup>7</sup>

The approach of war triggered a revival of interest in federalism as a way to bolster the democratic nations in the face of Fascist aggression. Federal ideas had flourished in Britain in the interwar years. Leading intellectuals such as Lionel Curtis, Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), and Harold Laski championed them. These and other federalists joined a new group, the Federal Union, established in November 1938, which attracted several thousand members. *Union Now*, a book by US academic Clarence Streit, calling for a transatlantic union of democratic states, had a big impact on British opinion.<sup>8</sup> As World War II ground on, British federalists produced a steady stream of books and pamphlets advocating the establishment of a federal system of European states in the postwar period. In September 1944, the Federal Union adopted as an "immediate aim the promotion of a democratic federation of Europe as part of the postwar settlement."<sup>9</sup>

Britain was home during the war to many exiled continental politicians, who both imbibed and shaped these federalist ideas. British federalism also influenced the non-Communist resistance movements throughout occupied Europe, especially in Italy. There Altiero Spinelli and other democratic socialists, detained on the island of Ventotene, smuggled out their Manifesto for a Free and United Europe, in July 1941 (it later appeared as an underground publication in Nazi-occupied Rome).<sup>10</sup> Drawing on a tradition of Italian federalism dating from the nineteenth century, the manifesto called for a postwar federation, including Germany, to ensure peace in Europe. Inspired by the



Ventotene Manifesto, Italian federalists conferred with the representatives of resistance movements from other countries during a clandestine conference in Geneva in the spring of 1944; the result was the International Federalist Declaration, which circulated secretly throughout Nazi Europe.

At the same time, driven by a malevolent racial nationalism, the Nazis integrated Europe by force. Yet Albert Speer, Hitler's young economic czar, speculated about a postwar European economic community based on voluntary cooperation rather than coercion. Referring to a meeting in September 1943 with Jean Bichelonne, the like-minded French minister of production, Speer told an interviewer decades later: "We agreed that in the future we would avoid the mistakes of the First World War generation, who were now at the helm. Irrespective of national frontiers, Europe had to be economically integrated."<sup>11</sup> According to his military liaison officer, Speer believed strongly in shared economic sovereignty: "He was certain that the only way towards a better and peaceful future, not only for Germany but for all of Europe, was if Germany could eventually be part of an economic European entity."<sup>12</sup>

### **Toward European Union**

Speer never thought that the war would end in Germany's annihilation. That outcome, together with the emergence of the Soviet Union as the liberator and then the occupier of Central and Eastern Europe, completely changed the geopolitical configuration of the Continent. Eager to establish a new, open, international economic system and protect Western Europe from internal Communist subversion or external Soviet aggression, the United States became deeply embroiled in European affairs as the Cold War intensified. Susceptible to US pressure and mindful of the mistakes of the past, yet fearful as ever of eventual German resurgence, France sought a mutually agreeable strategy to deal with the new Federal Republic. The circumstances seemed propitious for France and its neighbors to share a degree of national sovereignty in a supranational organization. The Cold War facilitated such an initiative but also ensured that, instead of being pan-European in scope, it would be confined to Western Europe.

The movement for European integration reemerged in the aftermath of World War II and reached its apogee in 1948 at the Congress of Europe, a gathering of over 600 influential Europeans from sixteen countries, held in The Hague in May 1948. Yet the Schuman Declaration of 1950, which gave rise to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), originated not in the ferment of the European movement but in the narrow confines of the French economic planning office, headed by Jean Monnet. It was an imaginative response to the challenge of rapid German economic recovery at a time of worsening East-West conflict, satisfying differing US, French, and German needs and objectives. For leading French and German politicians at

the time, the coalescence of European and national interests made sharing sovereignty irresistible and set in train a lengthy, unpredictable, and intriguing process of economic and political integration.

In his famous article “The End of History?” Francis Fukuyama referred dismissively to “those flabby, prosperous, self-satisfied, inward-looking, weak-willed states whose grandest project was nothing more heroic than the creation of the Common Market.”<sup>13</sup> The six countries that launched the European Community (EC) in the 1950s were far from flabby, prosperous, self-satisfied, or inward-looking. Nor were they weak-willed. Despite Fukuyama’s scorn for a vision devoid of color and heroic derring-do, it took a leap of faith and rare political courage for most of those countries to turn their backs on traditional nation-state aspirations and agree to exercise some of their powers in common. For France, in particular, accepting the EC meant a drastic revision of the country’s long-standing self-image as a leading great power. For Germany, largely destroyed at the end of the war, European integration offered salvation and international rehabilitation.

Plans for a European Defense Community (EDC), to be organized along lines similar to the ECSC, collapsed because of French fear of German rearmament, apparently poisoning prospects for further formal integration. Yet the European Economic Community (EEC) emerged soon afterward, not because of the kind of spillover predicted by Ernst Haas in *The Uniting of Europe*, his pathbreaking book on the ECSC, but because of the appeal of deeper economic integration at a time of intensifying intra-European trade.<sup>14</sup> Member states built the EC on a solid foundation of informal economic integration stretching back to the late nineteenth century, which they now shaped in particular geographical and functional directions.

Britain stayed outside the Communities because its national interests, or at least the government’s perception of its national interests, pointed in a different direction. By the time Britain changed course and applied to join in the early 1960s, French president Charles de Gaulle saw British membership as a threat to France and promptly thwarted it. De Gaulle embraced the EC as an economic entity, not least because of its promise of a generous agricultural policy, but rejected its political pretensions. His espousal of an intergovernmental political union and dismissal of European Commission president Walter Hallstein’s federal ambitions precipitated the greatest constitutional crisis in the history of European integration—the empty chair crisis of 1965–1966.

French opposition to British accession ended after de Gaulle’s resignation in 1969 and in light of Germany’s growing economic power. Unfortunately, British membership in the EC coincided with international financial instability and the oil crisis of the early 1970s. The enlarged EC struggled through a decade of brutal economic conditions: sluggish growth, rampant inflation, and rising unemployment. The recession reinforced British am-

bivalence toward the EC. Regular meetings of EC leaders, institutionalized in the European Council, helped hold the Community together. The chancellor of Germany and the president of France used the EC as a hook upon which to hang the European Monetary System (EMS), a mechanism for monetary policy cooperation in the late 1970s. Otherwise the EC seemed moribund, the butt of jokes about agricultural surpluses and excessive harmonization of industrial product standards.

The EC sprang back to life in the mid-1980s, rediscovered as the answer to the problems of Eurosclerosis and the lethargy of the previous decade and as a vehicle for Community members to confront together the challenges of incipient globalization. Commission president Jacques Delors deftly capitalized on the member states' determination to accelerate economic integration. He leveraged the single market program to win substantial spending from the EC budget to promote economic and social cohesion, aimed at closing the gap between richer and poorer member states, including recent entrants Portugal and Spain. The Single European Act (SEA), the first major treaty reform in the EC's history, committed member states to complete the single market by 1992; introduced far-reaching institutional reform with respect to single market measures; and enshrined cohesion as a key Community objective. Little wonder that the SEA came to be seen as a major turning point in the history of European union.

If legitimacy depends on success, then the EC enjoyed strong legitimacy in the late 1980s. The single market program proved popular with elites and ordinary Europeans alike. Delors reveled in the EC's newfound popularity. France and Germany returned to the driver's seat of European integration, their leaders calling for the ambitious, seemingly improbable goal of monetary union to consolidate the single market and strengthen the EC politically in the face of dissolution of the old order in Central and Eastern Europe. Increasingly alienated by moves toward monetary union and other forms of integration, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher warned that the EC risked becoming a "superstate." She and Delors had radically different visions of Europe: his ardently federalist, hers fervently antifederalist.

Popular support for European integration helped return Helmut Kohl of Germany, François Mitterrand of France, and Felipe González of Spain to power, and helped topple Thatcher from power, in the late 1980s. Driven by their respective national interests and a shared European interest, Kohl and Mitterrand pushed forward with plans for monetary union. Rapid change in Central and Eastern Europe, culminating in the imminent prospect of German unification, helped Kohl overcome domestic resistance to giving up the country's cherished currency, the *deutschem*ark. The sudden end of the Cold War also emboldened member states to develop a common foreign and security policy (CFSP), which, together with economic and monetary union (EMU), became the centerpiece of intergovernmental negotiations in

1991 that resulted in the Maastricht Treaty. A new face of Europe was emerging: that of an aspiring global power, trying to achieve the unified political clout to match its rising economic weight.

But exaggerated claims of the single market's success and a severe economic downturn soured the public mood in the early 1990s. The Maastricht Treaty, which launched the EU, fanned popular unease about the pace of European integration. Responding to a near-fatal backlash against the treaty's scope and content, a chastened political establishment struggled to make the EU more open, accountable, and responsive to citizen concerns. Member states stressed the notion of subsidiarity—a principle of decentralization and quasi-federalism—to reassure a restive public. Despite these efforts, the EU failed to win widespread acceptance as it struggled to be effective in a harsh international environment.

The newly proclaimed EU faced formidable challenges. The road to monetary union, finally reached in 1999, was rocky, obliging member states to make hard economic choices in order to participate. Enlargement reemerged on the EU's agenda with the end of the Cold War. First the European neutrals (plus Norway), then the newly independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe (plus Cyprus, Malta, and Turkey), sought membership. The neutrals (Austria, Finland, and Sweden) joined without fuss in 1995; Norway chose to stay outside. Primarily because of their low level of economic development and poor administrative capacity, the Central and Eastern European countries faced major obstacles to membership. They eventually joined in two stages: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia acceded in 2004 (along with Cyprus and Malta); Bulgaria and Romania acceded in 2007. Croatia, like Slovenia a former republic of Yugoslavia, which had collapsed in the 1990s, joined the EU in 2013. Turkey was a special case: geographically distant though strategically important; economically underdeveloped and politically unsteady; populous and predominantly Muslim. The Turkish occupation of the northern part of Cyprus complicated the Mediterranean island's otherwise straightforward membership application as well as Turkey's own membership prospects. Once Cyprus acceded, Turkey's chance of joining seemed even more remote.

Enlargement on such a large scale was bound to change the EU, especially at a time of growing public disillusionment with the EU itself. Having avoided far-reaching institutional change during previous episodes of enlargement, and aware of the need to address the yawning gap between "Brussels" and ordinary Europeans, national governments launched a new round of treaty reform in 2000 that would culminate a decade later in the Lisbon Treaty. First came the Nice Treaty of 2001, which proved patently inadequate either to prepare the EU for enlargement or to strengthen the EU's weak legitimacy. Next came the Convention on the Future of Europe, in 2002–2003,

when representatives of EU and national institutions considered sweeping changes to the EU treaties, including the promulgation of a constitution.

The ensuing Constitutional Treaty was less innovative than its proponents had hoped, but alarmed many Europeans by drawing attention, as the adjective “constitutional” implied, to the EU’s statelike characteristics. The rejection by Dutch and French voters of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 was a severe political setback for the EU. National and EU leaders managed to salvage most of the contents of the discredited treaty in the unobjectionably named Lisbon Treaty, which itself had to be voted on twice before being ratified in Ireland (the only member state to hold a referendum on the issue). Though the Lisbon Treaty strengthened the EU institutionally and broadened its policy scope, the protracted and unsatisfactory experience of treaty reform over the previous decade deepened public unease with the EU and strengthened national resistance to further grand bargains to bolster European integration.

The outbreak of the eurozone crisis in the wake of the Constitutional Treaty debacle reinforced the impression that the EU was in serious trouble. The onset of the crisis, in 2009, exposed weaknesses in the design of EMU and a pattern of economic divergence among eurozone members. A “one size fits all” monetary policy had unintentionally encouraged excessive borrowing by some countries, notably Greece, and had fueled property bubbles in other countries, notably Ireland and Spain. Risky behavior by many European banks added to the eurozone’s vulnerability when the financial crisis struck.

Regardless of the causes of the crisis, it was the seemingly sluggish EU response and the tough line that Germany took on conditionality for bailouts to the worst-affected countries that undermined confidence in EMU and in European integration more broadly. Germany’s insistence on austerity seemed to exacerbate the economic downturn throughout Europe. Though Germany’s chancellor, Angela Merkel, remained in power throughout, governments in more than half of the eurozone countries fell during the crisis. A huge rift opened between Germany and France when François Hollande, who strongly opposed austerity, became president of France in May 2012. Germany’s preoccupation with austerity and apparent indifference to the plight of other eurozone countries, serious tension in Franco-German relations, and growing opposition in Britain to continued EU membership overshadowed the undoubted success of the European project during the previous decades.

Clearly, today’s EU is very different from the European Communities of the 1950s. Yet certain features endure: the logic of economic integration; French fear of falling behind; concern about Germany’s predominance; the significance of Franco-German leadership; British detachment; and the small-country syndrome (small member states’ fear of hegemony). Like the EC before it, the EU is a political undertaking that is concerned primarily with eco-

conomic integration. Although the common foreign and security policy, a nascent defense policy, and cooperation on justice and home affairs often grab the headlines, at its core the EU is mostly about managing the European marketplace. Economic integration is unglamorous but important. By eliminating barriers to trade and investment, and facilitating movement across borders, it benefits the peoples of Europe directly but largely imperceptibly.

The EU operates in a global context that has changed dramatically since the birth of the original European institutions. Some of the early proponents of European integration wanted Europe to assert itself internationally, seeing the EC as a possible “third force” alongside the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War put an end to their dream and to French efforts in the early 1960s to establish a European union independent of the United States. The end of the Cold War provided an opening for the EU to emerge not as a third force but, because of the disappearance of the Soviet Union, as a second force alongside the United States, in a world with several emerging economic powers such as China, Brazil, and India. By then the EU was a global economic power; becoming a global political and military power proved more difficult. The fallout from the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 and the war in Iraq in 2003, and from the great recession and the eurozone crisis, has greatly complicated the EU’s efforts to match its economic power with diplomatic and military might.

### **Interpreting European Union History**

Serious historical research on European integration started in the 1980s. Before then, the interpretation of European integration was not the work of historians, or to be more precise it was not historical work, given that the full range of raw material began to become available only in the late 1970s with the declassification of most government documents covering the early postwar years (under the standard “thirty-year rule”). Only as the ensuing archival-based research was disseminated at conferences and in publications did the historiography of European integration truly commence. By that time, the federalist interpretation of European integration, based on ideology rather than rigorous academic assessment, had firmly taken hold.<sup>15</sup>

#### ***The Federalist Interpretation***

The federalist interpretation was spawned by a dedicated group of writers who viewed the demise of the nation-state and the emergence of European union as both inevitably and highly desirable. For them, the 1948 Congress of Europe was a high-water mark, after which the struggle for European union became more difficult though the outcome no less certain. In their opinion, the fault lay with intractable intergovernmentalism, epitomized by the United Kingdom and personified by former prime minister Winston

Churchill. Despite having made a famous speech in Zurich, in 1946, in which he called for a United States of Europe, Churchill was a nationalist with little sympathy for supranationalism.

Churchill's prominence at the Congress of Europe, where he ensured that the Council of Europe, which emerged from it, was organized along traditional intergovernmental lines, frustrated many federalists. Undaunted, federalists believed that European union would ultimately prevail, not least because history was on their side. Indeed, European federalism had been building steam for decades, even centuries. Its origins lay in "a continual hankering after some kind of European unity," notably since the glorious days of Charlemagne, who became Holy Roman Emperor in 800.<sup>16</sup> European federalists fondly cited subsequent calls for European unity made by a succession of Christian intellectuals and politicians, and pointed to a rich literature espousing the idea of a united Europe.

The spiritual dimension of European federalism gave many of its proponents a "holier than thou" attitude. In the long march of history, federalism seemed to them to have a better lineage and to be a worthier cause than modern nationalism, which had brought Europe such misery by 1945. Many federalist writers anticipated the sudden demise or gradual withering away of the nation-state and its replacement by a federation of states. In their view, supporters of traditional political arrangements and international relations were naive (at best) or malevolent (at worst).

Jean Monnet was an awkward character for many federalists to embrace. Although a proponent of European unity, Monnet took an unheroic, low-key approach, preferring to move piecemeal toward European union via the unglamorous path of functional economic integration. Nor was he religious, let alone a Christian Democrat. He was not a career politician either, but a prominent national and (before that) international civil servant.

By contrast, Robert Schuman, whose name became synonymous with the plan for the ECSC, was ideally cast for the federalist interpretation of European integration. Coming from the disputed province of Lorraine and having grown up in German-occupied territory, Schuman sought above all to promote reconciliation between France and Germany. He was not only a Christian Democrat but also a devout Catholic—celibate and saintly.<sup>17</sup>

Konrad Adenauer, postwar Germany's first chancellor, also fit the bill, being another Christian Democrat and advocate of European union. Federalists added to the mix Italian prime minister Alcide de Gasperi, yet another Christian Democrat and bona fide European idealist, who nonetheless played only a marginal role in the development of European integration and whose motives owed as much to concerns about the growing strength of the Italian Communist Party as to a burning desire for a federal Europe.

For all the excitement surrounding the Schuman Declaration, the ensuing ECSC was a far cry from the much-sought European federation.



Federalists' hopes soared again with the call (also engineered by Monnet) for a European Defense Community, and correspondingly plunged when the proposed community collapsed in 1954. According to the federalists, the failure of the defense community ranks alongside the stunted development of the Council of Europe as the greatest setback in the history of the European integration.

The new hero, in the federalists' view, was Belgian foreign minister Paul-Henri Spaak, who engineered the successful outcome of the Messina meeting of foreign ministers in June 1955, which resulted in the negotiations in 1956–1957 that brought about the European Economic Community. But Spaak was not as compelling a character in the federalist narrative as was Schuman. Without doubting his commitment and contribution to European integration, many federalists were discomfited by his socialism and anticlericalism.

Walter Hallstein, the first president of the European Commission, occupies a high position in the federalist pantheon. Hallstein was a zealous federalist who sought to assert the economic community's political character. That brought him into conflict with de Gaulle, the greatest scoundrel in the federalist interpretation (greater even than Churchill). What seemed to some federalists like a titanic struggle in the early 1960s between two great leaders, one (Hallstein) representing the future of Europe and the other (de Gaulle) clinging to the past, was in reality an unequal battle between a powerful national leader and the head of an emergent European institution.

The empty chair crisis contributed to a political malaise in the Community that stretched into the early 1980s. The economic recessions of the 1970s made matters worse. These were the dark ages for European federalists, a time when European integration seemed stagnant or even regressive. Salvation came in the form of Jacques Delors, who became Commission president in January 1985 and oversaw the single market program later in the decade. By that time, the federalist interpretation of European integration enjoyed wide currency. This was a story of chances seized and squandered; of setbacks and surges; of crises and opportunities; of a few far-sighted statesmen struggling for Europe's soul against atavistic nationalists; of supranational institutions embodying the ethos of European federalism and constituting an embryonic European government; of brave officials of Community institutions carrying the torch of European unity.

The European Commission had an obvious interest in encouraging research and writing on the history of European integration that would propagate the federalist interpretation. The Commission was instrumental in establishing the European University Institute (EUI), which opened in Florence in 1976. The Commission envisioned the EUI's Department of History and Civilization as a source of scholarship on European integration that would lay the academic foundations for what it hoped was an emerging European federation.<sup>18</sup>



Walter Lipgens, the first professor of history at the EUI, seemed ideally suited for the job and lent academic credibility to the federalist interpretation. A convinced federalist himself, Lipgens embarked on the monumental task of attempting to collect and publish every speech, statement, and scrap of documentary evidence, country by country, from the resistance movements and subsequent European movement in support of European integration. Lipgens's Herculean effort did not bear the abundant fruit that he had hoped for. Nor did he live to see the results, which appeared posthumously.<sup>19</sup> The three edited volumes may have had the contrary effect from that intended. For the contrast between the weight of documentary material contained in them and the actions of European politicians was striking. Why had so many speeches, policy papers, and other pronouncements on European integration produced such relatively paltry results?

### *Backlash*

By that time, many historians of postwar Europe were highly critical of the federalist interpretation. With the opening of national archives covering the immediate postwar years, they were finally able to explore the dynamics of decisionmaking on issues ranging from the Marshall Plan to the ECSC. Alan Milward, a brilliant economic historian who succeeded Lipgens at the EUI, was the most prominent of them.

Initially, Milward was curious to know why reconstruction had been so successful after World War II compared to the aftermath of World War I. Presumably, Europe's success after 1945 was due largely to the role of the United States. Indeed, the prevailing view in the popular and academic literature was that the United States had saved Western Europe by implementing the Marshall Plan. Milward asserted that Europe's economic recovery had begun in 1945 and was well under way by 1947 when Europe faced a shortfall of dollars with which to continue to buy capital and consumer goods from the United States. Far from rescuing Western Europe, the Marshall Plan had merely helped Western Europe to overcome a balance-of-payments problem (although this was hardly an inconsiderable achievement).

If the Marshall Plan had not saved postwar Western Europe, Milward wondered what had. He concluded that the real saviors were the ECSC and the European Payments Union. The first facilitated a diplomatic settlement between France and Germany, without which a stable Western European order could not have come about; the second facilitated international trade, without which Western Europe could not have prospered. In Milward's view, Monnet devised the ECSC not because of altruism or high idealism but because of unrelenting US diplomatic pressure on France to come to terms with Germany's political and economic rehabilitation. By early 1948, French officials were groping for a strategy that would reconcile French economic modernization with German economic recovery. This was the

genesis of the Schuman Plan, the substance of which emerged gradually over a two-year period and “did not, as all commentators on it have so far suggested, emerge as a *deus ex machina* from [Monnet’s] Planning Commissariat in Spring 1950.”<sup>20</sup>

Milward took particular pleasure in debunking the federalist interpretation of European integration and dismissed the political significance of the “extraordinary wave of enthusiasm for European federation” in the immediate postwar years, claiming that “it was no more than a faintly disquieting and soon stilled disturbance for the ship of state, their officer governments and their crews of civil servants.”<sup>21</sup> The idea that European integration was the result of idealism or the weakness of the nation-state, Milward wrote, “is flatly contradicted by this book. Here the interpretation is that the very limited degree of integration that was achieved came about through the pursuit of the narrow self-interest of what were still powerful nation states.”<sup>22</sup> Nor was there anything inexorable or inevitable about European integration.

The publication of Milward’s *The Reconstruction of Western Europe* had a profound impact on the historiography of European integration. Milward’s stellar academic credentials, together with the extent of the archival research on which the book rested, lent considerable credibility to his conclusions. Backed up by solid research, Milward’s assertions about the state-centric nature of European integration seemed compelling, if somewhat overstated. Milward used the occasion of the publication of the paperback edition to take a swipe at those federalist who claimed that the book was “a denial of the role of idealism and an exaggeration of the role of national materialism in the making of post-war Europe,” once again claiming that the historical evidence showed that the prevailing (federalist) understanding of European integration was “an inadequate foundation of belief and theory on which to build or explain the new European order.”<sup>23</sup> Milward was so dismissive of the federalists as to argue that his own interpretation of the history of European integration was blindingly obvious: “it is no great thing to show to be wrong what few historians ever believed to be right.”<sup>24</sup>

The study of postwar economic reconstruction had brought Milward to the study of European integration, which was squarely the subject of his next big book. Milward was struck by a paradox: at the same time that nation-states were becoming more powerful in the postwar period, having recovered (in most cases) from the devastation of the war itself, they were surrendering sovereignty to a supranational entity that, its proponents claimed, was the antithesis of the nation-state. How could nation-states be strengthening and weakening at the same time? Milward concluded that “there is no . . . antithesis between the nation state and supranationality” and that “the evolution of the Community since 1945 has been an integral part of the reassertion of the nation state as an organizational concept.” Indeed, the two were inextricably linked: “to supercede the nation state would be to destroy the

Community. To put a finite limit to the process of integration would be to weaken the nation state, to limit its scope and to curb its power."<sup>25</sup>

Milward's thesis was that national governments went beyond traditional international interdependence and surrendered sovereignty in key policy areas in order to ensure their own survival and enhance their own authority. European integration, far from undermining the nation-state, as federalists believed that it would, was an essential means of strengthening the nation-state under the circumstances in which Europe found itself in the mid-twentieth century. "The development of the EC, the process of European integration, was . . . a part of [the] postwar rescue of the European nation-state, because the new political consensus on which this rescue was built required the process of integration, the surrender of limited areas of national sovereignty to the supranational."<sup>26</sup>

The publication of *The European Rescue of the Nation State* cemented Milward's reputation as the foremost historian of European integration and established his explanation of the origins and development of the EC as the new orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup> Rearguard actions to reassert federalism, or at least to provide a more balanced perspective, were largely unavailing.<sup>28</sup> *The Frontier of National Sovereignty*, a short book by Milward and colleagues, published in 1993, was essentially an addendum to *Rescue of the Nation State*.<sup>29</sup> It contained a number of case studies to demonstrate the primacy of national interests in the process of European integration and the mutual dependence of the nation-state and the supranation (the case studies were country-specific, focusing on the interests and preferences of Italy, France, Denmark, Britain, and the United States at various times in the postwar period).

Like *Rescue of the Nation State* only more so, *The Frontier of National Sovereignty* sought to develop a theory of European integration based on historical evidence. Milward's hypothesis, that nation-states chose to surrender sovereignty in a supranational entity when it suited them to go beyond traditional interdependence, had both descriptive and predictive value: it described the process of integration to date and provided a framework for envisaging when nation-states might agree to surrender sovereignty in new policy areas. Not surprisingly, Milward and his colleagues concluded that their approach to understanding the EC convincingly explained the acceleration of integration in the late 1980s, culminating in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992.

Another of the most important books on the history of European integration appeared at about this time, and could be described as an annex to Milward's edifice. That was John Gillingham's *Coal, Steel, and the Rebirth of Europe*, a compelling analysis of the background and negotiations that led to the ECSC.<sup>30</sup> Like Milward, Gillingham asserted the centrality of the ECSC to the stability and security, and therefore also the prosperity, of Western Europe after World War II. Like Milward as well, Gillingham emphasized the primacy of national interests. His chapter on the negotiation of the ECSC, aptly

titled “From Summit to Swamp,” followed the course of the intergovernmental conference from the rhetorical heights of the Schuman Declaration to the unseemly give-and-take of the bargaining that followed.

Another important feature of Gillingham’s book was that it drew heavily on industry as well as government archives and placed the ECSC squarely in the history of nearly fifty years of interaction between French and German producers (almost half the book covered the period from the end of World War I to the end of World War II). The final chapter, titled “The Success of Failure,” contrasted the economic inadequacy of the ECSC with its political success. Whereas the ECSC was unable to prevent reconcentration in the German steel industry and failed to bring about a fully functioning common market, it provided a practical peace settlement for postwar Europe, inculcated cooperative practices among participating groups and governments, and laid an institutional foundation for the European Economic Community.

### *Political Science and History*

Political scientists—mostly American or US-based—had been among the most astute analysts and observers of the European Community in the 1950s and 1960s. Political scientists’ interest in the EC waned in the 1970s and early 1980s, as the EC itself appeared to languish. With the renewal of European integration in the late 1980s, a new generation of political scientists, again mostly American or US-based, discovered the EC. Prominent among them were those who fused history and political science in an effort to explain European integration and predict future developments. Andrew Moravcsik was the most famous and influential of these scholars.

Like Milward, Moravcsik took an unabashedly state-centric view of European integration, beginning with a study of the negotiations that resulted in the Single European Act.<sup>31</sup> Moravcsik refined Milward’s approach by focusing exclusively on the commercial interests of the big member states. In his view, commercial interests alone determined governments’ preferences, and lowest-common-denominator intergovernmental bargaining accounted for the contents of the SEA. Again like Milward, Moravcsik wanted to develop a theory of European integration that was based on historical evidence. The case study of the SEA formed the basis for Moravcsik’s trademark “liberal intergovernmentalism,” an approach to understanding key constitutive moments (mostly treaty-making and reform) in the history of European integration.

*The Choice for Europe*, Moravcsik’s monumental study of European integration “from Messina to Maastricht” (1955–1992), developed the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism on the basis of five case studies.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the SEA, these were: the negotiation of the Rome Treaty; the consolidation of the common market; the launch and management of the European Monetary System; and the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty. Moravcsik not only in-

sisted on the importance of historical research for understanding and theorizing about the EU, but also stressed his mastery of primary sources.

A number of critics claimed not only that Moravcsik's use of sources was incorrect but also that the sources themselves were "softer" than Moravcsik declared them to be. Accordingly, these critics went on to question the validity of Moravcsik's revisionist claims. Regardless of its possible impact on Moravcsik's scholarly reputation, such criticism accentuated the massive impact of Moravcsik's work. Moravcsik had managed to blend history and political science in the study of European integration, cast key developments in the history of the EU in a new light, and raise the visibility and status of EU studies.

Craig Parsons, another political scientist working on the history of European integration, focused on the key events of the 1950s, though he confined his analysis to France, the crucial member state at that time. In *A Certain Idea of Europe*, Parsons argued that a combination of ideological commitment and favorable domestic political circumstances, rather than economic or geopolitical forces, accounted for the success of the ECSC and the European Economic Community.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, the absence—for reasons not unconnected to the European question—of a ruling coalition that would support the defense community, sealed the fate of that initiative. Perhaps because the chronological scope and theoretical sweep of his research were narrower, and because his familiarity with French sources was so thorough, Parsons was not seriously criticized by historians, though his ideational explanation for the triumph of the community model in the 1950s has certainly been questioned.

Historical research is not the province exclusively of US political scientists working on the EU. Berthold Rittberger (of Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich) has long combined historical research and political science methodology to explore questions relating to democratic accountability and representation. His groundbreaking book *Building Europe's Parliament* was rooted in research on the origins of the Common Assembly of the ECSC, and the acquisition by the European Parliament of budgetary and legislative power in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>34</sup>

### **Recent Work**

Whereas Moravcsik developed a new theory grounded in historical research, John Gillingham embarked on an equally ambitious undertaking: a history of European integration (the book was titled simply *European Integration*) from the Schuman Plan in 1950 to the Nice Treaty in 2000. Gillingham's credentials as a leading historian of European integration were already well established. Aware of the importance of archival sources and their general unavailability for the period after the early 1970s, he nonetheless felt compelled and confident to continue his narrative into the

early 2000s. The story that he told was not simply of national interests and supranational solutions, but of a struggle “between two principles of social, political, and economic organization: the state and the market”; Gillingham declared that “the tension between these two poles is responsible for the zigs and zags characteristic of the integration process.”<sup>35</sup>

Gillingham starkly portrayed the process of European integration as a fight between good and bad, between market forces and statism. During the first stage of European integration, in the immediate postwar period, statism was on the ascendant. Monnet, the hero of Gillingham’s book on the ECSC, became something of an antihero in *European Integration*. The difficulty with Monnet this time was his passion for planning and disinterest in democratic institutions, two problems that he bequeathed to the EC and later the EU. The epic battle between markets and statism took place, in Gillingham’s opinion, in the 1980s; the main protagonists were Thatcher and Delors. Thatcher was Gillingham’s hero in *European Integration*, Delors the villain, a characterization that turned the usual description of European integration in the 1980s on its head.

Arguably, Gillingham’s ideological zeal undermined the credibility of *European Integration*, which appealed strongly to euroskeptics. Yet Gillingham remained profoundly appreciative of the benefits of European integration, regretting only its direction (or lack of direction) since the halcyon days of the single market program. The negative outcome of the French and Dutch referendums on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 was fully consistent with Gillingham’s conclusions in *European Integration* and was not necessarily a cause for alarm. Rather, it was a signal to EU leaders that the EU needed to return to first principles: the continuation of unspectacular but essential economic integration.

Other major contributions to the historiography of European integration in recent years have not been as ambitious as Gillingham’s, and range from detailed studies of national involvement to in-depth analyses of particular events and developments. The creeping forward in time of the availability of national archives has meant that important turning points, such as the launch of the European Monetary System, are now subject to thorough scrutiny.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, the burgeoning of postgraduate studies in EU history and the increasing political salience of European integration have accounted for a growing number of young historians turning their attention to the EU. More recent scholarship has focused on the relationship between European integration and the Cold War, the institutional history of the EU, and particular policy developments.<sup>37</sup>

### *Britain and the EU*

Given its highly emotional and politically charged nature, it is hardly surprising that the question of Britain’s EU membership has attracted consider-

able academic attention. Concerned about the quality of the public and academic debate on Britain's involvement in the EC, Milward weighed in with a chapter on "Britain and Western Europe" in the first edition of *Rescue of the Nation State*, which he revised considerably in the second edition.<sup>38</sup> He also wrote the first volume of the official history of Britain's relationship with the EC, covering the period from the Schuman Plan to the failure of Britain's first application for membership, in which he argued that British policy throughout was consistent with a national strategy that sought to ease the country's transition from a great power to a middle-ranking European power but that proved difficult to implement for a variety of economic and political reasons.<sup>39</sup>

Stephen Wall, a former British diplomat, wrote the second volume of the official history, covering the period from the Britain's first membership application to the 1975 referendum.<sup>40</sup> Unlike Milward, Wall did not present a main thesis or argument, preferring to let the government documents, from which he quoted extensively, speak from themselves. Nevertheless, Wall emphasized the primacy of geopolitical rather than economic considerations for Britain's renewed membership efforts; and the adroit political maneuvering of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who used the renegotiation of EC membership terms and the 1975 referendum to overcome strong opposition to the EC from within the Labour Party.

### **Purpose and Organization of the Book**

*Europe Recast* examines the European Communities' and later the EU's political, institutional, and policy development in the context of fluctuating national fortunes and changing global circumstances. Drawing on original accounts of the establishment of the European Communities and a wealth of scholarship in a range of disciplines, the book seeks to explain and describe the development of European integration as comprehensively as possible within a manageable length, while hoping to avoid "Euro-fatigue" on the part of the reader. The history of the EU, because it lacks conventional heroics, often seems dull and dry. The empty chair crisis of the mid-1960s, when French representatives refused to take their seats in the Council of Ministers, is the most exciting political conflict in EU history—hardly on a par with the siege of Vienna or the Napoleonic campaigns. Yet as this book shows, the making of the EU combines idealism and ideological struggles, the initiative and political entrepreneurship of strong individuals, national interests and international relations, and institutional design and bureaucratic intrigue.

The story of European integration is worth telling not only because of its intrinsic interest but also because of its importance. Having begun as one of a number of competing European projects, the supranational EC quickly eclipsed all others and soon claimed center stage. As a result, today's EU is



a regional integration organization unlike any other, with formidable economic power and political clout. Understanding the EU is fundamental to understanding Europe, and understanding EU history is fundamental to understanding the EU.

While arguing that national interests rather than Euro-idealism accounted for the emergence of the ECSC and that national preferences were paramount as well in later stages of European integration, this book acknowledges the sometimes pivotal importance of other influences and factors. Although pragmatism may explain the scope and shape of the EU, a felicitous combination of idealism and national self-interest characterized the early years of European integration. The architects of the new Europe grasped the political opportunities presented in the 1950s to pool national sovereignty and establish supranational organizations. European integration could not have flourished and Euro-idealism would have foundered if the undertaking had not worked to the advantage of the countries concerned.

Although the ideas that led to the founding of the European Communities reach back into the nineteenth century, the end of World War II is the critical point of departure for the story of contemporary European integration, and therefore for this book. Thus Chapter 1 explores the immediate postwar period. Chapter 2 examines the emergence of the three Communities in the 1950s, as well as the failure of the proposed defense community. Chapter 3 covers the construction of the EC, including the epic constitutional battle provoked by de Gaulle. Chapter 4 assesses the EC's fortunes during the economic upheavals of the mid-1970s. Chapter 5 explains the EC's gradual recovery in the late 1970s and early 1980s, due to changing domestic and international circumstances. Chapter 6 discusses the acceleration of integration in the late 1980s, focusing on the SEA and the single market program. Chapter 7 describes the achievement of European union in the early 1990s, focusing on the Maastricht Treaty. Chapter 8 examines the challenges that confronted the new EU, notably enlargement, further treaty reform, and implementation of EMU. Chapter 9 looks at the limits of European union, especially with respect to further enlargement, the Lisbon Treaty, and the euro-zone crisis. Chapter 10, the conclusion, returns to key points of the narrative, highlighting the substance of the European idea that survived each new reinvention and expansion to keep the original vision alive.

## Notes

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6. See Francis Deak, "Can Europe Unite?" *Political Science Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (September 1931), pp. 424–433.

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21. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 492.

23. *Ibid.*, p. xix.

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25. Alan Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 2–3.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

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