The building of Europe. Some lessons for the future

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Résumé

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THE BUILDING OF EUROPE

Some lessons for the future

Introduction

In the 21st century we shall need to learn how to manage a deeply interdependent and infinitely diverse planet, marked for over a century by the pre-eminent role played by the Nation States in the management of societies and the world's affairs.

The United Nations organization in its current form still reflects this pre-eminence. Yet it is for precisely this reason that it is in crisis. The world currently counts such a large number of heterogeneous States, that an efficient management of the world's affairs cannot be achieved by simply convening a General Assembly of these States, unless we resign ourselves into accepting that it is precisely this heterogeneity and the sheer numbers involved, that results in de facto administrative power lying with a handful of the world's most powerful States. If we are looking for a reasonably democratic way of managing the world tomorrow and whichever way we look at the problem, there is no apparent alternative the solution lies in constituting a relatively small number of strong regional groups (less than ten) capable of both managing their own internal problems and interfacing with the others to manage the affairs that are common to humanity.

Various attempts at regional groups have been undertaken in the latter part of the 20th century (European Union, ALENA, Cône Sur, ASEAN, etc.) and history has no shortage of precedents in which peoples or independent communities have voluntarily joined forces more or less closely to manage their common affairs, from the very small scale of Switzerland to the more enormous scale of the USA. In the last few decades, however, the building of Europe has provided us with the most singular and striking, tangible political experience. Though, paradoxically, within Europe, the ability to build a genuine European policy is greeted largely by skepticism, the European example is perceived elsewhere either as a threat because of Europe's economic weight and her temptation towards protectionist policy or, more often, as a reference, even a model.

The ambitiousness of the project and the conditions in which Europe has forged its identity, fascinate others more than they do the Europeans themselves. It is true that, looking back on the two World Wars which, triggered by European rivalry, scarred the century and had only just been settled in 1945, and considering that in 1946, it was such a small group of men and women that set out to create what was to become a community of interest in which the French and the Germans swapped their status of hereditary enemies for that of fulcrum of a new Europe, we have every right to be astonished. The process looks as miraculous as it was ambitious. At a time in our history when the dominant feeling is one of impotence, with a resulting lack of confidence in the future, and the feeling that human edifices, particularly of a political nature, are precarious and artificial, it is important to realize that at a very difficult time in world history, in the wake of its most bloody conflict, a handful of people were aware that something had to be done, and that it could succeed. They did it, and, in so doing, profoundly changed the destiny of Europe. That is where the hope lies for the coming generation.

The history of Europe over the last fifty years shows that it is not Utopian to attempt to manage interdependencies. That, admittedly with great difficulty, it has been possible to develop institutions and methods to achieve this. Countries that were enemies yesterday, have shown that they could look beyond the scars of war, and overcome their mutual mistrust. In these countries,

a small number of individuals have managed to reconcile the apparently wild dream of a total overhaul of international relations with the pragmatism needed to take the first steps in this direction. Europe has managed to create an association of countries with very disparate standards of living without causing catastrophes. It has refused to surrender to pure market laws, and has created mechanisms for solidarity that have ultimately been accepted by even hard-line market economists. It has demonstrated that it was possible, on a greater scale than the Nation State, to create mechanisms for solidarity that enabled the safeguard and development of a civilization in search of a balance between individual freedoms and the common good. This too is the balance that is being sought after in other regions of the world.

But can the process of European construction can be transposed unchanged to other regions in the world? It would clearly be presumptuous to make such a claim. Firstly, because it was specific historical circumstances that enabled the emergence of Europe, and secondly, a long learning process has been needed to achieve the current results, which, even now, remain flawed. The specific circumstances included: the suffering caused by the war, the economic need for unity, luck, exceptional personalities such as Jean Monnet, American backing for the European project, and fear of the Soviet Union. Clearly none of these will recur in the same shape in other places and at other times. Yet many aspects of the European process hold a wealth of lessons for Europe's own future, can give new confidence and ambition to her own children, and to other regions in the world. The purpose of this essay is to isolate some of these lessons. It is divided into four chapters:

- **conditions**: the initial obstacles and assets in the building of Europe, and how these obstacles were momentarily weakened and the assets momentarily exploited;

- **the process**: how the European institutions were gradually developed by a combination of idealism and pragmatism;

- **the art of implementation**: how, around the personalities of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, the first were steps taken and, how, once the initial momentum had been lost, the process managed to keep going;

- **some lessons** for other regions in the world.

This document is drawn from a memorable meeting, brief yet dense, that took place on March 5 1996 at the Charles-Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH). Present were six key figures in the early days of European construction (Michael Palliser, Great Britain; Wienrich Behr, Germany; Max Kohnstamm, Netherlands; Georges Berthoin, Emile Noël, and Jean Ripert, France). The meeting, organised by Stéphane Hessel as part of the Alliance for a responsible and united world process, offered them the first opportunity for forty years to get together to talk over their memories. Present too at the meeting were Maurice Cosandey and Pierre Calame of FPH.

CHAPTER 1 - THE CONDITIONS

This story begins in the immediate wake of World War Two. The European countries have fought and destroyed each other. On the side of the losers, Germany has been ravaged. On the winner's side, France has lost status by collapsing against Germany. England has saved herself but is exhausted. The war has provided the USA with the economic springboard so long awaited since the crisis of 1929, and the country has emerged with considerable moral credit. The Soviet

Union's Red Army has gained immense prestige, for victory would not have been possible without much sacrifice and courage. Wholesale reconstruction is a necessity. But on what bases? The Nation States? A European organization with or without the English? Integration with the Soviet Union as part of a continuing revolution, or in some developing socialist form of humanism? The idea of a united Europe, a conceptual vestige of the Roman Empire, is faced with potent obstacles, but also enjoys, at least temporarily, some advantages. However, of paramount importance too is the image of a united Europe in the popular imagination, as well as that of the social and political forces with which it is associated.

We shall see how these obstacles were overcome, the assets exploited, and how Europe gained favour with the majority of public opinion.

A. Overcoming the obstacles

1. The obstacle of sovereignty and national identities

It is within Europe, particularly in the wake of the French Revolution, that the idea of Nation became so strong. Within this idea, national sovereignty was a dogma. In subsequent history and political science, national identity systematically took precedence over both local identities and the possibility of a European identity. Nationalism had for over a century been the force and the malediction of Europe. It is this nationalism that had just brought Europe to the brink of self-destruction. Europe had been fortunate that, at the time of its building between 1945 and 1950 the sovereignty of the European countries was considerably weakened. Germany, defeated, was still under trusteeship. France, Belgium and the Netherlands, though still theoretically sovereign States, were in reality dependent. It was therefore far easier to obtain an acceptance by States, conscious of their inadequacy and of their incapacity for independent action, that Union, in an as yet undefined form, was worth attempting. As Emile Noël puts it: "if we had tried the same thing twenty years later, just by cool calculation, we would never have obtained from Germany, France and the Netherlands what we did back in 1950, when we asked them to make concessions on sovereignty which at the time seemed to them minimal". By implementing a common administration of coal and steel, which in many ways amounted to a common administration of the wealth of the Ruhr, Germany was placed on an even footing with her partners. Michael Palliser noted that the failure, several years later, of the Common European Defence policy was due to the fact that the initiative came too soon as regards Franco-German relations, and too late, because sovereignties had once again been consolidated. It is significant here that England, which, from the outset, strongly encouraged the building of Europe, perceived herself as external to the process. Her place among the winners of the war left a feeling that sovereignty was intact. As Michael Palliser notes: "British public opinion did not take to Churchill's pro-European ideas. It was a sort of pride on our part. We had won the war and had no need for all that." Georges Berthoin notes: "Great Britain did not take part in the European coal and steel Community because the Labour government had just nationalized the coal industry and did not want to share with a European authority the power that it has just won at national level".

2. Methods of organization of political life and forms of negotiation that are difficult to reconcile with a common administration

The European countries were used to managing their relations through traditional diplomacy. Power was exercised by national institutions. In the negotiation, each party formulated its interests and negotiated compromises with the others. It was indispensable to make a break with these practices. Or, more exactly, two breaks: one, temporary, in which Jean Monnet played a

decisive part, persuading each party to "sit on the same side of the table with the problem in the middle", another, more durable, with the creation of institutions embodying the duality of the functions with, on one hand, the European Commission, organically representing the "interests of Europe" and, on the other, the Council of Ministers representing national interests. We shall return to these two turning points in more detail.

3. Overcoming mutual suspicion

In 1945, notes Max Kohnstamm, the drama of war was still present in everyone's minds. "Could Europe be a human reality for the Dutch? The Italians were not taken seriously. The Belgians were still very remote. The Germans were viewed with hatred, and there was no confidence in the French." So how was the first step to be taken? As Stéphane Hessel points out, there was also, undoubtedly, mutual curiosity between Europeans. "We have lived together for centuries with a certain amount of mutual recognition and affection, whereas in other regions of the world, the boundaries are still very watertight". Yet what allowed the mistrust to be overcome was the determination to turn a new page. "So long as the past dominates the future," notes Max Kohnstamm, "there is no chance. I remember my first conversation with Wienrich Behr (one of the German representatives, he had only a few months previously been a member of the staff of van Paulus, the field-marshal who capitulated before the Russians at Stalingrad). You walked into my office and said that you were a regular officer. I said that was none of my business and that we were here to talk about the future, not the past. Later, we talked about the past and there comes a time when this is indispensable. But there are times when action has to be forward-looking".

B Making the most of the assets

Three factors combined to make the immediate post-war period propitious for the birth of Europe: the "never again" feeling that came in the aftermath of war, the interdependence between the different European countries, and external pressure.

1. Never again

The first factor that contributed to the building of Europe was, above all, the suffering, the horror of the war that had just ended. Europe is, above all, the offspring of suffering and necessity. Michael Palliser says: "this European miracle was the result of two absolutely disastrous wars. One of the reasons for which some Englishmen and women of my generation became strongly pro-European was the appalling situation that we discovered in Germany, but also throughout the continent in 1944-45". Wienrich Behr adds: "In Germany, there was the conviction that Europe was a condition sine qua non for peace-keeping. The need to guarantee peace was a motivation. My generation is the generation that lived through two wars. After experiencing two wars, one had this conviction that one was now laying the ground for an enduring peace".

The need to establish peace justified the renunciation of national interests: "common interest meant that some national advantages had to be abandoned in favour of a common denominator. At that time, the common interest was a non-discriminatory access to the wealth of Germany, the Ruhr, coal and steel." Before World War II, the economist J.M. Keynes had already explained what would happen if measures were not taken. But at that time, the suffering was not enough to generate a reaction.

2. Interdependence between European countries

Before the war, economic exchanges between European countries were considerable, and created a de facto interdependence. As Max Kohnstamm points out: "before we even started to discuss the Schuman plan in 1950, things were relatively straightforward: it was clear that the Dutch economy could not be rebuilt leaving Germany in a disastrous situation. Yet, at the same time, what sense was there in allowing Germany to rebuild if it was for the Ruhr to start making new bombs to destroy Rotterdam again? How were we to break this vicious circle? At least we had to start by realizing that a vicious circle was what we were in! Already, between 1949 and 1950, a small group of us had discussed this, and had concluded that economically, the Netherlands needed a large market and an economically strong Germany. What was to be done and how?"

Emile Noël makes the point that current international commercial exchanges are North-South rather than intra-regional. The African countries trade for the most part with the Western world and very little with each other. In the Maghreb, exchanges between Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria do not exceed 10% of total trade, the remainder being accounted for by the Northern countries. This is even true for the Asian countries. This explains why, each time an attempt is made to produce a regional entity, questions of relations with neighbours tend to prevail over economic interest.

3. Soviet threats and American encouragement

Another motivating factor behind the building of Europe was the need for defence against the perceived threat of the rise of Stalinism. Consequently, for Europe, the Soviet Union was a unifying factor. As Michael Palliser points out: "we now tend to forget what was then the force of the Communist parties in France, Italy and Germany. There was a shared feeling that the USSR might succeed in gaining control of Europe. This threat was a unifying factor that pushed the Europeans into doing what they did".

Traditionally, British foreign policy had been to divide the Europeans, siding with one or another to prevent the emergence of a major European power. The reason why Great Britain performed a policy U-turn by strongly supporting the building of Europe after the War was the existence of the Soviet Union. Many Europeans in the immediate aftermath of the war, still hoped that the USSR, which had been a major ally during the war, might develop along different lines towards a more "humanist" revolution. Many were afraid that a united Europe would cut the USSR off from such a development. However, Stalin's hard-line attitude after the war, rejecting the Marshall plan, and pursuing his expansionist policy for world-wide communism, changed pro-Soviet sympathy into the feeling that there was a threat against which unity was required.

The Americans encouraged the building of Europe and made it a prerequisite of the Marshall plan. However, as Max Kohnstamm notes, "money was important, but wasn't essential. What did matter was that the Americans said: 'if you don't want to work together you won't get any money'. We were enormously lucky to have this rich and generous America".

C. Creating a positive image of Europe in public opinion

Over and above economic or strategic interests, was Europe desirable to European public opinion? What was the image people had of it? The result was not a foregone conclusion. Georges Berthoin says: "We were fortunate in one thing. Churchill had taken a favourable position towards the European project as of 1946. He said that he wanted a sort of United States

of Europe. This was important because it was Hitler who, during the war, had initially put forward the European idea, developing the theme of the European crusade against Bolshevism. The fact that it was Churchill who again proposed the idea of European integration and Franco-German cooperation made the European idea acceptable in many people's minds. This was made even easier because many European federalist movements had been born in prisoner of war and concentration camps." So, in the wake of a European idea of Nazi origin came a different idea associated with the resistance to Nazism.

In Churchill's mind, this, however, meant continental Europe, and there was no call for Britain to take part. It is not the least of history's paradoxes that an English leader should militate for the building of Europe while keeping his own country out. The result has been an enduring misunderstanding.

There was also a political difficulty. In Great Britain, Churchill's patronage produced a negative reaction from the Labour Party and the labour movement in general. Also, Europe in both Churchill's and the Conservative party's outlook was based on cooperation between States. On the continent, a federal type of approach was widely propounded in Christian Democrat circles, less so among socialists. (There was, however, a demand for British involvement). Because of these contradictions, there was a risk, at the end of forties, that the movement towards European unification would run out of steam, and even come to a halt altogether. As we shall see, the Monnet-Schuman initiative was to set the wheels in motion again.

CHAPTER II. THE PROCESS

What has perhaps best characterized the building of Europe, like all human adventures, is the combination of idealism and pragmatism, dream and a sense of the tangible, an association of the desirable and the possible. The idea of building Europe was not born in a single day from the fertile imagination of a few well-intentioned individuals. It was an old dream, reactivated by the dramas of the war and supported by large sectors of the population.

A. Civic involvement

In May 1948, a major "European Congress" was held at the Hague, at the initiative of the British "Unionist" (following Churchill) and continental "federalist" organizations. The European Congress was not just a straightforward political conference. Alongside a large number of parliamentarians and politicians from all sides - except the communists - was a large civic representation, with trade unionists, employers, farmers, and intellectuals. The Hague conference was therefore not political. Rather, it was what we would now call a civic Assembly or, in the terms of the Alliance for a responsible and united world, a sort of European Estates General. For example, Denis de Rougemont, Swiss philosopher and writer, played a major role, and helped to pinpoint the idea of a European cultural dimension. The Hague Congress was the seedbed in which the first tangible actions in the building of Europe could develop.

B. Distant perspectives and first steps

European construction was a step by step process - pragmatic and gradual - but it was not a modest ambition that would gradually open itself up to new horizons. If the economy was the

means to this first step in the building process, in the mind of its founders, the perspective was primarily political. Jean Monnet, at the height of the debacle in 1940, had suggested to Churchill, who made the idea public, a political merger of England and France! In 1946, Winston Churchill spoke of a United States of Europe. But the founders saw even further ahead. In the words of Max Kohnstamm: "the European Community was not for Jean Monnet a goal in itself. For him, the aim was to completely overhaul international relations. The idea was to create the same form of democracy between States as within, in other words, a common law, both constraining and liberating at the same time. The only alternative is jungle law." This requirement is more than ever obvious today. The building of Europe was a step forward in this direction.

However, at the end of the 20th century, with the globalisation of trade, the need to create a set of rules for democracy in world-wide relations is more urgent than ever. Georges Berthoin, for long European president of the Trilateral Commission notes that the top bosses of the major multinational corporations are themselves in favour of a set of rules of this kind. The economy, within Europe, was the instrument by which the political link could gradually be built, once interdependence was accepted as desirable. The economy was never a goal in itself.

C. Beyond the market, the community

The goal of the European founders was, as we have said, political. It was to create a community of interests and cultures and not just a large market. The constitution of a common market was a first step towards a true European government in which the European Parliament and the European Court are already pillars. As Michael Palliser notes, there is no doubt that, during the last decades, Europe has made much faster progress in economic integration than in other areas. Yet, in 1950 and 1960, in a context where customs laws were higher and countless tariff barriers impeded trade exchanges, the creation of a customs union within the community and a common economic zone was in itself a major political act. The creation of a common market was a political act.

The problem today has been substantially modified. The pace at which the building of Europe grows is largely dependent on economic fluctuations. As Michael Palliser puts it: "in the history of the community, there have been ups and downs that correspond to the ups and downs of the community's economy. At the end of 1972, a meeting of European governmental heads in Paris set Union Economic and Monetary Union for 1980. This date was forgotten because of the oil crisis. The 1970s were years of economic turbulence. Economic pressure becomes political pressure. The current depression surrounding the European idea is the result of unemployment, and the lack of growth in our economies."

But, above all, is it really possible to undertake to build regional entities today from either economic integration or a free trade zone? The weight of the world market has made this much more difficult. Max Kohnstamm puts it this way: "The globalisation of the economy has made it more difficult to get out of purely economic approaches. When we started to build Europe, we all agreed that a large domestic market was absolutely indispensable. We did not think in terms of a market open to the world. Today, on the other hand, many will say: we already have the world market, why should we do anything more specific?" Stéphane Hessel goes along with this: "the market is now global and, unless state sovereignty is used as a very strong mechanism, it has become difficult within a world market to have protected regional markets."

In this new context, the building of regional entities first means developing an awareness that, unlike in neo-liberal Utopias, the market, having become an end in itself, is incapable of ensuring alone the social and ecological regulation of the planet, and it is imperative that political

regulations be created at world-wide level in which the regions act as veritable communities. In this perspective, the legitimacy of protected regional markets stems precisely from the need to create such communities.

D. A new form of governance

The European founder fathers were very aware of the precariousness of political will-power and the vicissitudes of public opinion. The drama of the war and the temporary crisis of national sovereignties had opened doors a little way. It was important to prevent them from closing again, and, it was a question, as it were, of getting a foot in to keep them open. The foot was to be the institutional mechanisms. The founder fathers, Jean Monnet at the helm, knew just how important institutions were in guaranteeing duration. With the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), followed by the European Commission, irreversible effects were introduced into the building of Europe without which, undoubtedly, Europe would not have become what it is today. Very soon after the war, the strong feeling for sovereignty returned. The whole European political tradition was based on bilateral negotiations between individual States. It was indispensable that instances be created capable of upholding the common European interest to, and even against, the national political leaders. It is quite consciously that "technocratic" instances were created, made up of individuals with no political mandate and speaking in the name of Europe, in the face of political instances that were, by essence, national. "The challenge of Europe", says Georges Berthoin, "was to establish a dynamic link between the common interests and the national identities and sovereignties. This is because it is dangerous and vain to wish to negate the reality of nation. But how are we to propose common solutions and to associate national sovereignties with this approach, and feel comfortable with the application of common policies? The community's experience of its own institutions has created a truly new theory of power. In the normal exercise of power, there are technicians, experts who say what is desirable, and politicians who say what is possible. It is the Minister who has the democratic legitimacy and assumes responsibility for decisions. In the European Commission, the functions of decision and proposition have been duplicated and given equal status. The European Commission is not a commission of civil servants but a politically responsible instance for submitting propositions. It has its own legitimacy, and has become increasingly clearly democratic because the member commissioners must be accepted by the European Parliament. The Commission's counterpart, on the same level, is the Council of Ministers, embodying the representatives of national sovereignties. It is the dialogue between these two instances of equal status that makes it possible to unite rather than oppose the two facets - common interest and sovereignty - that are essential for regional administration and, tomorrow perhaps, for world administration".

The key mechanism, the real master stroke of the European founders, was to insist that the European Commission be the single channel through which propositions were to be submitted to the European Parliament. The national representations then give their opinion on these proposals. Europe would not be what it is if it had been left to the national representations to formulate these proposals themselves.

E. The long process of learning by managing concrete problems

The current workings of the European Commission did not develop overnight. The only way to learn the real meaning of common interest is to learn to manage common problems together. Coal and steel provided the opportunity. For Jean Monnet, this idea had a deep rooting because,

as a young man, in the Great War, he had exercised responsibilities within the common Anglo-French administration of procurement and transportation. Jean Monnet, at once a visionary and a pragmatist, has a sharp feeling for the economy. For each action, a careful balance between advantages and disadvantages had to be analyzed, between gains and losses. The choice of an area in which there was a real need for change, where the tangible gains clearly outweighed the disadvantages as a starting point for the building of Europe that was where the adventure really began.

F. The driving force behind European construction has changed over the years

As Emile Noël points out: "when the Treaty of Rome was being negotiated, some of the driving forces behind European construction had already weakened. By 1956-1957", he underlines, "the Soviet threat was, for example, considered less serious than in 1950. The Atlantic organization had become more powerful and the Soviet challenge appeared less daunting. The creation of a common market, the common construction of peaceful nuclear energy had assumed greater importance than protection against the Soviet threat. For example, for the French government of the time, Europe provided an opening, a way to prepare the French economy for a more open, more liberal policy, enabling steps to be taken, while making precautions indispensable for an economy that was still relatively fragile".

G. The prerequisites for the European edifice

Can all countries, all the regions in the world draw inspiration from the institutional mechanisms created by the European Commission? Emile Noël considers this uncertain: "democracy, a state in which justice prevails, and sound administration, were prerequisites to ensure the successful working of a system as complex as that of the Community. We subsequently extended the Community to countries in which these three prerequisites were not fulfilled. This was true in Greece, where the administration was deficient, and Portugal where it was weak. Several Commission inquiries show just how far the system is fragile as soon as these three prerequisites are deregulated. The attempts that have been made in other regions - Central America, the Andean group, in the Maghreb - to build structures more or less based on the European system, have till now tended to lead to failures, precisely because these basic conditions were not fulfilled. The regimes were not democratic, the administration was flawed, and the rule of law was largely undermined."

CHAPTER III - THE ART OF IMPLEMENTATION

At the end of the 1940s, though numerous factors were favourable to the building of Europe, the project could have remained wishful thinking had it not been for the genius of a few men, the foremost of whom was Jean Monnet, and their capacity to get together and constantly come up with concrete solutions to the problems facing them. This is because, as Jean Ripert, who also held Jean Monnet's positions at the French "Commissariat au plan" and at the United Nations emphasizes, "you don't gain credibility when you propose to do things, without showing how they are to be done: an example is to make speeches about some agreement between governmental and non-governmental organizations to change consumption patterns and production structures, without anything actually changing. Concrete action is needed to give

credibility to the message. At the start of European construction, what gave credibility to the French positions was that the French were ready to abandon sovereignty in the crucially important fields of coal and steel. Since then, French governments have not always accepted to pay a high price for the credibility of some of their initiatives in the political or military fields." This art of implementation found its finest exponent in Jean Monnet.

A. Catalysis

Jean Monnet, as early as the Schuman plan negotiations, was not in a strong position. He was not invested by all the governments. He had to convince. Georges Berthoin makes the point that "Jean Monnet never used a position of strength. He allowed people to become aware that the common interest was to some extent part of the national interest." Dialogue, persuasion, finding allies, was of the essence. When the European Coal and Steel Community was founded, steel manufacturers were far from convinced by the idea. Jean Ripert notes: "they had their cartel and their experts sitting at the table. Some had a political vision, and many let themselves be convinced by Jean Monnet. Among the industrialists, there were people of all kinds. You have to find them. One of Jean Monnet's talents was the ability to very quickly detect a large number of potential allies, without making mistakes". Undoubtedly, however, it is the Schuman plan negotiation that has remained legendary. Max Kohnstamm tells the story: "for me, there was a very precise turning point that led to the success of the Schuman plan. We had sat down for discussions with a relatively small group around the table. After five minutes' talk, the arguments broke out. This lasted several days. The head of the Dutch delegation, Spierenburg was practically distraught, exclaiming 'how am I supposed to defend my country's interests, if these imbeciles don't even know what their own country's interest is?' Because, suddenly, on the table, nobody was defending a national interest. That's where the plotting started. Jean Monnet said that we had to get around the table and put the problem in the middle. Once you start negotiating independently, on the side, the process falls apart." Jean Ripert adds: "unlike you, I wasn't there on the first day of negotiation, but I soon joined the small group of French negotiators. So I heard Jean Monnet come back to this point time and again. The facts showed how relevant his approach was. Conversely, I have also witnessed at the UN that things get complicated when there are too many negotiators around the table".

B. The art of grasping opportunities

Max Kohnstamm picks up the story: "Monnet was walking in his garden with an American journalist. On their way back, the American said 'Mr Monnet, you're very superstitious. You've talked about nothing but luck.' And Monnet answered: 'yes, because without luck you can achieve nothing. However, to get luck, you have to work hard so as to be in a position to grasp it when it turns up'".

C. Plotting for a just cause

Was the building of Europe born from a plot? Evidently not, if, by plot, we understand a small number of individuals meeting secretly to enforce their interests against those of the others. The building of Europe, as we have repeated, was a public objective, proclaimed as such, and largely shared. However, at implementation level, there is no doubt that, thanks to the action of a small number of determined individuals, with allies in different countries and different administrations,

the generous idea began to take shape. As Wienrich Behr points out, those who worked together at Luxembourg, at the ECSC, were militants of the common cause. Yet, he says, "I came up against those who were convinced that the wealth of this poor Germany had to stay in Germany. Someone who later became a great European said to me at the time: you're all Quieslings (from the name of the Austrian Chancellor who opened up Austria to Hitler). The people at Luxembourg had to do together what was dictated by their common interests. They had contacts with the people in the national administrations who were agreed with our idea that we had to do things in common against the national interest". "Did you have the impression", asks Stéphane Hessel, "of, dare I say, taking part in practically a plot? Of trying to drive home ideas, knowing that it would be difficult, that you shouldn't say too soon what it was that you were aiming at?" "Yes", answers Max Kohnstamm, "it was a plot." Stéphane Hessel pursues: "This mechanism to use the European Commission as a sole channel for making proposals, was it just an ingenious idea that got through unnoticed because nobody was paying attention to it, or was it a clearly defined proposal? I'm interested to know how a good idea, a fertile idea can overcome the barriers of inertia and stupidity". To which Max Kohnstamm says: "There was a plot in the building of Europe insofar as we didn't blaze abroad the idea that the single channel principle was an absolutely vital feature. We secured it without everyone being really aware of what we were doing. Once we had got it, we said why it was essential and we defended it. Despite all the weaknesses that we notice today, nobody attacks this specific issue of the Commission's exclusive role within the Community. Even the English have come to accept it".

So it was by creating institutional mechanisms with a guaranteed durability and that had their own specific development logic that Europe began to develop.

D. The generation effect

Jean Monnet, at the time of the Schuman plan negotiations, was already a mature sixty year old. However many in his entourage were still very young. This is reminiscent of what happened in French agriculture after the war. Power went straight from the grand-parents to the grand-children, skipping a generation. Perhaps this jump from one generation to another is an enduring and universal prerequisite for a bold projection into the future.

CHAPTER IV: WHAT LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE AND FOR THE OTHERS?

The lessons to be learned from the building of Europe have emerged in the previous chapters. In these chapters, we have highlighted the specific nature of Europe. It is now up to each of the world's regions to search for its own path from an analysis of its own specific characteristics. By way of conclusion, we can identify four main issues which can be used, if not as a guidelines, at least as landmarks for other histories and for the future of the European adventure itself:

* the awareness of a crisis that calls for action;

* the need for a vision backed by civic society and by the younger generations;

* the search for needs and tangible motives;

* the setting up of institutions guaranteeing durable construction and balance between interdependency and diversity.

A. The awareness of crisis

As we have said, the suffering and disaster of the war were the first motivations behind the building of Europe. But do peoples always have to wait for drama on this scale before reason can begin to triumph? Let us hope not. The crisis is already there. In many countries, particularly in the South, the concept of national sovereignty is increasingly hollow, and the populations are aware of this. This crisis in sovereignty is compounded by a crisis in political legitimacy. Very often, there is a lack of respect for political elites. Faced with the great forces of the market and science, and the weight of international institutions, the elites exercise power in a way that is perceived as a quest for private interest rather than as a means for a people to weigh collectively on its own destiny.

Many feel that our development model has reached a dead end, that science, technique and the market place, these prodigious means of operation, have become ends in themselves, risking to drag humanity into immense crises. There are things CARSPECIAUX 190 \f "Symbol" water, soil, energy conservation, the assets that are common to all of humanity CARSPECIAUX 190 \f "Symbol" that must be made to succeed at all costs, and that call for worldwide mobilization. In the absence of a common set of rules, the globalisation of the economy has become a jungle. Almost everywhere in the world, societies are increasingly becoming two-tiered, with a more or less sizable layer of the population integrated into and capable of benefiting from the world market, while the remainder is increasingly outcast and marginalised. Faced with these major trends, unless we except the continental States such as China and India, no Nation State is alone able to face up, because none is able to define the rules of the game. At best can they, like the emerging economic powers in Asia, use intelligence, creativity, and coherence to carve out a niche in the world market. Let us wager that the urgent need for regulations, the shared awareness of the crisis, will be a sufficient stimulant to shake institutional inertia and the vested interests of national elite.

B. The need for vision

Dream and passion are the prime motivations for action, coming far before interest. It will be the task of the young generations, for whom INTERNET is a part of everyday life, to build tomorrow's world. To perceive the interdependencies, and identify the threats that hang over it. To dare to wish for a responsible and united society. Without a vision of this kind, no technocratic mechanism can be possible, and, even if it was, would be meaningless. Similarly, there is a clear need for a mobilization of civic societies on a world-wide scale similar to that of the Hague conference in 1948. Because a collective idea of meaning must be built before institutional mechanisms.

C. Identifying the driving forces and sources of demand for regional integration

To secure a change, it is first necessary to identify those who wish such a change, and the concrete issues that can serve as a starting point. Using Europe as an example, Max Kohnstamm suggests: "perhaps, with small groups in which there may be people with a demand, a good starting point would be a detailed analysis of advantages and disadvantages. They should be able

to say what it is they are asking for and what the obstacles are. From there, it is possible to start building a plan and the idea of a plan is necessary. If you talk to people who cannot formulate sufficiently concrete demands, you will stay on a general level like that of the Hague symposium". Georges Berthoin goes further: "Politicians often have a generous impulse, but someone has to say them 'Fine, but what do we do?' Generally that's when they say 'we'll see about that later'. It is here, that methods should be established with stages. In other words the politician should be taken literally. That was Monnet's method". "Also", he adds, "people who have demands should be assisted in expressing them, in becoming aware of what is reasonable, and should be helped to make precise proposals. If the governments see that a certain number of articulate demands are being made, they will go in that direction. A politician will not set out to solve problems unless someone puts them on his plate. That would be suicidal. However if he is aware that there is a trend in opinion, that is not extreme, he will bear it in mind, all the more so if he is unsure of his legitimacy with regard to the material interdependence that characterizes international and daily life for everyone. If awareness is organized by those who are making the demands, answers may emerge, and our experience here provides us with grounds for optimism: things happen when a lot of people share the same feeling of danger at the same time. This is what is happening right now. The globalisation phenomenon is a great opportunity but also carries a threat. This is clear."

D. The search for appropriate institutions

The European institutions cannot be transposed in their current state. However, they do allow us to pinpoint a few principles of more general relevance:

- The balance between diversity and interdependence. Reconciling the cultures of different nations with the need to put an end to nationalism is obviously the central point. The world is rich in its diversity. We complain in Europe about the abundance of European directives. Yet these have largely resulted from the emphasis on market unification, and consequently on the conditions for competition. In other regions of the world, the need for unification need not be pushed so hard. On the other hand, a principle of active subsidiarity might be applied universally: the countries agree on a set of common goals but each according to its own specific characteristics defines its own means to obtain common results.

- The cog-wheel effect. Thanks to the genius of its founders Europe very soon converted otherwise precarious agreements into institutions guaranteeing their durability.

- Institutions compatible with the reality of national administrative and political structures. As we have seen, the successful operation of the European institutions was based on the assumption that they would represent democratic States in which law was observed and administrations efficient. Where this is not yet the case, there will undoubtedly be a need to invent, at least initially, more rudimentary systems for regional integration.

- Common interest issues. Two ideas : a commission representing the common interest and acting as a single channel for the submission of proposals, and the achievement of a balance between a common instance and national representations are both major innovations in the European system and, probably, the corner stone of any learning process for regional cooperation.