



—Illingsworth, *The London Daily Mail*

Western Unity: When & How?

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The committee system of integration on an executive level would prove to be irresponsible, undemocratic, uncreative and uninspiring in the long run.

FOR WESTERN democracies, survival has become a common problem: sovereignty will be shared in common or separately lost.

A Western Europe demoralized and divided against itself is no protection for America. A Western Europe federated as a separate and neutral entity is no better.

The necessity of Atlantic Union is no longer in question. Britain's Prime Minister has declared:

We are approaching a formative and decisive phase in the organization of the Atlantic Community. This will require, by a more effective pooling of resources, the surrender, in an unprecedented degree, by each country of the ability to do as it pleases.

The questions are *when?* and *how?*

Continental concepts of law contrast sharply with Anglo-Saxon traditions: Germany remains authoritarian; for Italy, parliamentary government is still a tenuous experiment and due process, a revolutionary idea. Nations as far apart in outlook as the Atlantic democracies naturally seek the simplest form of cooperation—integration at the executive level of governments.

In executive integration, joint committees are created to carry out specific functions. Decisions are made only through unanimity. The committees have no original authority or independent existence. Their authority is gained

from the fact that each member, in voting, commits the national government which he represents to the actions undertaken.

In wartime, combined boards of the Allies directed every phase of our joint endeavors, just as combined commands directed our operations in the field. In postwar years this pattern was recreated in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. In defending the pattern, in the debate on the Schuman Plan, Sir Stafford Cripps declared:

Ever since it was set up, the OEEC has been making progress in active cooperation, so that today the degree of mutual understanding and cooperation between its members exceeds that in any other association of nations ever known in the world.

Two very major achievements stand to its credit. The first is the liberation of trade between the OEEC countries. . . . The second . . . is the series of European payments schemes culminating in the European Payments Union. This latter scheme has been a difficult one for [Great Britain], with its obligations' to the Commonwealth and the rest of the sterling area, and we have gone a very long way to reach an accommodation.

Cripps of course is right. The clearing away of trade barriers among the free nations has been the indispensable first step toward closer integration. The European Payments Union is a vital second step toward the coordination of

economic policies. The OEEC has done invaluable work, though a great deal remains, in abolishing the restrictions that still obstruct a third of Europe's trade. Already the OEEC has projected its planning beyond 1952. America and Canada have recently joined the OEEC as full members.

Is the OEEC enough to bind Germany's resources to the West, and to unify European defense production? The British stake their future on the OEEC pattern. A thousand little OEECs crisscross Europe in a spider's web of committees, tying every conceivable combination of sovereign and independent nations in an abortive system of half-commitments and half-alliances.

No Transfer of Sovereignty

In planning for common defense, the North Atlantic Council has employed the committee system. The Foreign Ministers meet in the Council on rare occasions; their deputies are on permanent assignment. The Ministers of Defense of the Council nations meet on the Defense Committee; the Ministers of Finance, on the Defense Finance and Economics Committee; the representatives of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of each

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nation, on the Military Committee; the Ministers of Supply, on the Production Supply Board. Under the committees are the standing groups for Western and Southern Europe, and for the North Atlantic seaboard nations. At Fontainebleau they jointly maintain the nucleus of a potential combined command.

In the staffs of the planning group there are the beginnings of original executive authority. Yet neither in the resolutions of the Council, nor in the terms of the Atlantic Pact itself, is any transfer of sovereignty undertaken or contemplated.

Ernest Bevin christened the new community the Atlantic Brotherhood. "Democracy," he declared at the Council's last meeting, "is no longer a series of isolated links. It has become a cohesive organism."

Functionalists, Not Federalists

The truth is, of course, that at present the Brotherhood is neither cohesive nor organic. The Pact calls on its governments to "unite their efforts," but offers no structure for unification. It calls on them to settle their disputes peacefully, but creates no mechanism for settlement. It declares that an attack against is an attack against all, without implementing a combined defense.

The basic organizing principles of the Brotherhood, in Bevin's words, are:

First, that it consist of "12 free, independent sovereign nations working together."

Second, that these nations are joined in "equal association" in which "the smallest nation among us is equal with the greatest."

These principles may have been politically expedient in 1949. In terms of effective action from now on, they are so far removed from reality, and so inadequate for our present tasks, that any structure raised upon them must be condemned to powerlessness and paralysis.

Europeans have believed that any closer integration of the Western nations rested on a rapprochement between Germany and France. Anxious to secure this, and seeking a way out of the quicksand of committees, the French have carried inter-government cooperation one stage further in the Schuman Plan. The French White Paper states:

By pooling basic production and by instituting a new higher authority whose decisions will bind . . . member countries, these proposals will build the first concrete foundation of the European federation which is indispensable to the preservation of peace.

The plan was rejected by the British government. Its action was more deep-seated and disturbing than the speeches of Labor Party leaders at first suggested. For, Socialist jargon aside, Cripps was speaking in the mainstream of British tradition in basing his attack upon the Schuman Plan on its supranational approach to Atlantic cooperation, and in restating the British alternative—the committee system.

The European Payments Union . . . [Cripps argued in Parliament] is typical of what can be accomplished by a freely negotiated arrangement between governments. I am perfectly certain that if, in this case, some supranational body had attempted to impose upon us by a majority vote some payments scheme without any prior discussion between governments, it could only have resulted in complete failure and in our having to leave the organization.

Participation in a political federation, limited to Western Europe, is not compatible either with our Atlantic community or as a world power. . . . Free and voluntary association and cooperation between the governments of Europe can best achieve the most stable results,

Cripps carefully avoids any rejection of an Atlantic federation. Yet Britain's commitments and tradition bind her to the "free and voluntary" approach. "We

British are functionalists and not federalists," a Cabinet minister told me, pounding on the table. His unspoken conclusion was: "The rest of the world can like it or lump it; do things the way we do, or not at all."

For quick understanding, swift decisions, freedom of action in times of emergency, the committee system is superb. Every civil servant will swear by it—as every civil servant should. Economists, Treasury experts, diplomats and soldiers of 14 nations have learned in ten years of war and reconstruction to work as members of a single team. Effective and devoted, they are uninhibited by public prejudice, unimpeded by legislative review, unambitious for more grandiose superstructures. In their own restricted world, Atlantic Union has long since been achieved.

However, democracy places a limit on the powers of civil servants, and, with it, to the effectiveness of the committee system. In the short run it works miracles; in the long run it suffers from four major defects.

First, the committee system is irresponsible.

Its members are civil servants, free from the responsibilities and the benefits of public participation and legislative scrutiny.

Where the executive and legislative branches of government are fused, as in Britain, this weakness is hidden. But where they are separated, as in France and the United States, it is at once apparent. The legislative branch, save in wartime, must always be on guard against the extension of executive power. It will naturally and rightly suspect an independent instrument of the executive and restrict its authority, even where substantial power is needed.

Since the committees themselves have no original powers, and will be granted none by legislatures, the executive branch of each national government becomes the sole judge of its own performance in fulfilling or ignoring committee directives. No authority, no discipline rests with the committee, and no sanctions—save the doubtful and dangerous sanctions of an irate American Congress withholding needed aid.

Second, the committee system is undemocratic.

The civil servants who make up the committee are trained in the management of nations rather than



Straight: Pact is not organic, cohesive

Inventor to the End

JAMES WATT

Born in Scotland, Jan. 19, 1736

THE CONDENSING STEAM engine, which has contributed so much to the social and material wealth of our civilization, has changed little in principle since James Watt took out his patent in 1769.

Watt became interested in the power of steam when, as a poor young precision instrument maker employed by the University of Glasgow, he was asked to repair a steam pump used for draining mines. He studied the cumbersome contraption closely and put it back into operation. But its inefficiency was a challenge and for several years he worked on the problem, borrowing money for materials, living a spartan life. When he finally produced his steam pump, which was more powerful and efficient because of the separate condensing chamber, he had to relinquish two-thirds of the manufacturing receipts to his financier. Dejected by the struggle, he left off inventing and slowly built up a reputation as a civil engineer.

The Scottish mines gained a new lease on life, drained by Watt's steam engines. Sales boomed, and after several years James Watt regained full rights to his invention and formed the partnership of Boulton and Watt—a satisfactory arrangement in which Boulton ran the factory and Watt was free to invent. Technical improvements and more uses for the steam engine increased the wealth and power of the firm.

When his patent ran out and the steam engine became public domain, Watt retired, devoting the rest of his old age to diversified inventions such as methods of bleaching cloth, reproducing sculpture, and consuming smoke from chimneys.

the committees a vision of world government, brought suddenly into being. It was short lived. At the war's end the committees were at once destroyed. In World War II, combined boards were created to direct every phase of the joint war efforts of the Allies. Seeing both their promise and their limitations, some observers such as myself, who believed that world government would develop along functional lines or not at all, urged that the combined boards be broadened to include Russia, and made part of an over-all structure of the United Nations which would grow continuously, through the management of war and reconstruction, to the enforcement of peace. Instead, inter-allied cooperation was held at the committee level, and the committee structure was again destroyed at the war's end.

Last, the committee system is uninspiring.

The common need of the Western nations is for bold and imaginative thinking: the committee system instead reduces all ideas to the lowest common denominator set by its weakest member.

Our common need is further for leaders equal to our tasks; the committee system, by its framework of frustration and lack of authority, automatically excludes first-rate men. So Charles Spofford, who raised money for the Metropolitan Opera, fumbles Europe's mobilization while Eisenhower, who led Europe to victory, raises money for Columbia.

Our common need is above all to build together a spirit of faith and dedication among the peoples of the Western nations.

"We fought the better," said Churchill of Britain, "because we felt with conviction that it was not only our own cause but a world cause for which the Union Jack was kept flying in 1940 and 1941. The soldier who laid down his life, the mother who wept for her son and the wife who lost her husband felt a sense of being united with the universal and the eternal. . . ."

Bright flags, great leaders, inspiring ideas have moved men in the past. But who will be moved today to give up wealth, run risks and make sacrifices for the North Atlantic Council and the OEEC?

in the ways of democracies. Their greatest weakness is their inability to confront and master the necessity of informing, enlightening and educating the public in order that they can safely rely on the democratic will.

In tranquil years, when broad directives are set and problems consist of details, there is no need for constant reliance on public opinion. In years of conflict, when there are no clear directives, and great decisions turn on public attitudes, no organization, working in critical areas of international cooperation, can accomplish its ends without public guidance.

Once, again, the problems are far less urgent for Britain than for other nations. Centuries of internal unity, of class rule, of continuous training in the management of a worldwide economic and political system, have led the British people close to a civil-service state. Party politics stops short of the civil service.

The British worker has an innate belief in the competence and judgment of the Oxford graduate in the Foreign Office; if China is lost to communism, he remarks that no doubt the chaps did

their best.

In contrast, a federal system like the U.S., which pits legislative against executive and state power against federal power, breeds an innate distrust among citizens in the competence and judgment of executive officials. Continuity in policy is rare, in any case, with one Congress ready to repudiate the solemn commitments of its predecessor. But the smooth functioning of the committee system breaks down completely when the citizens of Kansas City feel totally unmoved by the fact that on some joint committee they have never heard of, some unknown official and his counterparts from foreign nations, in their perfect understanding, have informally and privately agreed on a joint course of action for their peoples to follow.

Third, the committee system is un-creative;

that is, in terms of enduring achievements that outlast wars and emergencies.

In World War I, a substantial part of the resources of the Allies were pooled under committee management. Hopeful men like Sidney Webb saw in